

Work and Climate Change Report

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

YEARLY ARCHIVES: 2021

Canadian government climate priorities detailed in Mandate Letters to Ministers

Posted on **December 18, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The government's priorities for all Ministries are set out in a series of Mandate Letters, released to the public on December 16, and **available here**. Each letter is introduced with a general statement of priorities, which includes: "Building a cleaner, greener future will require a sustained and collaborative effort from all of us. As Minister, I expect you to seek opportunities within your portfolio to support our whole-of-government effort to reduce emissions, create clean jobs and address the climate-related challenges communities are already facing."

Most specifically related to the tasks of climate change adaptation and mitigation are the Mandate Letters to the Ministers of **Environment and Climate Change**; **Natural Resources**; and **Labour** – the latter two charged with advancing legislation for the promised Just Transition for workers and communities.

To the **Minister of Environment and Climate Change**: (Steven Guilbeault) a long, detailed and challenging list of initiatives, highlighted as: "You will also set out by the end of March 2022, how we will meet our legislated 2030 climate goals. This will include new measures related to capping and cutting oil and gas sector emissions, further reducing methane emissions across the economy, mandating the sale of zero-emissions vehicles and setting us on a path to achieve an electricity grid with net-zero emissions by 2035. You will also work with your colleagues and crown corporations to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies by 2023." Some specifics from the letter:

- With the support of the Minister of Natural Resources, introduce a Clean Electricity Standard to achieve a net-zero clean electricity grid by 2035 and achieve a 100 per cent net-zero emitting electricity future.

- Enact a strengthened Canadian Environmental Protection Act to protect everyone, including people most vulnerable to harm from toxic substances and those living in communities where exposure is high.
- Identify, and prioritize the clean-up of, contaminated sites in areas where Indigenous Peoples, racialized and low- income Canadians live.
- Recognize the “right to a healthy environment” in federal law and introduce legislation to require the development of an environmental justice strategy and the examination of the link between race, socio-economic status and exposure to environmental risk.
- Work with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and with the support of the Minister of Natural Resources, to accelerate our G20 commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies from 2025 to 2023, and develop a plan to phase out public financing of the fossil fuel sector, including by federal Crown corporations.
- With the support of the Minister of Natural Resources, cap oil and gas sector emissions at current levels and ensure that the sector makes an ambitious and achievable contribution to meeting the country’s 2030 climate goals. This effort will take into account the advice of the Net-Zero Advisory Body and others, including provinces and territories, Indigenous Peoples, industry and civil society, and require the oil and gas sector to reduce emissions at a pace and on a scale needed to align with the achievement of net-zero emissions by 2050, with five-year targets to stay on track.
- Make progress on methane emission reductions by developing a plan to reduce emissions across the broader Canadian economy consistent with the Global Methane Pledge and require through regulations the reduction of oil and gas methane emissions in Canada by at least 75 per cent below 2012 levels by 2030.
- In collaboration with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Minister of Indigenous Services, continue to work in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation to address climate change and its impacts, and chart collaborative strategies.
- Work with the Minister of Natural Resources to help protect old growth forests, notably in British Columbia, by reaching a nature agreement with B.C., establishing a \$50 million B.C. Old Growth Nature Fund, and ensuring First Nations, local communities and workers are partners in shaping the path forward for nature protection.

The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change had already issued [a press release](#) announcing that discussion papers on many of these issues would be issued before the end of 2021, to enable consultations in 2022. On December 16, the first of these was released, regarding [zero emission vehicles](#). The Ministry also [tabled its Reports to Parliament](#) on December 13.

The Mandate Letter to the [Minister of Natural Resources](#), (John Wilkinson) includes this summary statement: “As Minister of Natural Resources, you will prioritize moving forward with legislation and comprehensive action to achieve a Just Transition, ensuring support for communities to create more economic opportunities for workers and families into the future and in all regions of the country. You will work with partners to develop and implement strategies to decarbonize regional electricity systems, grow the market for clean fuels and transform Canada’s building stock for the climate era. You will likewise move early to launch a Critical Minerals Strategy, ensuring that Canada’s natural resources are developed sustainably, competitively and inclusively.”

Specifically, the Minister is given the lead on the Just Transition file with this statement:

To support the future and livelihood of workers and their communities in the transition to a low carbon economy:

Work with the Minister of Labour in moving forward with legislation and comprehensive action to achieve a Just Transition. This work will be guided by consultations with workers, unions, Indigenous Peoples, employers, communities and provinces and territories. You will be supported by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion and Ministers responsible for Regional Development Agencies;

Continue to deliver on investments to train workers and create opportunities for green jobs; and

Natural Resources is also charged with:

- Increase inclusion in the clean energy workforce by creating more opportunities for women, LGBTQ2 and other under-represented people in the energy sector.
- Work with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry to develop a sustainable battery innovation and industrial ecosystem in Canada, including to establish Canada as a global leader in battery manufacturing, recycling and reuse. In support of these efforts, you will work with stakeholders to identify new strategic priorities, including future battery types, ways to optimize batteries for cold weather performance and long-duration storage, and applications in heavy-duty transportation, and launch a Canada-U.S. Battery Alliance for stakeholders in both countries to identify shared priorities and create environmental requirements.
- Reduce pollution from transportation by adding 50,000 new electric vehicle chargers and hydrogen stations to Canada's network and supporting the installation of charging stations in existing buildings, and by making investments to retrofit large trucks currently on the road, and supporting the production, distribution and use of clean fuels, including low or zero carbon hydrogen.
- Work with provinces and territories, communities and Indigenous Peoples to develop and implement a National Net-Zero Emissions Building Strategy to achieve net-zero emissions from buildings by 2050, with interim milestones, that include accelerating net-zero emissions new builds and deep retrofits of existing buildings through codes and incentives, requiring EnerGuide labeling of homes at the time of sale, transitioning away from fossil-fuel home heating systems, and launching a community level net-zero emissions homes initiative.
- Work with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry on the development of model building codes, including publishing a net-zero emissions building code and model retrofit code by the end of 2024 that align with national climate objectives and provide a standard for climate-resilient buildings. You will also work to amend the National Building Code of Canada to specify firefighter and first responder safety as a core objective. To ensure effective implementation of these performance standards, work with partners to develop strategies around incentives, training programs and pilot initiatives.

- Help Canadians improve the energy efficiency and resiliency of their homes by providing grants of up to \$5,000 for home retrofits through the Canada Greener Homes Grants Program and creating a Climate Adaptation Home Rating Program as a companion to the EnerGuide home energy audits to protect homeowners from the impacts of climate change.
- Work with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to help protect old growth forests, notably in British Columbia, by advancing a nature agreement with B.C., establishing a \$50 million B.C. Old Growth Nature Fund, and ensuring First Nations and Métis, local communities and workers are partners in shaping the path forward on nature protection.

To the [Minister of Labour](#) (Seamus O'Regan):

“Work with the Minister of Natural Resources in moving forward with legislation and comprehensive action to achieve a Just Transition. This work will be guided by consultations with workers, unions, Indigenous Peoples, employers, communities, and provinces and territories to support the future and livelihood of workers and their communities in the transition to a low carbon economy. You will be supported by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion and Ministers responsible for Regional Development Agencies.”

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U.S. fishers' union sues the Oil Majors for damages to the oceans

Posted on **December 18, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As reported in the Labor Network for Sustainability newsletter, “the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations, a union representing 900 family-owned fishing boats on the Pacific coast, is suing Chevron, Exxon, BP, Shell, and other oil and gas companies for covering up research that warned about the dangers of burning fossil fuels. The union wants compensation for damage caused by global warming and to meet the cost of new infrastructure to cope with the climate crisis. They also demand changes in fossil fuel industry behavior.” The suit is summarized by The Guardian in [“Toxic waters devastated Pacific Coast fisheries. But who’s to blame?”](#) (Nov. 20) . The PCFFA has published a report , [“Combatting Global Warming and Acidic Seas”](#) , which documents the impacts on the livelihoods of the fishers.

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Newfoundland and Labrador approves \$35 million to support offshore oil and gas, then strikes a new Net-Zero Advisory Council

Posted on **December 18, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced the formation of a new Net-Zero Advisory Council in a [press release](#) on December 13. The Council will focus on how to achieve the 2030 and net-zero targets through “near term and foundational actions the government and others can take”. The goal is “to grow the green economy, while considering a just transition and affordability. The Council will also advise on global trends to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the importance and use of carbon sinks.” The eight members of the Advisory Council are mainly from business and academic backgrounds, including Newfoundland-born Angela V. Carter, Associate Professor at University of Waterloo and author of [Fossilized: Environmental Policy in Canada's Petro-Provinces](#) (UBC, 2020).

This may prove to be a heavy lift for the Advisory Council, given the November announcement by the Newfoundland Premier that \$35-million from the Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Oil and Gas Industry Recovery Assistance Fund has been directed toward 26 projects connected to the offshore oil and gas industry. The investment is forecast to create or maintain a total of 230 jobs. A [CBC article](#) reports on the NDP criticism of the announcement, emphasizing the timing, just 10 days after the end of COP26. The article also quotes the Newfoundland Premier's sales pitch for Newfoundland offshore oil: “We have an incredible product that is incredibly valued because of its low carbon footprint. It's not landlocked and...we can deliver that to the world right now during this transition over time.”

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Some labour union reflections on COP26

Posted on **December 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In “[After Glasgow : Canadian Labour Unions Confront The Most Exclusionary COP Conference In History](#)” (*Our Times*, Dec. 16), Sune Sandbeck and Sari Sairanen of Unifor describe their experiences as union delegates to the events – where unionists and even some

countries were vastly outnumbered by the 503 delegates from the fossil fuel industry . The article asserts that, despite much disappointment in the COP26 results,

*“Trade unions were instrumental in securing the **Just Transition Declaration**, whose signatories included Canada, France, Germany, the UK, the European Union and the U.S. And although just transition was omitted from early draft texts being negotiated, it would eventually make its way into vital passages of the final agreement. In fact, the Canadian labour delegation played a key role by drafting last-minute text proposals that would see just transition included in a crucial paragraph in the **final COP26 decision**.”*

The article names the following unions who sent representatives as the Canadian labour delegation at COP26 : the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), Unifor, the BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU), the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), the Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE), the United Steelworkers (USW), and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Canada.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) wrote a brief reaction to events in “**COP26 – workers must focus on solutions, not empty promises**”, calling for a focus on concrete steps for job creation in a green economy. CUPE cites the agenda of the international **Trade Union Program for a Public Low-Carbon Energy Future**, launched on November 4 at COP26. It states: “Focusing mainly on the power sector, the Program is an attempt to rally the international trade union movement behind an ambitious political effort to bring about a fundamental shift in climate and energy policy. This shift is needed both to correct the failures of the market model and to ensure that the energy transition is socially just, economically viable, and effective in terms of reaching climate goals.”

The Canadian Teachers Federation reflected on COP26 and climate education with: “**Turning of the oil taps begins in the classroom**”, advocating for the important role of teachers. Much of the same thinking appears in the Education International reaction “**COP 26 key outcomes: Why is this important for education unionists?**” . That response notes that progress was made in the form of a pledges by government ministers regarding teacher training, student participation and climate resilience in education systems, and noted that youth activists stressed the importance of teacher support and student collaboration in reforming curricula across the world. However, the language of the formal negotiations for climate education (part of the mandate of the Action for Climate Empowerment) fell short, calling only for climate education to be “encouraged”.

From the international federation IndustriALL: “**Trade unions at COP26: what we did, what we achieved, and what we need to focus on now**” chronicled union events at COP26, and on December 14, the union published a more analytical piece “**What happened at COP26 and what it means for workers**” . Speaking about fossil fuel jobs, an IndustriALL delegate states: “... Rather than making our members believe that we can defend these jobs indefinitely, we must be honest with them and help them to prepare for the future. Our urgent task is to develop concrete frameworks for Just Transition that we can implement through social dialogue.”

And to those who are suspicious that the claims of Just Transition are just “more of the same”, the article has this: “Why should we believe it will be different this time?”

“It won’t be different if we leave it to our politicians. But it can be different if we are engaged in driving the transition. We are facing an unprecedented shift in the global economy – the end of the age of fossil fuel, and the beginning of a new age that is yet to be defined. Unlike previous changes, this is a managed process, with space for unions to influence policy. The world’s governments will spend unprecedented amounts of money. It is up to us to ensure that this spend delivers good jobs to our members – and that we build a better world in the process.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [COP26](#), [international labour action](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour unions, pension funds and divestment: resolutions from Alberta, Ontario conventions and a U.S. report from Stand.earth

Posted on **December 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“***Labour Confronts the Climate Crisis***” appeared in the November issue of *Our Times* magazine, written by James Hutt of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). He highlights the notable speakers from the November convention of the Ontario Federation of Labour, but states that the main discussion at the convention focused on if and how unions can fight climate change through divestment, ethical investing, and active involvement in their pension fund management.

From the article :

“ Many speakers underlined that divestment may have limited financial impact but can be very effective as a political tool. Democratic institutions, in particular unions, can use it to make a powerful statement and undermine the social legitimacy of the fossil fuel industry...

.... speakers concluded that there are a number of important actions unions should take regarding their pension funds, including demanding transparency and input into how funds are being invested. Unions can also advocate for investing in community-led renewable initiatives, and they can help these initiatives scale up.

The final panel recognized that while pensions do have a role to play, ultimately our true power lies elsewhere. As workers and unions engaged in the climate fight, it's clear that we must go beyond pension-board tables and the confines of capital markets.”

At its annual convention held in early December, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) passed three environmental resolutions, announced and summarized in a [press release](#) (Dec. 4). These included calls for 1. just transition for workers, 2. a green new deal that includes providing union jobs through an expanded public sector, modernizes public infrastructure, recognizes Indigenous rights and treaties; and builds a just society, and 3. a call for the Alberta Investment Management Corp. (AIMCo) to “quantify the climate risks of its investments and adopt a path to net zero” in the pension funds it manages. Response from AIMCo is presented in [an article in Benefits Canada](#), which notes that AUPE members have a seat on the AIMCo sponsors’ Board through their membership in the Local Authorities Pension Plan.

AUPE members are right to be concerned with the performance of AIMCo – as described in the report published on December 15 by the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta. [Can AIMCo be Fixed?](#) traces the controversial moves by the UCP government to take control of public sector pensions, as well as AIMCo’s risky volatility trading strategy (VOLTS), which led to a \$2 billion loss in 2020. The authors at Parkland conclude that “A thorough rethink of AIMCo’s board of directors and ownership structure is required in light of the troubling actions by the UCP government, AIMCo’s poor performance as an investment manager in recent years, and the serious structural weaknesses of AIMCo”. The report makes five policy recommendations for change, none of which relate to its management of climate risks, but focus on the ownership and governance structure, including: Eliminate the Crown’s sole ownership of AIMCo and “Implement a new ownership structure with the government holding a minority position to prevent governments using AIMCo funds for their own political purposes”.

The Parkland report is the latest of several which have condemned the Alberta pension manager for its bias to oil and gas investments, described in a [previous WCR article](#) when it invested in the Coastal GasLink pipeline in 2020, and in the 2019 report from Progress Alberta, [Alberta’s Failed Oil and Gas Bailout](#).

From the U.S., a new report released by Stand.earth and the [Climate Safe Pensions Network](#) argues for the importance of divestment. [The Quiet Culprit: Pension Funds Bankrolling the Climate Crisis](#) details the fossil fuel exposure of 14 public pension funds, revealing that \$81.6 billion is invested in coal, oil, and gas. The report notes, for example, that nine of the fourteen funds have invested over \$281 million in TC Energy, the company behind the controversial [Coastal GasLink pipeline violating Indigenous rights](#) in Wet’suwet’en land. The pension funds also have over \$3.24 billion invested in big tar sands miners Canadian Natural Resources, Cenovus, ConocoPhillips, Exxon and Suncor. The conclusion? “With over \$46 trillion in assets worldwide, pension funds are among the largest institutional investors in fossil fuels. These investments have dangerously underperformed the rest of the market, making public pensions’ fossil fuels investments inherently risky....The fastest way for pensions to address climate change is to divest fossil fuel holdings and invest in just and equitable climate solutions.”

Urgent Recommendations for Deep Carbon Retrofitting include mandatory building performance benchmarking, more investment in workforce training

Posted on **December 14, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Decarbonizing Canada's Large Buildings is a new report commissioned by the Canadian Green Building Council (CaGBC) and executed by two consultancies: RDH Building Science and Dunsky Energy + Climate Advisors. Those researchers used “whole-building energy modelling” to evaluate deep carbon retrofit opportunities across 50 different building archetypes, reflecting a range of building types (office, multi-unit residential, and primary school), sizes (low-rise and midrise), ages (1970s and 1990s) and regions (Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, and Vancouver). The researchers developed baselines and assessed business-as-usual upgrades, and also identified and assessed the performance outcomes of deep carbon retrofits. Some highlights from the report: full decarbonization by 2050 is technically viable for all the building archetypes, though some are more financially appealing than others – and office buildings are the “low-hanging fruit.” The key technical solutions identified are to 1. Reduce/replace fossil fuel use for space heating, mainly through electrification, 2. Implement energy demand-reduction measures and, 3. Incorporate and/or install on-site renewable energy systems. The report emphasizes the urgency of action, calling for governments to introduce mandatory building performance requirements, mandatory energy performance benchmarking and disclosure programs, and improved incentive programs, such as innovative loan programs, such as property-assessed clean energy (PACE) and on-bill financing (OBF), among programs.

In calling on policy-makers to ramp up education, low-carbon skills training, and industry capacity, the CaGBC report recommends 1. collaborative training programs, leveraging the existing training opportunities offered by industry associations; 2. Incorporating deep carbon retrofit training into continuing education requirements for architects and engineers. 3. Increased government investment in building-related retrofit training programs offered by many unions and community colleges; 4. Improving industry buy-in by collaborating with manufacturers. The Summary Report is [here](#); register [here](#) to receive the full technical study when available.

Related reading: “***Colleges get set to train Canada's green workforce***” (National Observer, Dec. 14) , which highlights Toronto's Centennial College for resurrecting an architectural

technology course with a focus on green building design and technology.

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Nature-based solutions as a means to environmental justice in New York City; the importance of nature-based solutions to protect Canadian coastal communities

Posted on **December 14, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Opportunities for Growth: Nature-Based Jobs in NYC is a new report released on December 1, from Just Nature NYC, a partnership between the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and The Nature Conservancy in New York . The report argues that nature-based solutions “ are vital to improving environmental health and building climate resilience – particularly in environmental justice communities. Climate scientists project that the frequency of annual heat waves in NYC will increase three to-five-fold by 2050, and heat waves are expected to last longer than those of the recent past.”

The report breaks new ground with a discussion and definition of a nature-based job:

“Nature-based jobs (NBJs) are defined as jobs that directly contribute to natural infrastructure and nature-based ecosystems with the goal of enhancing human health and well-being and promoting biodiversity.”

Using that definition, the report determined that there were 45,560 nature-based jobs in the New York City in 2020, in such positions as landscape architects, construction managers and tree trimmers and pruners. It notes projected growth for each role between 2020 and 2025, with the most expected growth to be in the professions of soil and plant scientists (expected to grow by 41 percent) and conservation scientists (with a growth of 27 percent). With a focus on the environmental justice benefits, the authors call for near-term growth of nature-based jobs; increasing job equity, accessibility, and quality; and the need to promote deeper public appreciation of nature-based solutions. Summaries are available in **“*To Combat Climate Change, NYC Needs More Nature-Based Jobs: Report*”** (*City Limits*, Dec. 6) and a December 1 **summary in *The Medium***.

Another report arguing for the importance of nature-based solutions was published by the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo in December. ***Rising Tides and Shifting Sands: Combining Natural and Grey Infrastructure to Protect Canada's Coastal Communities*** assesses the urgent dangers of flood and storm damages on Canada's East and West Coasts, and discusses the current status of coastal protection measures. It differentiates between grey infrastructure (the hard, engineered measures such as seawalls) and nature-based solutions (which depend on, or mimic, natural systems to manage flood and erosion risk). The report argues that nature-based solutions are underutilized, and in addition to offering protection, deliver multiple benefits, including improved biodiversity, carbon sequestration and storage, enhanced wellbeing and opportunities for recreational activities.

Rising Tides and Shifting Sands recommends scale-up of nature-based solutions through: 1. Developing national standards to support consistent evaluation of the benefits of nature-based solutions; 2. Developing national monitoring standards for coastal protection measures, focused on nature-based solutions; and 3. Building capacity to finance and deliver nature-based solutions by engaging the private sector. (“Public-private partnerships can potentially assist in financing, delivering, monitoring, and maintaining nature-based solutions. The insurance industry can also assist in managing construction risks and offering innovative insurance products that provide funds to restore natural features protecting the coastline, should they be damaged during extreme events.”)

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Encouraging electric vehicles: U.S. Buy American policies threaten Canadian auto worker jobs

Posted on **December 14, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

U.S. President Biden's ***Build Back Better Act*** passed the U.S. House of Representatives in November, including incentives to encourage adoption of electric vehicles: a consumer tax credit of \$7,500 for electric vehicles made in the U.S., and an additional \$4,500 tax credit if the vehicle was made with union labour. The news was **welcomed by U.S. auto workers' union UAW**, but in Canada, workers and the government are alarmed. A press release from Unifor, the Canadian auto workers' union, is titled ***“President Biden needs to realize he is shooting U.S. auto sector in the foot”***, stating: “The fact is U.S. assembly plants couldn't survive without the engines and other components we make here. For that matter, he can't build a sustainable BEV industry without the nickel, cobalt, manganese and other minerals coming out of Canada, either.” The business-oriented *Financial Post* published ***“Why America's rush to EVs might kill the entire Canadian auto parts business”***. As reported by **CBC News**, federal government officials have

threatened retaliatory trade measures, arguing that the Buy American provisions amount to a 34 per cent tariff on electric vehicles assembled in Canada and violate the terms of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) . An alternate solution is described in [“Canada willing to ‘align’ EV incentives with U.S. to avert tax-credit crisis: Trudeau”](#) (*Toronto Star*, Dec.13). CTV News offers an [Explainer](#) which also summarizes reactions from government, industry, and labour.

In Ontario, where most Canadian auto jobs are located, the provincial government **announced** on December 9 the creation of the Premier’s Council on U.S. Trade and Industry Competitiveness, to be chaired by Unifor National President Jerry Dias, working with the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. From the press release: “This new Council, with the full support of our government, will continue to advocate for Ontario against unfair Buy American policies by highlighting the cost of protectionism to businesses on both sides of the border and promoting a Buy North American approach to our auto sector.”

On October 17, Ontario **had announced Phase 2 of its Driving Prosperity – The Future of Ontario’s Auto Sector** policies “to secure production mandates for hybrid and electric vehicles, create a domestic battery ecosystem, and strengthen Ontario’s position as a North American automotive and electric vehicle (EV) innovation hub.” To date, the Ontario government strategy has been to incentivize manufacturers but resist the kinds of consumer incentives Biden has proposed, as described in [“Doug Ford talks big on EVs but won’t reintroduce rebates”](#) (*National Observer*, Dec. 13).

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Toronto region emissions increased 2% despite the pandemic; net-zero target accelerated to 2040

Posted on **December 14, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new publication was **released** by The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) on December 13, reporting emissions data for 2019 and 2020 in the Region of Durham, Halton Region, City of Hamilton, Region of Peel, and City of Toronto – home to 7.7 million people and representing 44% of Ontario’s emissions. [2019-2020 Carbon Emissions Inventory in the GTHA](#) provides data on the major sources of emissions across the region: buildings, transportation, industry, waste, and agriculture, with the greatest amounts coming from buildings (45%) and transportation (35%).

Comparison over the five years since 2015 shows emissions moving in the wrong direction – up by about 2.0%, despite decreases in emissions due to the pandemic in 2020. The report concludes that the GTHA is not on track to reduce emissions in line with local or international 2030

climate commitments, makes policy recommendations for municipalities. The TAF report gives examples of the technological changes required, and states that only leadership is missing.

In November, the **City of Toronto announced** that it would accelerate its net-zero target from 2050 to 2040, with interim goals of a 45 per cent reduction in GHG levels by 2025, and 65 per cent reduction by 2030. The plan will be debated on December 15, and the Council will also be considering four other potentially high-impact policies: TransformTO Net Zero Strategy, Toronto Hydro's Climate Plan, and two transportation by-laws that can significantly reduce carbon and air pollution.

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Increasing Heat stress as an occupational health issue

Posted on **December 9, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report from the European Trade Union Institute is a call to action for preventive management of extreme heat conditions as part of occupational health and safety policies for government and workplaces. ***Heatwaves as an occupational hazard: The impact of heat and heatwaves on workers' health, safety and wellbeing and on social inequalities*** was released on December 2, and argues that heat impacts go far beyond heat illnesses such as heat stroke, since workers are exposed to other factors of heat stress and also because heat exacerbates other underlying conditions and other occupational hazards. The report includes appendices, for example: the "Resolution on the need for EU action to protect workers from high temperatures", adopted at the Executive Committee Meeting of the European Trade Union Confederation in December 2018, (pages 60-61) and "An agreement for a company action plan" (page 62-65), a detailed guide for developing workplace action plans, to be developed in cooperation with companies, workers, and workplace representatives.

Although the ETUI report includes summary statistics about occupational heat stress, the latest facts and statistics about all the health impacts of climate change appear in the 2021 edition of ***The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change***, released in October just before COP26. Amongst the highlighted findings: Indicator 1.1.3: the past four decades saw an increase in the number of hours in which temperatures were too high for safe outdoor exercise; Indicator 1.1.4: "In a rising trend since at least 1990, 295 billion hours of potential work were lost across the globe in 2020 due to heat exposure—ie, the equivalent to 88 work hours per employed person." (Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India had the greatest losses – with the equivalent to 216–261 hours lost per employed person in 2020). Indicator 4.1.3 discusses loss of earnings from heat-related labour capacity reduction, finding that that the impact on workers' earnings is significant, both for the worker and for the GDP of countries.

The Lancet Countdown report analyses all health impacts, including extreme weather events, forest fires, vector-borne diseases etc. and overall, concludes that “As with COVID-19, the health impacts of climate change are inequitable, with disproportionate effects on the most susceptible populations in every society, including people with low incomes, members of minority groups, women, children, older adults, people with chronic diseases and disabilities, and outdoor workers.” It provides sophisticated data analysis on 44 indicators, organised in five “domains”: climate change impacts, exposures, and vulnerabilities; adaptation, planning, and resilience for health; mitigation actions and health co-benefits; economics and finance; and public and political engagement.

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Surveys of oil and gas workers show their willingness to retrain and move to clean energy jobs

Posted on **December 9, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

International recruitment firm [Brunel International](#) and [Oilandgasjobsearch.com](#) released the latest version of their annual survey on November 30, showing key employment trends such as recruitment challenges, compensation, energy transition, job engagement, and retention in the global energy sector. ***Energy Outlook Report 2021-2022*** is summarized with [key highlights here](#), including that more than half of the oil and gas workers surveyed want to work in the renewable energy sector – a sentiment stronger amongst workers ages 25 – 29 years old. The survey also highlights a high degree of “job volatility” in the wider energy and extraction sector, with 44% of workers in oil and gas, 42% each in mining, power, and renewables, and 39% in nuclear saying they were looking for a career change in the next five years. The full survey is available [for download here](#).

Although not as widely reported, a Canadian survey in the summer of 2021 showed a similar appetite for career change. Iron and Earth, the Canadian organization of fossil fuel workers whose mission is “to empower fossil fuel industry and Indigenous workers to build and implement climate solutions”, commissioned Abacus Data to conduct a survey of 300 Canadians working in the oil, gas or coal industry. The [survey report](#) probed general attitudes to a net zero economy, but more particularly asked about attitudes and motivations to skills training and retraining, with breakdowns by age, gender, Indigenous/minority status, and region. The top level finding: 69% of all the workers surveyed were very interested or somewhat interested in “making a career switch to, or expanding your work involvement in, a job in the net-zero economy”. These findings are consistent with an anecdotal report [“Workers Pick Job Stability Over Higher Wages as Oil](#)

Rig Operator Scrambles for Crews” (*The Energy Mix*, Sept. 14), which reports on the recruitment difficulties of the oil and gas industry. The article quotes the head of the Canadian Association of Energy Contractors, who speaks of shift in the industry, “citing the premium many younger workers place on work-life balance, along with the federal government’s talk about just transition legislation.”

That same Canadian Association of Energy Contractors released their ***industry forecast for 2022*** in November. It reports that drilling activity for oil and gas wells has “bounced back” from an all-time low in June 2020, and “total jobs in 2021 were up 54 per cent year-over-year from 2020, with an increase of 9,734 jobs. In 2022, CAOEC expects another increase of approximately 7,280 total jobs to 34,925, a 26 per cent increase year-over-year.” However, clearly oil and gas workers are right to be concerned about job stability, as the CAOEC continues: **“In comparison to 2014, we anticipate total jobs will still be a loss of 56 per cent from the peak of 78,793 total jobs in 2014.”**

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [employee attitudes](#), [labour market forecasts](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

More ambition required to reduce emissions from “last-mile” deliveries by Amazon, FedEx, UPS and more

Posted on **December 9, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Parcel delivery on a warming planet: The efforts and ambitions of six companies, examines practices at Amazon, Deutsche Post DHL Group, FedEx, Flipkart, UPS, and Walmart, focussing on the cost- and energy-intensive “last mile ” of the delivery process. The report also looks at company-wide emissions targets, target dates for full electrification of the delivery vehicle fleets, and presents three case studies, from Delhi, London and Los Angeles), showing how these cities encourage, facilitate, and regulate sustainable last-mile delivery systems. Part of the discussion: the relentless drive to reduce costs and the complexity of subcontracting relations in the last-mile delivery sector which reduces subcontractor abilities to mitigate environmental impacts, for example, by investing in electric vehicles. The report concludes that all six companies demonstrate awareness of their environmental impacts and have set targets to reduce their emissions, but their goals are not sufficiently ambitious or timely. ***Parcel Delivery on a Warming Planet*** is published by the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) in Amsterdam.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Amazon](#), [Corporate Climate Policy](#), [courier industry](#), [delivery](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#), [Trucking Industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A call for 100% clean energy by 2035: Electrification is necessary to keep up with global decarbonization

Posted on **December 7, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Underneath it All is a new report from Clean Energy Canada, released on December 1. It calls for Canada “to go big on clean electricity: to ensure Canada can effectively combat climate change, to diversify and strengthen Canada’s economy, to further expand Indigenous clean energy ownership, and to improve energy security and affordability.” The report discusses each of the four objectives, and regarding economic diversification, has this to say: “Canada can set a course to carbon neutrality while driving job creation and economic competitiveness: Currently, Canada’s heavy industries—including cement, chemicals, fertilizers, forest products, mining, and steel—employ more workers than the oil and gas sector. These industries, along with agriculture, manufacturing, and others, must further decarbonize for emissions reasons, but getting ahead of the curve will also create opportunities to access markets looking for low-carbon products today” – giving the examples of Apple, BMW, and FedEx. According to the discussion of our current electricity situation, the report states that: “Electrification—that is, hooking up our vehicles, heating systems, and industry to a clean electricity grid—will require Canada to produce roughly twice as much non-emitting electricity as it does today in just under three decades.” Recommendations on how to reach 100% clean electricity by 2035 focus on the federal implementation of the recently-announced Clean Electricity Standard by 2023 and using the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to prevent new fossil plant construction in the meantime. Further, “federal and provincial governments “must support the development, scale-up, and installation of new generation, storage, transmission, and efficiency technologies,” with Ottawa providing infrastructure support and investment tax credits.”

A related technical report was published by the David Suzuki Foundation in August 2021. ***A Zero-Emission Canadian Electricity System by 2035***, written by Marc Jaccard and Bradford Griffin, models two different policy scenarios which “would enable Canada to achieve a net-zero GHG emissions electricity system by 2035 and sustain it at net-zero while the total system doubles in size by 2050 as fossil fuels are switched out for clean electricity.”

On December 3, an Environment and Climate Change Canada **press release** announced new consultations will begin in 2022 – and one of the topics to be covered is “Transitioning to a net-zero emitting electricity grid by 2035.”

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Clean Energy, Decarbonization** | [Leave a reply](#)

Audit of coal workers' transition promised in 2022; audit of green recovery funds finds job retention not measured

Posted on [December 7, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The federal Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled several reports in the House of Commons on November 25, including [Report 5—Lessons Learned from Canada's Record on Climate Change](#). Well-documented and concise, it summarizes the history of climate policies and international agreements over the last 30 years, and concludes: “Repeated commitments, strategies, and action plans to reduce emissions in Canada have not yielded results.....Despite progress in some areas, such as public electricity and heat generation, Canadian emissions have actually increased by more than 20% since 1990.” The report identifies the central flaw of “policy incoherence”, highlighting the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline and the Onshore Emissions Reduction Fund as examples. Eight “lessons” are discussed, with accompanying opportunities for the future, with an overarching lesson which calls for greater leadership and coordination amongst all levels of government. Lesson 2 states that “Canada’s economy is still dependent on emission-intensive sectors” and in a section entitled “Shielding workers and communities”, the report highlights the findings of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities. **Most importantly, the Commissioner promises a performance audit to Parliament in 2022, “examining Canada’s just transition for coal workers.”** In the discussion about the need for a national energy policy, and report poses “Considerations for parliamentarians” which include: “How much financial support does Canada provide to the oil and gas industry? Could this support be reallocated to workers?” and “How can the federal government identify and assist communities and workers most affected by the transition to a low-carbon economy?”

Also of interest: The Commissioner’s [Report #4: Emissions Reductions Fund – Natural Resources Canada](#), which is a scathing rebuke to the department and a catalogue of poor, hasty design and inaccurate measurement of the impacts of the Onshore Emissions Reduction Fund. The Fund, launched in 2020 as part of the federal Covid-19 Economic Response Plan, offered \$675 million in the form of interest-free loans and non-repayable grants with the stated goals of helping land-based oil and gas companies attract investment, retain jobs, and reduce emissions. Amongst the failings: Natural Resources Canada failed to use recognized GHG accounting principles to measure the GHG reductions, and awarded maximum grants to all applicants without assessing value for tax-payers money. Further, “Natural Resources Canada indicated that one of the rationales for the Onshore Program was to help maintain jobs in the oil and gas sector. However, we found that the department did not include job retention as a feature in the program’s design. For example, it did not list job retention as an eligibility condition or an assessment

criterion for funding decisions. The department also did not include job retention or creation in the oil and gas sector as a performance indicator for the Onshore Program. However, it planned to request this information from funded companies as part of the contribution agreements' reporting requirements." Natural Resources Canada has accepted this criticism and promises to "provide annual and periodic reporting on greenhouse gas emission reductions and jobs (direct and indirect) from ERF-funded projects, as new information becomes available." The new Minister of Natural Resources, Jonathan Wilkinson, **announced a review of the program on November 26**

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Flooding in British Columbia is an unfolding, man-made climate disaster

Posted on **November 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

After the disastrous summer heat wave which **killed 595 people in British Columbia** in June 2021, along comes **the worst natural weather disaster in Canada's history** so far : torrential rains and flooding which began on November 15 in southern British Columbia, centred on Abbotsford and the agricultural Fraser River Valley, including First Nations lands. One person so far has been pronounced dead; mudslides, rockslides and water have destroyed roads, bridges and rail lines; motorists have been stranded, and supply chains from the port of Vancouver to the rest of Canada are disrupted. Thousands of people and animals have been evacuated and rescued from homes under water. The culprit? As reported by the *National Observer*, "**Lethal mix of cascading climate impacts hammers B.C.**" (Nov. 17). But human fingerprints are all over this climate catastrophe, as explained in "**A tipping point: how poor forestry fuels floods and fires in western Canada**" (*The Guardian*, Nov. 16). *The Guardian* article cites a February 2021 report, **Intact Forests: Safe Communities**, in which author Peter Wood warned of the potential catastrophe around the corner unless the province's forest management practices were changed.

Responding to over a year of intense pressure, the government of B.C. *DID* announce new plans in November, to defer logging on 2.6 million hectares of at-risk old growth forests for two years or so, pending the approval of First Nations – a compromise policy which satisfied no one. "**BC Paused a Lot of Old-Growth Logging. Now What?**" (*The Tyee*, Nov. 8) explains background to the decision and the opposition from the United Steelworkers, whose members work in the forestry sector . The **USW press release** accuses the government of selling out the workers.

"Protecting some old growth isn't enough. B.C. needs a Forest Revolution" and **"Counting the Job Costs of halting old growth logging"** expand on the economic arguments for the clearcutting of B.C.'s forests. (*The Tyee*, Nov. 10). B.C. now needs new research, to count the dollars required to re-build lives and infrastructure after this disaster.

Wind and solar companies perform poorly re labour and human rights

Posted on **November 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 1, the Centre for Business and Human Rights Resource Centre released the 2nd edition of its report: the ***Renewable Energy & Human Rights Benchmark 2021 Report***. Although the report notes some improvements from the inaugural 2020 edition, the Centre states that the “overall results remain profoundly concerning, with companies scoring an average of just 28%.” In the past 10 years, the Centre has recorded over 200 allegations linked to renewable energy projects, including land and water grabs, violation of the rights of Indigenous nations, and the denial of workers’ rights to decent work and a living wage. Only 2 companies in the survey guaranteed the right to a living wage.

The wind and solar sectors accounted for 44% of the total allegations of abuse. The ***Key Findings for the Wind and Solar sectors*** report includes analysis, and makes recommendations for corporations and investors. For corporations, the key recommendation is: “Set a clear and urgent goal to implement human rights and environmental due diligence in operations and supply chains, alongside access to remedy, with special emphasis on land and Indigenous rights risks.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Job Quality](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

COP26 takeaways for Canada and the labour movement

Posted on **November 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the conclusion of COP26 on November 13, the world has been left with the ***Glasgow Climate Pact*** and numerous side deals that were made throughout the two weeks of presentations and negotiations. Carbon Brief **notes** that the final Glasgow Pact is actually set out in three documents –with most attention falling on this paragraph in the 11-page “cover document” (aka ***1/CMA.3***), which:

“Calls upon Parties to accelerate the development, deployment and dissemination of technologies, and the adoption of policies, to transition towards low-emission energy systems, including by rapidly scaling up the deployment of clean power

generation and energy efficiency measures, including accelerating efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, while providing targeted support to the poorest and most vulnerable in line with national circumstances and recognizing the need for support towards a just transition;”

Fortunately, Carbon Brief analyzed all three documents, as well as side events and pledges in its summary of **Key Outcomes**. The International Institute for Sustainable Development has also compiled a detailed, **day by day summary through its Earth Negotiations Bulletin**.

Reactions range widely, but the November 13 tweet from **@Greta Thunberg** captures the essence: “The #COP26 is over. Here’s a brief summary: Blah, blah, blah. But the real work continues outside these halls. And we will never give up, ever.” Veteran climate reporter Fiona Harvey writes “**What are the key points of the Glasgow Climate Pact?**” in *The Guardian*, representing the more positive consensus about the success of diplomacy, and *The New York Times* provides overviews from a U.S. perspective in “**Negotiators Strike a Climate Deal, but World Remains Far From Limiting Warming**” (Nov. 13) and “**Climate Promises Made in Glasgow Now Rest With a Handful of Powerful Leaders**” (Nov 14). In contrast, George Monbiot argues that the Fridays for Future movement and civil society have demonstrated the power of a committed minority in “**After the failure of Cop26, there’s only one last hope for our survival**” and states: “Our survival depends on raising the scale of civil disobedience until we build the greatest mass movement in history, mobilising the 25% who can flip the system.

More details, with COP26 highlights most relevant to Canadians and workers:

The *National Observer* has compiled their coverage in a series of articles titled **Uniting the World to Tackle Climate Change** – which includes a summary “**Glasgow didn’t deliver on 1.5 C, but not all is lost**”. A quick summary appears in *The Toronto Star* “**What’s in the Glasgow Climate Deal and what does it mean for Canada**” (Nov. 15). Climate Action Network Canada (CAN-Rac) compiles a range of reactions in “**Canadian civil society reacts to COP26: incremental inadequate progress; a reason to mobilize**”.

Key Issues:

On Just Transition:

In what could be considered progress, for the first time the language of Just Transition is included in the main text of The Glasgow Pact, as section 85 states that the Parties: “... recognizes the need to ensure just transitions that promote sustainable development and eradication of poverty, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs, including through making financial flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emission and climate-resilient development, including through deployment and transfer of technology, and provision of support to developing country Parties”

In addition, a ***Just Transition Declaration*** was agreed upon by 15 governments, including Canada, UK, USA, much of the EU, and New Zealand. The ILO played a key role in drafting the Declaration and released its own ***press release here***. The Declaration itself cites the preamble from the Paris Agreement and the 2015 ILO Guidelines for Just Transition, and states:

“signatories recognize their role to ensure a transition that is “fully inclusive and benefits the most vulnerable through the more equitable distribution of resources, enhanced economic and political empowerment, improved health and wellbeing, resilience to shocks and disasters and access to skills development and employment opportunities. This should also display: a commitment to gender equality, racial equality and social cohesion; protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples; disability inclusion; intergenerational equity and young people; the promotion of women and girls; marginalised persons’ leadership and involvement in decision-making; and recognition of the value of their knowledge and leadership; and support for the collective climate action of diverse social groups. Social dialogue as well as rights at work are indispensable building blocks of sustainable development and must be at the centre of policies for strong, sustainable, and inclusive growth and development.”

On November 10, ***the closing statement of the Trade Union Delegation*** to the COP26 Plenary session was delivered by Richard Hardy, National Secretary for Prospect union in Scotland, a member of the General Council of the Scottish Trade Union Congress, and a member of the Scottish Governments Just Transition Commission. From that statement:

“ I will speak on behalf of the 210 million workers in 165 countries represented by the global trade union movement the global trade union movement is happy that “Just Transition” has finally found its way in the language used by many parties and observers. We saw and appreciate the adoption by donor countries of the declaration on “Supporting the Conditions for a Just Transition Internationally” and applaud the strong commitments made by signatories. We urge the parties to continue to work towards a Just Transition one that is about jobs, plans and investment. Once again, we call on parties to step up their NDCs and create the millions of good quality jobs and decent work with your climate policies and measures, good quality jobs and decent work which the world desperately requires.... Unions need a voice at the table in social dialogue processes that deliver on jobs, just transition plans and investments.”

Reaction from other unions: A ***joint statement by the UK Trade Union delegation*** to the COP President on November 10 calls for increased engagement on just transition, climate action, labour and human rights. Further, it states: “We applaud the UK COP Presidency’s role in preparing the Declaration on “Supporting the Conditions for a Just transition Internationally”, which was launched last week. But this is a parallel initiative, and not part of the binding UNFCCC agreements. Similar efforts need to be made to incorporate just transition and labour rights into the official COP26 negotiations.” The International Trades Union Congress (ITUC) reaction is ***here*** and ***here*** (Nov. 11), and from IndustriALL, ***here***.

On Ending new fossil fuel production and subsidies:

In *his opening address to COP26* on November 1, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that Canada “will cap oil and gas sector emissions today and ensure they decrease tomorrow at a pace and scale needed to reach net-zero by 2050”. (a statement reviewed in “*Amid urgent calls for action at COP26, Trudeau repeats pledge to cap oil and gas emissions*” (*National Observer*, Nov. 1) . Before leaving COP, the Prime Minister also **committed up to \$1 billion** in international funding for the transition away from coal. But when the **Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance** was officially launched on November 10, it was the government of Quebec which joined (having pre-empted the launch with their **announcement on November 4**).

On November 4, a federal **press release** states that Canada has signed the Statement on International Public Support for the Clean Energy Transition, stating that ...”Canada and other signatories will further prioritize support for clean technology and end *new* direct public support for the *international unabated* fossil fuel sector by the end of 2022, except in limited and clearly defined circumstances that are consistent with the 1.5 degree Celsius warming limit and the goals of the Paris Agreement.” [emphasis by the editor]. Climate Action Network Canada (CAN-Rac) sums up that commitment and hopeful reactions by many in “**Canada joins historic commitment to end international fossil fuel finance by end of 2022**” . However, for context, the CAN-Rac press release also notes **Canada’s Big Oil Reality Check**, a report released on November 3 by Oil Change International and Environmental Defence Canada. It assesses the climate plans of eight Canadian oil and gas producers (including Cenovus, Suncor, Canadian Natural Resources Ltd , ExxonMobil and Imperial Oil ,and Shell Canada), and concludes that their current business plans to 2030 put them on track to expand annual oil and gas production in Canada by nearly 30% above 2020 levels. Also, at a COP side event on November 12, **The Fossil Fueled 5** report called out the governments of Canada, the U.K., the United States, Norway, and Australia for the huge gap between their net zero targets and climate pledges and their public support for fossil fuel production. In the case of Canada, the report states that the government has provided approximately \$17 billion in public finance to three fossil fuel pipelines between 2018 and 2020. **The Fossil Fueled 5** was produced by the University of Sussex in cooperation with the **Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative** and their regional partners in each of the 5 countries – Uplift (UK), Oil Change International (USA), Greenpeace (Norway), The Australia Institute (Australia) and Stand.earth (Canada).

On Deforestation: The **Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forest and Land Use** seems especially important to Canadians, given the current flooding and devastation in British Columbia which is part of a “**Lethal Mix of cascading climate impacts**” . The Declaration, endorsed by Canada, Russia, Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, is explained by *The Narwhal* in “**COP26 deforestation deal could be a win for climate, but Canada needs to address true impacts of forest loss**” (Nov. 10) and in “**Leaders promise to halt ‘chainsaw massacre’ of world’s forests**” (*National Observer*, Nov. 2). However, the *New York Times* exposes “**The billions set aside in Glasgow to save forests represent a fraction of spending to support fossil fuels**” (Nov.2) and *Energy Mix* writes “**Glasgow Forest Pact Runs Short on Funding while Canada ‘Gives Industrial Logging a Free Pass**” (*Energy Mix*, Nov. 3). *The Energy Mix* also notes the failure of previous such Declarations to make an impact on emissions –

especially in Canada and Brazil – as explained in *[Missing the forest: How carbon loopholes for logging hinder Canada's climate leadership](#)*, a report released pre-COP by Environmental Defence Canada, Nature Canada, Nature Québec, and Natural Resources Defense Council.

Zero Emissions Cars Declaration launched a coalition which includes six major automakers (Ford, Mercedes-Benz, General Motors, Volvo, BYD, and Jaguar Land Rover), and 30 national governments – including Britain, Canada, India (the world's 4th largest market), Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, Croatia, Ghana and Rwanda, and others. Sub-national signatories included British Columbia and Quebec in Canada, and California and Washington State. The federal U.S. government, China and Japan did not sign, nor did Toyota, Volkswagen, and the Nissan-Renault alliance. Signatories pledged to work toward phasing out sales of new gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles by 2040 worldwide, and by 2035 in “leading markets.” The New York Times has more [here](#)

Union participation at COP26:

A webinar in October, co-hosted by IndustriALL Global Union and IndustriAll Europe was titled ‘On the Way to COP26 – Industry, Energy and Mine Workers Demand Just Transition’, and saw the launch of a ***Joint Declaration on Just Transition*** by the two internationals. (IndustriALL also released its own ***Just Transition for Workers guide***). From the International Trade Union Confederation, an overview of trade union demands going in to the COP26 meetings was released as ***The Frontlines Briefing document***; the ITUC also provides ***a schedule of the activities of the official Trade Union Delegation*** – at 25 pages, an impressive record of union participation in events and negotiations.

The Canadian Labour Congress sponsored a panel: ***Powering Past Coal with Just Transition: The Trade Union Perspective***, with CLC Vice-President Larry Rousseau and Tara Peel joined by Canada's Environment and Climate Change Minister Steven Guilbeault, as well as Sharan Burrow, International Trade Union Confederation general secretary as moderator. Speakers included union leaders and government/ministerial representatives from Canada, South Africa and the US.

Another panel, Just Transition in the Steel and Energy Industry took place on November 8 and is ***available on YouTube***. It launched ***Preparing for a Just Transition: Meeting green skill needs for a sustainable steel industry***, a report written by Community Union and researchers from the Cardiff University School of Sciences. It reports on the views of 100 steelworkers in the U.K., revealing that 92% feel a green transition is necessary, 78% feel it will bring a radical transformation to their industry, and 55% feel they already possess the skills necessary to make the transition. 79% had not been consulted by their employers, leading to a recommendation for more worker voice. The survey also delved into what skills would be needed.

The ***International Transport Workers Federation*** (ITF) mounted a focused campaign, including a new report co-released on November 10 with C40 Cities. Their original research modelled the impacts of doubling public transportation in five major cities – Houston, Jakarta, Johannesburg, London and Milan and demonstrated that it create tens of millions of jobs worldwide (summarized

by an [ITF press release](#) and available as the full report, [Making COP26 Count: How investing in public transport this decade can protect our jobs, our climate, our future](#) .

Also on November 10, the ITF **announced** that a tripartite Just Transition Maritime Task Force will be formed, to drive decarbonization and support seafarers through shipping's green transition.

Official partners include the UN Global Compact and the International Labour Organization, as well as the ITF representing workers and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), representing ship owners. The ITF Sustainable Shipping Position Paper, titled [The Green Horizon We See Beyond the Big Blue](#), is available [from this link](#) .

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Activism is working to move pension funds away from stranded fossil assets

Posted on **November 11, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

[“Canadian pensions are retiring fossil fuel investments”](#) (*Corporate Knights* magazine, November 9) strikes a hopeful note about the state of Canada's pension funds, stating: “Canadian pension portfolio exposures to fossil fuel stocks are down to a 10th of what they were 10 years ago, notwithstanding some controversial private equity investments.” The article summarizes analysis from the [Canadian Pensions Dashboard for Responsible Investing](#), a new project of The Natural Step Canada, Smart Prosperity Institute, and Corporate Knights. That [full report](#) is a unique overview of sustainability performance, and employs measures such carbon footprint of the portfolio, presence of net-zero targets, the pay link to Environmental Standards (ESG), support for shareholder environmental resolutions, and more.

Another related *Corporate Knights* article describes youth-driven campaigns which have challenged pension plans to acknowledge and adjust to climate risk. [“How young people are using climate litigation to fight for their future”](#) focuses on youth activism targeting pension funds. It describes a years-long challenge to the Retail Employees Superannuation Trust (REST) in Australia, which ultimately ended in the pension fund settling a lawsuit out of court by acknowledging that “climate change is a material, direct and current financial risk” that could “lead to catastrophic economic and social consequences.” The fund also agreed to be more proactive and “ensure that investment managers take active steps to consider, measure and manage financial risks posed by climate change and other relevant ESG risks.” A second example describes the current activist campaign calling for the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) to phase out all current fossil fuel investments by 2025 and completely decarbonize its portfolio by

2030. Retired teachers and high school students have mobilized in Toronto, under the leadership of Shift Action for Pension Wealth and Planet Health (Shift), which is organizing similar campaigns at the ten largest Canadian pension funds. In September 2021, the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan Board [announced](#) “industry-leading targets to reduce portfolio carbon emissions intensity by 45% by 2025 and two-thirds (67%) by 2030, compared to its 2019 baseline. These emission reduction targets cover all the Fund’s real assets, private natural resources, equity and corporate credit holdings across public and private markets, including external managers.” The WCR has more detail [here](#) .

Relevant to all pension management: new research [published in Nature Energy](#) and summarized in *The Guardian* with this headline: “[Half world’s fossil fuel assets could become worthless by 2036 in net zero transition](#)” .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and youth](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#), [youth litigation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Policy recommendations re Green jobs and Green skills in U.K. and the EU

Posted on [November 10, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

An October publication by researchers at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change in the U.K. revisits the issue of green jobs: how to define them, where they are, and the labour market policy challenges of educating and training the workforce to prepare for them. [Are ‘green’ jobs good jobs? How lessons from the experience to-date can inform labour market transitions of the future](#) focuses on U.K. data, but also compares it to EU data and discusses the different labour market methodologies for measuring and tracking green jobs. The authors conclude that more information and deeper analysis is needed , especially regarding the educational needs of specific regions and occupations. An 8-page [Policy Brief](#) distills the policy applications of the analysis, concluding that green jobs provide good quality employment in Europe and in the UK, where they pay higher wages and are at lower risk of automation than non-green jobs, especially for middle- and low-skilled workers. The Brief notes that some groups, especially women and young people, are underrepresented. It concludes that policymakers need to focus on building the skills needed in the net-zero transition, and target transition policies to address regional and demographic imbalances.

This research comes as the government has a stated goal to reach 2 million green jobs by 2030, and to do so, has initiated a [Green Jobs Task Force](#), and a multitude of studies, plans and consultations. Some sense and summary of all these comes in the [Green Jobs Report](#) released by the U.K. Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee on October 25. It is the result of a

consultation process which received 65 submissions. Amongst the recommendations: based on the recent failure of the government's Green Homes Grant voucher scheme, it is clear that the Government urgently needs to set out a retrofit skills strategy.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Green Jobs](#), [green skills](#), [Job Quality](#), [Labour Market Planning](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New website launched to promote greener international trade agreements

Posted on **November 10, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

[GreenNewTrade.org](#) is a new website aimed at climate justice activists and the general public, describing past and current trade challenges to “Green New Deal–type policies”, and calling for changes to trade rules. For Canadians, the most famous such international trade dispute occurred when Japan and the EU challenged the domestic content provisions in Ontario's Green Energy Act – and *in 2013, the World Trade Organization ruled against Ontario*. There have also been numerous challenges under the investor–state dispute settlement (ISDS) rules of NAFTA and the successor United States Canada Mexico Trade Agreement (USMCA) – the website gives the example of US coal mining company [Westmoreland](#), which in 2018 challenged Alberta's planned phaseout of coal-fired power plants.

For an introduction to the issues, see [Beyond NAFTA 2.0: A Trade Agenda for People and Planet](#), a report released in 2019 by some of the same groups behind this new website: the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Institute for Policy Studies, and the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung–New York. A [blog post](#) at the Business and Human Rights Resources website describes [GreenNewTrade.org](#).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [International Trade](#), [Investor-State Dispute Settlement \(ISDS\)](#), [NAFTA](#), [Ontario Green Energy Act](#), [World Trade Organization](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada signs on to COP26 Just Transition Declaration

Posted on **November 9, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the end of week one of the Conference of the Parties in Glasgow (COP26), Canada signed on to the [Just Transition Declaration](#), along with 14 other countries, including the UK, USA, much of

the EU, and New Zealand. The declaration cites the preamble from the Paris Agreement and the 2015 ILO Guidelines for Just Transition, and states that signatories recognize their role to ensure a transition that is

“fully inclusive and benefits the most vulnerable through the more equitable distribution of resources, enhanced economic and political empowerment, improved health and wellbeing, resilience to shocks and disasters and access to skills development and employment opportunities. This should also display: a commitment to gender equality, racial equality and social cohesion; protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples; disability inclusion; intergenerational equity and young people; the promotion of women and girls; marginalised persons’ leadership and involvement in decision-making; and recognition of the value of their knowledge and leadership; and support for the collective climate action of diverse social groups. Social dialogue as well as rights at work are indispensable building blocks of sustainable development and must be at the centre of policies for strong, sustainable, and inclusive growth and development.

We recognise that a just transition is not the replacement of one industry with another, but a diversification toward a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive economy overall. Lastly, we recognise the importance of facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, through social dialogue, to ensure that no one is left behind, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Declaration provides more details about each of the objectives, and concludes with a statement that: “We intend to include information on Just Transition efforts, where relevant, in our national Biennial Transparency Reports in the context of reporting on our policies and measures to achieve our Nationally Determined Contributions.” The ILO, which played a key role in drafting the Declaration, released its own press release and summary [here](#). Reaction from the International Trades Union Congress (ITUC) is [here](#) .

Note that much more was said about Just Transition at COP26 – much of it at side events or smaller panels. One example, the COP26 panel on Just Transition in the Steel and Energy Industry on November 8, available on YouTube [here](#). This panel was the occasion for the launch of ***Preparing for a Just Transition: Meeting green skill needs for a sustainable steel industry***, a report written by Community Union and researchers from the Cardiff University School of Sciences. The report provides an overview of decarbonization in the steel industry, but most importantly reports on the views of 100 steelworkers in the U.K., revealing that 92% feel a green transition is necessary, 78% feel it will bring a radical transformation to their industry, and 55% feel they already possess the skills necessary to make the transition. 79% had not been consulted by their employers, leading to a recommendation for more worker voice. The survey also delved into what skills would be needed.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [attitudes of union members](#), [attitudes of workers](#), [COP26](#), [Just Transition](#), [steel industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

CCPA's Alternative Federal Budget 2022 calls for a fossil fuel moratorium and maps out a generous Transition plan for Canadian workers

Posted on **November 9, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As it has for 26 years, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released its Alternative Federal Budget, offering progressive, costed policy choices for Canada, along with a plan to pay for them. This year's AFB, released on November 9, is titled: ***Mission Critical: A Just and Equitable Recovery***, which focuses on key issues which include: strengthening and expanding the existing health care system, implementing universal public child care, reforming Canada's income security system, addressing the housing crisis, and moving forward on reconciliation with First Nations peoples. Climate action is addressed in Chapter 7, "Physical Infrastructure for People, Biodiversity and Planet", and relates to Chapter 6, "A Vision for Job Creation and Decent Work".

Regarding climate action policies, the CCPA states "Building on the government's own commitments to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, this AFB ramps up the stringency of environmental regulations. It also takes a more hands-on approach to transitioning the economy away from the production and consumption of fossil fuels." Specifically, the document calls for an immediate moratorium on new fossil fuel extraction projects, and a phase-out of coal, oil and natural gas production for fuel by 2040. The ensuing disruption would require a permanent, independent Just Transition Commission, to oversee and co-ordinate the federal government's just transition agenda for all sectors (not just fossil fuels), and to develop regional transition road maps. For workers affected by fossil fuel closures (and the disruption to ancillary businesses in those communities), the AFB calls for "generous and predictable benefits", financed by a budget allocation of \$100 million per year over 20 years (the estimated lifetime of Canada's fossil fuel phaseout). This translates into a \$2,000 monthly Just Transition Benefit to offset their income loss for as long as it takes them to find re-training and/or re-employment. For workers who are near retirement and cannot reasonably retrain for a new career, this benefit bridges their income till their pensions begin. The Commission would be supported by a \$5 million per year budget, and would include the a wide variety of stakeholders, including labour unions, civil society groups, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, business associations, independent experts, and public servants from governments of all levels.

Other notable climate-related proposals: 1. Adjust the existing revenue-recycling formula for the national carbon pricing system by reallocating the majority of federal revenue away from middle-to-high-income households and toward emission reduction initiatives in the provinces where revenue is generated. 2. Establish a new federal economic diversification crown corporation which would prioritize direct public ownership of new infrastructure, funded by \$15 billion per year over five years to allow it to invest at the required scale. 3. Reconstitute the Canada Infrastructure Bank to

become a fully publicly financed bank with a mandate to invest in publicly owned and publicly operated infrastructure (and to require Community Benefits Agreements in those projects). The new CIB would also provide low-cost loans to municipalities, Indigenous governments, and other public bodies to scale up important infrastructure projects that are in the public interest, and would include the new Economic Diversification Crown Corporation.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alternative Federal Budget](#), [Canada Infrastructure Bank](#), [community benefits agreements](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [phase-out of fossil fuels](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Report on Canada's low carbon future makes recommendations for community and worker transitions

Posted on **November 1, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report from the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices analyzes the trends in the global transition to a low carbon economy, and warns that 800,000 Canadian jobs could be at risk if we fail to support strategic industries. The report states that Canada is particularly vulnerable to market disruptions because over 70 per cent of our goods exports and over 60 per cent of foreign direct investment in Canada are in vulnerable sectors – not only fossil fuels, but also such as auto parts and vehicles, minerals, and energy intensive industries such as steel and aluminum.

The report, ***Sink or Swim: : Transforming Canada's economy for a global low-carbon future*** is a business analysis with the overall message that transition offers opportunity, and Canada needs to act more quickly to “catch the wave”. Besides examining the benefits and sectors of opportunity in the low carbon transition, the the report includes a recommendation to: “Develop local and people-focused transition plans that drive new areas of job creation, improve the resilience of the workforce and empower Indigenous economic leadership.” More specifically, the report concludes with : “ Federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments should work together to develop detailed transition plans to support workers and communities and improve overall well-being. Transition plans should aim to attract new sources of growth and jobs, support worker transition and skill development, improve youth education outcomes and readiness, ensure alignment with Sustainable Development Goals, and empower Indigenous economic leadership.”

The Sink or Swim discussion starts from a fundamental statement that “achieving success is also about more than supporting affected workers in transition-vulnerable companies or sectors. Success will come from generating strong and inclusive economic growth that improves the wellbeing of all Canadians.” The ensuing discussion recognizes that multinational companies have weak connections and relationships to local communities, making them more likely to

relocate than to re-invest. Using census data, it identifies 55 communities of 10,000 people or more that have more than 3% of their workforce employed in transition-vulnerable sectors, highlighting the Wood Buffalo area in the oil sands of Alberta, and Thompson Manitoba, a nickel-mining community. The report offers recommendations for communities, focusing on the critical areas of infrastructure investment, financing, and the need for local capacity to analyze labour markets and financial opportunities— using the examples of the InvestEU advisory hub and the Colorado Office of Just Transition.

Regarding workers, the report documents the increased vulnerability of youth, minorities, and especially Indigenous workers. It sees the solution for all as improved education and training opportunities – describing programs in B.C. , the North, and for Indigenous workers. The report also states: “all post-secondary education programs—including trades, engineering, science, economics, and business—can support transition success by incorporating future skills and knowledge needs into their curricula and programming.”

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New Nova Scotia legislation enshrines climate goals, with principles of equity and Mi’kmaq concept of Netukulimk

Posted on **November 1, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Nova Scotia’s Minister of Environment introduced the ***Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*** to the Legislature on October 27 – the press release is [here](#). It builds on a previous Bill which was never enacted, with the important distinction that the EGCCRAct enshrines climate action goals and timelines into law. The new legislation follows a **public consultation** in 2021, and is built on four principles: equity, sustainable development, a circular economy, and “Netukulimk” (a Mi’kmaq word defined as “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”).

The specific goals include: reducing total GHG emissions to at least 53% below 2005 levels by 2030; ensuring at least 30% of new passenger vehicles are zero-emissions by 2030;a requirement that any new build or major retrofit in government buildings, including schools and hospitals, that enters the planning stage after 2022, be net-zero energy performance and climate resilient; decrease greenhouse gas emissions across Government-owned buildings by 75% by the year 2035; phase out of coal-fired electricity generation by 2030, with 80% of electricity supplied

by renewable energy by 2030. The problematic issue of forestry policy is finally addressed with a deadline of 2023 to implement the ecological forestry approach for Crown lands, as recommended in the 2018 Lahey report, “An Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia”.

Regarding equity, the government will “initiate in 2022 ongoing work with racialized and marginalized communities to create a sustained funding opportunity for climate change action and support for community-based solutions and policy engagement.” The legislation mandates a Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund to be established.

The Act mandates a Strategic Plan titled “Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth” to be tabled by December 31, 2022, with annual progress reports and a complete review in 5 years.

Reaction to the legislation, with a goal-by-goal analysis is available from Nova Scotia’s Ecology Action Centre, is [here](#). One of the sector-specific pieces is a call for ***an end to oil and gas production and a Just Transition for workers***. Despite the fact that there is currently no oil and gas production in Nova Scotia, the EAC highlights the danger that the **Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB)** issued a call for bids in May 2021.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [First Nations](#), [Ghg emissions reduction targets](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [offshore oil and gas](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Almost \$40 trillion divested from fossil fuels by 2021, with University of Toronto joining the long list of institutions in October

Posted on **October 28, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Time to coincide with COP26, ***Divest Invest 2021: A Decade of Progress towards a Just Climate Future*** was released by Stand.earth on October 26. It reports that “there are now 1,485 institutions publicly committed to at least some form of fossil fuel divestment, representing an enormous \$39.2 trillion of assets under management.” The report provides a timeline and summary of the major institutions which have divested, and includes brief case studies of South Africa and Harvard University. It argues that divestment is more impactful than shareholder engagement, and summarizes the impact of the shift of capital on the fossil fuel industry. Finally, the report discusses how that capital can be directed to renewables and to Just Transition, highlighting the cases of the Navajo Power in the U.S. and Frontier Markets in India. Accompanying the report is [a database](#) with much more information about individual institutions.

The report states: “Major new divestment commitments from iconic institutions have arrived in a rush over just a few months in late 2021, including Harvard University, Dutch and Canadian pension fund giants PME and CDPQ, French public bank La Banque Postale, the U.S. city of Baltimore, and the Ford and MacArthur Foundations.” Add to that list, Canada’s largest university, the ***University of Toronto, which announced*** on October 27 that the University of Toronto Asset Management Corporation (UTAM) – which manages \$4.0-billion – “will divest from all direct investments in fossil fuel companies within the next 12 months, and divest from indirect investments, typically held through pooled and commingled investment vehicles, by no later than 2030, and sooner if possible. UTAM will also allocate 10 per cent of its endowment portfolio to sustainable and low-carbon investments by 2025, representing an initial commitment of \$400 million, and is committing to achieve net zero carbon emissions associated with U of T’s endowment by no later than 2050.” Many of the same details were provided in the U of T President’s Letter to “the University of Toronto Community”, ***here***, which also describes the newly-announced goal of a **“climate-positive” St. George campus by 2050**, and defends why it has taken the U of T so long to act after the 2015 ***report of the President’s Advisory Committee on Divestment from Fossil Fuels***.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Divestment, Fossil Fuel Divestment, Universities, University of Toronto** | **Leave a reply**

Canada heads to COP26 with a new, activist Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Posted on **October 27, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Prime Minister Trudeau announced his appointments to Cabinet on October 26, and one of the strongest symbolic appointments was that of Steven Guilbeault as the new Minister of Environment and Climate Change. It appears that Trudeau did not (yet) follow the demands in ***Unifor’s October 22 letter to the Prime Minister***, which included “Establish a Just Transition Ministry and Just Transition Fund, partially financed through levies on large industrial emitters, with the mandate to support workers affected by climate-related job displacements through enhanced income insurance, pension bridging, severance pay, retraining and relocation support, and local just transition centres.” However, the new appointments sent an unmistakable signal, as described in the *National Observer* article ***“Cabinet shuffle signals support for climate, not oil and gas”***. The previous ECC Minister, Johnathan Wilkinson, was shifted to the ministry of Natural Resources – replacing Seamus O’Regan, who had been accused of a too-cozy relationship with the fossil fuel industry which falls under the Natural Resources portfolio. The *National Observer* article highlights the continued importance of Wilkinson on the climate change file.

Mitchell Beer provides the background to Steven Guilbeault in “[Guilbeault to Environment, Wilkinson to Natural Resources as ‘PM in a Hurry’ Names New Cabinet](#)” (*Energy Mix*, Oct. 26). The article includes reaction from environmental activists – many of whom have worked alongside Guilbeault in his earlier life as a Greenpeace campaigner ([when he was arrested for scaling the CN Tower in Toronto](#)), co-founder of non-profit [Équiterre](#) in Quebec, and as a member of the government’s [2018 advisory panel on climate change](#), before he was elected to Parliament in 2019. An exemplary quote, from Stand.earth Climate Finance Director Richard Brooks, “Hoping my old friend @s_guilbeault will remain true to his roots—and lead Canada in upping its climate ambition and more importantly its actions...” Yet as Keith Stewart of Greenpeace points out in their [press reaction](#), a whole of government approach will be needed. Stewart hopes it will lead to “greater cooperation on climate action across departments, as the minister of Natural Resources has in the past acted as the chief advocate for the oil industry at the Cabinet table.” As indicated in the reaction from *Macleans magazine*, “[Trudeau sends a signal to Alberta. Cue the squirming](#)” (Oct. 26), Wilkinson and NRCan are expected to smooth over the sharper edges of a potentially rocky relationship with Alberta: “A major test, past Glasgow, will be how Wilkinson and Guilbeault handle their government’s buzzy term: “just transition.”... It will fall in large part to Steven Guilbeault to maintain a steady and reassuring tone that this isn’t the case. His past doesn’t suggest he’s perfectly suited for this task...”

Reaction from the fossil fuel industry and Premier Jason Kenney is predictably negative, as reported in CBC’s story, “[Kenney says longtime activist’s appointment as environment minister sends ‘very problematic’ message](#)”. The CBC report quotes an Alberta academic who calls Guilbeault’s appointment “a finger in the eye to everything that Kenney has done.” A brief article from Reuters sums up the hostile reaction of the fossil fuel industry in the language of its headline “[Trudeau roils Canada’s oil patch naming Greenpeace activist as climate chief](#)” (Reuters, Oct. 26).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Environment Canada](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C.’s new Roadmap to 2030 disappoints critics despite new measures announced

Posted on **October 26, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

[CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#) is the new climate strategy document released by the B.C. government on October 25. The [press release](#) summarizes the framework of eight pathways to action: Low Carbon Energy; Transportation; Buildings ; Communities; Industry, including Oil and Gas ; Forest Bioeconomy; Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries; and Negative Emissions Technologies. Some of the flagship proposals include an increase to the carbon price; stronger

regulations for methane emissions (by 2035); new requirements to make all new buildings zero-carbon by 2030; 100% adoption of zero-emission vehicles by 2030 and new ZEV targets for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles. What's missing? Glaringly, no reduction of fossil fuel subsidies, no end to fracking of Liquefied Natural Gas.

A **reaction from Sierra Club B.C.** states: "While the Roadmap outlines strong steps to tackle emissions from transportation and buildings, key issues that remain unaddressed include fossil fuel subsidies, uncounted forest emissions, and fracked LNG..... Of significant concern to us is that the Roadmap focuses mainly on 2030 targets, nine years away, and does not include binding targets and pathways to set or achieve milestones in the intervening years. B.C.'s emissions have increased every year from 2015 to 2019; this calls for immediate action to curb emissions in the short, medium and long term." A more outraged reaction comes from Seth Klein in a Climate Emergency Unit blog titled, "**From leader to follower: B.C.'s updated climate plan – its 'CleanBC Roadmap to 2030' – is not an emergency plan**", which bemoans the lack of urgency and detail in the new Roadmap. Other criticisms are summarized in "**Critics aren't buying B.C.'s new climate plan**" (*The Tyee*, Oct. 26) highlighting that it will be impossible to meet GHG emissions reduction targets while supporting the LNG industry in the province.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green Building](#), [Liquefied Natural Gas](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Renewable energy jobs continue steady growth to 12 million jobs worldwide, but more government intervention is recommended

Posted on **October 26, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In its first annual review published in 2013, the International Renewable Energy Association (IRENA) estimated 7.3 million people were directly and indirectly employed in the industry in 2012. According to the latest newly-released edition ***Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2021***, that number has grown to 12 million people employed in 2020. Solar PV, both large and small-scale, is the largest sector, providing 4 million jobs. Wind energy now employs 1.25 million people, with an increasing number of people in operations and maintenance and in offshore wind energy sector. Only a fifth of wind energy workers are women, compared to 32% women in the whole renewable energy sector. In addition to detailed information about jobs, skills, and demographics, the report discusses policy needs, particularly for a just energy transition, and highlights IRENA's modeling of the employment implications of energy transition scenarios to 2050.

The report concludes with the policy discussion of what kinds of jobs and skills will be required, the need for decent jobs, and for urgency: “A speedy and co-ordinated approach requires governments to take on a much more proactive role, acting in the public interest and safeguarding broad social imperatives. This may occur through regulations and incentives, public investment strategies, and public ownership of transition-related assets and infrastructure (both at national and community levels).”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#), [Women in Renewable Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green investment brings greater job creation, but job quality not guaranteed

Posted on **October 26, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Green Jobs Advantage: How Climate-friendly Investments Are Better Job Creators was co-published by the International Trade Union Confederation, the World Resources Institute and the New Climate Economy, and released in mid-October. The paper reviews a dozen studies from 2009 to 2020 and compares the job creation projections in Brazil, China, Indonesia, Germany, South Africa, South Korea, the United States and globally. The analysis of these studies compares near-term job effects from clean energy versus fossil fuels, public transportation versus roads, electric vehicles versus internal combustion engine vehicles, and nature-based solutions versus fossil fuels – with the conclusion that greener investments create more jobs, dollar for dollar. The report also addresses the issue of job quality, and notes that in developing countries, many jobs are informal and temporary, with limited access to work security, safety, or social protections. In developed countries, “new green jobs may have wages and benefits that aren’t as high as those in traditional sectors where, in many cases, workers have been able to fight for job quality through decades of collective action.” One conclusion: “Government investment should come with conditions that ensure fair wages and benefits, work security, safe working conditions, opportunities for training and advancement, the right to organize, and accessibility to all.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [employment impacts](#), [Job Creation](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Worker’s events at COP26: virtual and in-person

Posted on **October 26, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **UN Conference of the Parties (COP26)** in Glasgow begins on October 31 and runs until November 12, with the world's media in attendance to chronicle if the high expectations are being met. A good source of news from a Canadian perspective is Canada's National Observer, which will send reporters to Glasgow, and whose coverage has already begun, [here](#).

Some news from a worker's point of view:

Climate Jobs: Building a workforce for the climate emergency will be released to coincide with COP26, by the Campaign against Climate Change, a coalition of U.K. unions. As of October 26, two chapters of the new report are available for free download: **Warm homes, healthy workplaces: climate jobs in buildings** and **Creating a green, affordable and accessible network for all: climate jobs in transport**. The new report updates their 2014 report, *One Million Climate Jobs*.

Another U.K. organization, the **COP26 Coalition**, is a broader, civil society coalition which includes environment and development NGOs, labour unions, grassroots community campaigns, faith groups, youth groups, migrant and racial justice networks. Their statement of demands is [here](#). The Coalition is organizing a **Global Day of Climate Justice** on November 6 – with events in Canada happening **in Toronto** and in **Quebec City**, along with a related event in **Sherbrooke Quebec** on Nov. 5th.

In addition, COP26 Coalition has organized a **People's Climate Justice Summit** in Glasgow, composed of 150 sessions which will focus on indigenous struggles, racial justice, youth issues, and worker and labour union perspectives. Many, but not all, worker-related sessions will be held on November 8 as a "Just Transition Hub" – a full day of sessions hosted by the Friends of the Earth Scotland, Just Transition Partnership, Platform, STUC, TUC and War on Want. The full program, with the ability to register is [here](#): those unable to travel to Glasgow can register as "Online- only" to receive a Zoom link for a livestream of some of the sessions. The online program includes the opening panel for the Just Transition Hub: **"Here and Everywhere: Building our Power"**, to be led by Asad Rehman, (War on Want), Sean Sweeney, (TUED), Roz Foyer, (STUC), and Denise Christie, (FBU). Other sessions available online include **"UK climate jobs rooted in global solidarity and climate justice"** and **"Just Transition in Latin America, from Decarbonization to Transformation"**.

In-person only sessions, which tend to have a U.K. focus, include: **"Lessons from the Frontline: Climate crisis resistance from around the world"**; **"Are green jobs great jobs, or are green jobs rubbish jobs?"**; **"The Lucas Plan for Climate? How workers are fighting to future-proof industry"**; **"Geared Up: Campaigns for Greener Transport"**; **"Air tight: Campaigns for home retrofits"**; **"Organising the unorganised: tactics and strategies for power in new industries"**; and **"Changing workplaces, changing jobs: organising for power in unionised workplaces"** – a training session led by Prospect union. Other sessions, outside of the Just Transition Hub, (in-person only), include **"Trade Unions and Climate Action"**, a training session led by the Ella Baker School of Organizing and **"International Trade Union Forum on Social and Ecological Transitions: what's next?"**, reporting on the International Trade Union Forum on

Ecological and Social Transitions which took place for 6 days during June 2021, with more than 140 organizations from about 60 countries.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [COP26](#), [international labour activities](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Pension fund managers pledge climate action; Unions can push for more

Posted on **October 26, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the run-up to COP26, and on the same day that Canada's **Big Six Banks joined** the United Nations Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), Canadian institutional investors and some of its pension fund managers also hit the news, by releasing a new ***Canadian Investor Statement on Climate Change***. Coordinated by the Responsible Investment Association (RIA), the statement signed on October 25 states: “We recognize that a transition to a net-zero economy will involve a major transformation of sectors and industries. We encourage all companies and stakeholders to facilitate a just transition that does not leave workers or communities behind. We also recognize that the financing required for transition activities and climate solutions presents an investment opportunity..... We further recognize that Indigenous Peoples have managed collective wealth for millennia – including lands, waters, andWe support a transition to a net-zero economy informed by Indigenous perspectives, that supports Indigenous economic opportunities, and encourages business practices that align with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).”

The Statement sets out specific expectations for investees which include just transition, and pledges five actions for the investment community, such as integrating climate-related risks and opportunities into the investment processes and developing a climate action plan to achieve net-zero by 2050. Further, the 36 signatories pledge to “ Ensure that any climate-related policy advocacy we undertake supports a just transition and the ambition of achieving global net-zero emissions by 2050 or sooner, and engage with our industry associations to encourage climate advocacy efforts that are consistent with these goals.”

Pension funds which have signed on to the Statement (so far) include: British Columbia Investment Management Corporation, British Columbia Municipal Pension Board of Trustees, British Columbia Public Service Pension Board of Trustees, Canada Post Corporation Pension Plan, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, Ontario Pension Board, Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada, University of Toronto Asset Management (UTAM), and the University Pension Plan.

“Only Labor Can Force Canadian Pension Funds to Divest From Oil “ (Jacobin, October 19) puts this lofty new institutional Statement in perspective, as it takes a more critical look at one of the leading pension fund managers, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, and its September **announcement that it would quit all oil production investments at the end of 2022**. After also highlighting examples of the fossil and mineral exploration investments of some of Canada’s major pension funds, the article concludes: “ ‘Financial sustainability’ — despite the Caisse’s announcement — will continue to take precedence over climate justice.”

Thus, the main point of the Jacobin article is to urge unions to take action:

“...the unions who represent the beneficiaries of these pension funds can fight to make sure that the deferred wages of workers are used for the common good. In many cases, unions appoint trustees to boards of investment funds. If the labor movement chose to organize around these issues, it would be a game changer. Public sector funds are subject to legislation and can be reformed through political action. Although they’ve been carefully designed to be free of democratic accountability, they are not immune to external pressure. Sustained organizing by unions and their members can lead to greater amounts of worker control over the use to which these large sums of money are put.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [financial institutions](#), [labour union policies](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Quebec bans fossil fuel exploration

Posted on **October 20, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a speech to the Quebec National Assembly on October 19, Premier François Legault **announced**: “the Government of Quebec has decided to definitively renounce the extraction of hydrocarbons on its territory. We must therefore ... capitalize on our strengths by fundamentally transforming our economy.” The move was not unexpected: an **article in the Montreal Gazette** in September forecast announcement, and linked it to the legal action brought by Utica Resources against the province when it refused an application for exploration in the Gaspé region. Although Quebec does not have a large fossil fuel extraction industry, it is the second largest Canadian oil and gas processor outside of Alberta.

Greenpeace Canada provides a **compilation in of reactions** from many of the grassroots groups in Quebec who have worked and lobbied for years for this result. Greenpeace also released a statement on October 20, titled **“Many environmental groups and citizens call for no compensation for oil and gas”**, which references a **May 2021 report** from the Center québécois du droit de l’environnement, which concluded that the government has the legal authority to legislate this ban without compensating fossil fuel companies. A Greenpeace spokesperson states further : “Rather, it is Quebec society that should demand compensation from oil and gas

companies for the floods, heat waves and forest fires that we are suffering from as a result of climate change.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [fossil fuel industry](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour and climate activists make recommendations for fossil fuel workers in new joint report

Posted on **October 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At a press conference on October 13, representatives of Climate Action Network Canada, Blue Green Canada, United Steelworkers, and Unifor launched a new report, ***Facing Fossil Fuels' Future: Challenges and Opportunities for Workers in Canada's Energy and Labour Transitions***. The report considers the challenges to the fossil fuel industry, including automation, and projects that 56,000 alternative jobs will need to be created for current Canadian oil and gas workers in the next decade. The report offers seven recommendations for a Just Transition, building on policy proposals from Canada's **Just Transition Task Force for Coal Workers and Communities**, the **Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec**, and Unifor (whose most recent statement is their submission to the Just Transition consultation process [here](#).) Key recommendations include: “Recognizing the expertise of workers, through consultation with workers and communities, Canada must create Just Transition policy / legislation that holds the government accountable to developing transition strategies. Similar policy / legislation should be adopted by all provinces with an emphasis on the oil and gas producing provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.” Funding is seen to come from Covid recovery funds and the Infrastructure Bank, with another recommendation: “Tie public investments to employers meeting conditions on job quality, including pay, access to training, job security, union access and representation through mandatory joint committees.”

Summaries of ***Facing Fossil Fuels' Future*** appear in the **press release** from Climate Action Network, and in ***“With Canadian fossil fuel jobs about to be cut in half, it's time to talk about a just transition”*** (*National Observer*, Oct. 15). The latter article highlights the enhanced impact of the bringing labour unions and climate activists together, and also emphasizes that workers must be included in all transition plans, using the cautionary tale of Algoma Steel. As explained in ***“Why Mike Da Prat boycotted the prime minister's Algoma Steel announcement”*** (*Soo Today*, July 6 2021) the union was not adequately consulted on transition planning when the government awarded \$420 million in July 2021 to help Algoma Steel transition from coal to greener, electric-arc furnace production.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Algoma Steel](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [green steel](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) |

Canadians and Calgarians support Just Transition, end to fossil fuel subsidies in public opinion polls

Posted on **October 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Citizens of Calgary voted in municipal elections on October 18 and returned the city's first female mayor, Jyoti Gondek . As **summarized by CBC**, she promised to address “inclusive economic recovery, social disparities within communities and take action to address climate change.” In the lead-up to Calgary's elections, [Alberta Ecotrust Foundation](#), [Calgary Climate Hub](#) and [Clean Energy Canada](#) commissioned a poll, conducted in August 2021, with **results announced** on September 8th. **The results show** that 69% of Calgarians are concerned about climate change impacts. Some specific highlights:

73% agreed with the statement: “ It is important to recognize the future of fossil fuels and invest in transitioning oil and gas workers to other industries.”

70% agreed that “The transition to renewable energy will ultimately improve the health and well-being of my family and me.”

67% agreed that “Calgary should focus its economic diversification efforts in becoming a leader in addressing climate change”.

And when asked to choose between a path to more oil and gas investment or a clean energy path, 49% agreed with the statement: “The signal from investors and financial markets is clear as they divest of oil & gas assets, and Calgary should invest in the transition toward clean energy.” (compared to 38% who favoured the old oil and gas economy).

Environmental concerns were high, including: 79% who expressed concern about poor air quality from wildfire smoke, 75% concerned with protecting ecological sensitive areas, and 73% concerned with the increasing number of extreme weather events.

Across Canada:

Closely following the federal election on September 20, an Abacus poll was taken in the first week of October 2021, to measure expectations of the newly elected government. Results were released on October 14th, with a **press release** from the new activist coalition, **No More Delays**. Some highlights:

65% of all respondents want “a swift delivery on the promise of a Just Transition plan to help workers thrive in the net-zero economy” (with almost 50% of Conservative voters in agreement);

64% want the government to establish a cap on oil and gas emissions (even amongst Conservatives, this had 47% support);

62% want the government to establish a plan to stop taxpayer subsidies going to the oil and gas industry

The **more detailed poll results are here**. **No More Delays** is a new initiative for climate action, supported by SumofUs, Stand.earth, Climate Emergency Unit, Équiterre, Greenpeace Canada, Council of Canadians, Citizens Climate Lobby Canada, Climate Reality Project Canada, Leadnow and Climate Action Network Canada – Réseau action climat Canada (CAN-Rac Canada).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Calgary, climate change policies, Fossil Fuel Subsidies, Just Transition, public opinion polls** | [Leave a reply](#)

Historical CO2 emissions: Canada tops the list as the highest per capita emitter

Posted on **October 14, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Which countries are historically responsible for climate change? is a new analysis released by Carbon Brief on October 5, and Canada scores high: #10 in the world for total historical emissions, and #1 as the worst offender per capita (calculated as cumulative emissions in each year divided by the current population – which implicitly assigns responsibility for the past to those alive today). Time to finally lay to rest that old chestnut that Canada’s contribution to the climate crisis is relatively insignificant, and we should wait till the bigger countries act to cut our own emissions.

Those bigger countries don’t escape blame either: overwhelmingly, the U.S. continues to rank as the #1 country for CO2 emissions since 1850, responsible for 20% of the global total. In comparison, the next highest-ranked countries are China (11%), and Russia (7%). Calculations of rankings are complex and subject to the mists of time, given that the calculations date back to 1850, and the inclusion of deforestation and land use emissions for the first time has also made a difference – bringing Brazil and Indonesia into the top 10 emitters, and raising Australia to 13th rank, from 16th.

Media summaries include: “***The countries most responsible for climate crisis revealed***” reposted from *The Guardian* by the *National Observer*; “***Any way you slice it, Canada is one of***

the worst emitters on the planet” (*National Observer*, Oct. 7) ; and “*Historical emissions tally paints clearer picture of climate responsibility”* (*Energy Mix*, Oct. 12).

It is significant that this analysis was released in the **Carbon Brief series of articles on Climate Justice**, and in the lead-up to COP26 . Historical responsibility for the climate crisis and the North-South divide will be a key issue at COP26, as briefly discussed in “**Rich Economies Face Demands for Cash to Fix Climate Damage**” (*Bloomberg News*, Oct. 11), and foreshadowed by the “**fiery” speech about global inequality** by U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres in September. Shortly afterwards, U.S. president Biden addressed the U.N. General Assembly and **promised to double U.S. climate financing aid to \$11bn by 2024**. According to “**Climate Finance Faces \$75-Billion Gap as COP 26 Looms 1,000 Hours Away**” (*The Energy Mix*, Sept. 21), Canada has one of the worst records for living up to its climate financing pledges, with an average contribution only 17% of its fair share in 2017 and 2018.

An article in *Ricochet* summarizes the Canadian record in “**Repaying our climate debt**” (May 2021), with a focus on the African operations of Canadian countries. The *Ricochet* article cites other recent research on climate justice: “**Quantifying national responsibility for climate breakdown: an equality-based attribution approach for carbon dioxide emissions in excess of the planetary boundary**” in (*The Lancet Planetary Health*, September 2020) and **Confronting Carbon Inequality** (Oxfam, Stockholm Environment Institute, Sept. 2020), which concluded that consumption by the richest 10% of the world’s population accounts for 24.5% of global emissions today, and half of those emissions are attributed to Canada, the U.S. and the EU.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada, Climate Justice, COP26, GHG emissions, loss and damage** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada joins Global Methane Pledge and ups the target for fossil-related reductions

Posted on **October 13, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With a **government announcement** on October 11, Canada joined twenty-three other countries and signed on to the **Global Methane Pledge**, launched by the U.S. and the U.K. on September 18. By signing on, Canada pledges to reduce all methane emissions by 30% from 2020 levels by 2030, and as described by *the Washington Post* (Oct. 11), Canada’s participation is significant because it is one of the world’s top 20 methane-emitting countries. Nine of the twenty have now signed on to the Global Pledge, but notably, Russia, China, India and Brazil have not.

The existing Canadian target for reducing methane emissions from the oil and gas sector is a reduction of 40–45 percent below 2012 levels by 2025. According to the **October 11 press**

release, that will increase, with a commitment "... to developing a plan to reduce methane emissions across the broader Canadian economy and to reducing oil and gas methane emissions by at least 75 percent below 2012 levels by 2030". It is noteworthy that the Minister also states: "our approach will include regulations", since the government has been criticized for relying more on taxpayer-funded incentives than regulation – as in "**Canada supports global pledge to slash oil and gas methane**" (Oct. 13). That article quotes Julia Levine of Environmental Defence, who states: "What we see in Canada is that despite the fact negative or low-cost (methane reductions) could be achieved through regulations, the federal government last year set up a **\$750-million emission reduction fund** (that) is paying companies to reduce their methane emissions" "These are technologies that allow companies to have less leakage and, therefore, more product they can sell" So we're subsidizing their ability to generate more profit from their products."

Canada's 75% pledge related to the oil and gas industry matches the target called for by the International Energy Agency in **Curtailing Methane Emissions from Fossil Fuel Operations**, released on October 7. But as pointed out by another IEA report, **Driving down methane leaks from the oil and gas industry** (January 2021), targets can only work if measurement of leaks is accurate. As scientists have proven, **Canada's methane leaks have been under-reported in the past**.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada, Climate change policy, Ghg emissions reduction targets, Methane Emissions** | [Leave a reply](#)

Postal banking services begin in Nova Scotia, Alberta and the U.S.

Posted on **October 12, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) announced that Canada Post will launch postal banking, with pilot sites opening in Nova Scotia in September and in Alberta in October. The goal is to offer the new financial services in over 249 Canada Post locations before the end of 2021. (**Financial Services Update #4**, July 2021). This brings to fruition an initiative which began with the **2012-2016 collective agreement** between CUPW and Canada Post, and its Appendix T: Service Expansion and Innovation and Change Committee. That Appendix secured the right "to establish and monitor pilot projects which will test the viability of the proposals" to expand services, as envisaged in the **Delivering Community Power campaign**. That larger campaign, which still continues, is meant to green Canada Post, and includes postal banking, conversion of the postal fleet to electric vehicles, provision of electric vehicle charging stations at Canada Post outlets, and more. The test program offers unsecured loans, and will run in collaboration with TD Bank. CUPW continues to work to establish a postal banking service independent of the big banks, as stated in **Financial Services Update #5** (Sept. 2021). The arguments for postal banking appear **on the CUPW website**, and in **Why Canada Needs Postal Banking**, a research paper published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2013.

The U.S. Postal Service also launched a pilot project to offer banking services in four cities in September, allowing customers to cash payroll or business checks of up to \$500 and have the money put onto a single-use gift card, which the postal service already sold. The back story is described in [“USPS begins postal banking pilot”](#) (*American Prospect*, October 11), and in [“Postal Banking Could Become a Reality Even Without Congress. Here’s How”](#) (*In these Times*, May 2018). As in Canada, the American Postal Workers Union negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement as part of its 2016 collective bargaining agreement, which called for a joint labor/management task force to consider pilot programs for opportunities to increase revenue – including two specific ideas: “modernization of money orders” and “expansion of international money transfers.” The APWU is an important member of the coalition, [Campaign for Postal Banking](#), whose website chronicles the U.S. campaign.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Canada Post](#), [postal banking](#), [postal workers](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Illinois sets U.S. standard for equity and labour standards in new Climate and Equitable Jobs Act

Posted on **October 6, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

[The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act](#) (SB2408) is a 900-page bill signed into law by the Governor of Illinois in September 2021. It is summarized by Natural Resources Defence in a blog titled [“Illinois Passes Nation-Leading, Equitable Climate Bill”](#), by David Roberts in his [new blog, Volts](#), and by the [Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition press release](#).

Why does David Roberts call it “one of the most environmentally ambitious, worker-friendly, justice-focused energy bills of any state in the country”? Some highlights: the CEJA requires Illinois to achieve a 100% zero-emissions power sector by 2045 (including their coal power plant), while encouraging electrification of transportation and buildings, and reforms to the utility rate structure. It increases the existing Solar for All funding (by 5 times) to help low-income families to switch to solar energy, creates a Green Bank to finance clean energy projects. For workers, the Act requires that all utility-scale renewable energy projects must use project-labor agreements, and all non-residential clean-energy projects must pay prevailing wages. Diversity hiring reports will be required to prove that projects have recruited qualified BIPOC candidates and apprentices. The Act also provides funds for 13 Clean Jobs Workforce Network Hubs across the state, to deliver workforce-development programs to low-income and underserved populations. According to David Roberts, “The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Department of Employment Security will work together to develop a “displaced worker bill of rights,” with \$40 million a year to go toward transition assistance for areas dependent on fossil fuel production or generation.”

The CEJA is a model not only for what it contains, but also how it was achieved. Roberts calls it “a model for how diverse stakeholders can reach consensus” and describes the years-long process in detail: “The state’s labor community was sensitive to the fact that it had largely been left out of the 2016 bill; the legislation contained no labor standards, and recent years have seen Illinois renewable energy projects importing cheaper out-of-state workforces. Labor didn’t want to get left behind in the state’s energy transition, so it organized a coalition of groups under the banner [Climate Jobs Illinois](#) and set about playing an active role in negotiations. Environmental and climate-justice groups organized as the [Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition](#). All the groups introduced energy bills of their own. And then they spent years banging their heads together. A special shout-out goes to the environmental-justice community in Illinois, which used three years of relentless grassroots organizing to build an incredible political force, without which the bill couldn’t have passed and wouldn’t have been as equity-focused.” The result, according to Roberts, “As far as I know, this gives Illinois the most stringent labor and equity requirements of any state clean energy program. Similar policies tying renewable energy projects to labor standards have passed in Connecticut, New York, and Washington, but no other state’s energy policy has as comprehensive a package of labor, diversity, and equity standards.”

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Illinois](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IndustriALL Europe launches Just Transition campaign

Posted on **October 5, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 23, the global labour federation IndustriALL issued a [press release](#) announcing that “IndustriAll Europe’s Executive Committee has agreed on a European campaign for a Just Transition for industrial workers.” From 25 October to 10 November, member organisations will hold a variety of national campaigns and events, which will be accompanied by intensified political lobbying at EU level and a pan-European social media campaign. The campaign is planned to extend beyond the two-week action, with a series of sectoral round table discussions at regional level and joint actions with IndustriALL Global in connection with COP26 in Glasgow. The political platform statement adopted by the European Executive Committee is titled ***Just Transition: ‘Nothing About Us, Without Us!***. It includes 5 demands, including the completion of “a clear, granular mapping of the employment consequences of a shift towards climate-neutral industries”, and a “European legal framework... to ensure workers have the right to co-decision during the transition in their workplaces and regions, strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining.”

A more complete statement of IndustriALL Europe’s priorities comes in the [Strategic Plan 2021-2023](#) from their Congress in summer 2021.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Europe](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [social dialogue](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

TUC recommendations to prevent carbon leakage of jobs and “future-proof” manufacturing

Posted on **October 5, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Safeguarding the UK’s manufacturing jobs with climate action: carbon leakage and jobs is a September Briefing paper from the U.K. Trades Union Congress. The report estimates that between 368,000 – 667,000 jobs could be offshored from Britain if industries fail to meet climate targets and the UK falls behind other countries on climate action. The regions most at risk are the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, and West Midlands; the industries with most jobs at stake are: iron and steel, glass and ceramics, and chemicals. The report outlines the actions needed to “future proof” British jobs, specifically: 1. Public investment, which the report states is too low, stating that the UK’s green recovery investment plans are just a quarter (24%) of France, a fifth (21%) of Canada, and 6% of the USA’s plans (when adjusted for population size). 2. Clear policies on decarbonisation across the economy – aligning actual plans with targets; and 3. Rules on local content – specifically, a local content requirement for offshore wind of at least 80%, with local supply chain commitments required and stringently enforced for all energy and infrastructure projects. In addition to the call for beefed-up local content requirements, the report calls on the government to: Implement the **Green Jobs Taskforce recommendations** in full; Level up investments in green infrastructure, including industrial decarbonization, in line with its G7 peers, extending to 2030; Establish a Just Transition Commission, including representation from employers and unions, to oversee the workforce aspect of the transition to Net Zero; • Introduce a permanent short-term working scheme to help protect working people through periods of future industrial change.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Leakage, Just Transition, labour union policies, Local Content Requirements, steel industry, United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

Plan to reduce Ontario emissions calls for incentives for energy efficiency, natural gas phase-out

Posted on **October 5, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A Plan for Green Buildings, Jobs and Prosperity for Ontario was released on September 15 by Environmental Defence and the Ontario Clean Air Alliance. It is a plain-language guide to why

and how to reduce carbon emissions from “fossil gas” (aka natural gas) and a summary of the co-benefits of doing so: create good green jobs, lower energy bills, and economic growth. The report states that Ontario’s carbon emissions from power generation are on track to increase by more than 300% by 2030, and offers specific actions which would instead reduce emissions from fossil gas by 30 – 40%.

The Plan proposes: heavy government investment in programs for building energy efficiency, including grants and low-interest financial schemes to encourage consumer buy-in (for example, allowing repayment on energy or property tax bills); Phase out of fossil fuel power generation by 2030; Net-zero building standards in construction; Redirecting funds which currently subsidize natural gas pipelines (estimated at \$234 million) to subsidize lower-cost zero-carbon heating alternatives; and reserving hydrogen and renewable fuels for the hardest-to decarbonize sectors like aviation and heavy industry.

The report cites modelling done by Dunskey Energy Consulting in **The Economic Impact of Improved Energy Efficiency in Canada** (2018) to claim that the energy efficiency programs alone would create over 18,500 good jobs, and states that even more would be created locally by green energy and zero-carbon heating programs.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [energy efficiency](#), [Energy policy](#), [Green Building](#), [Natural Gas](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition consultation extended as fossils try to mobilize

Posted on **October 4, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada’s public **consultation on Just Transition** was launched on July 20 but was suspended during the election campaign. On October 1, Natural Resources Canada took to social media to announce that the consultation has been extended “until further notice”. A “What we heard” report had been scheduled for Fall, and until then, unfortunately, the consultation website offers none of the submissions, or even a list of participants.

Some news is dribbling out however:

1. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released their **brief submission** on October 1, written by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood. The submission limits itself to answering the questions posed in the discussion paper, but makes a few key points: for example, “One specific concern in the context of a just transition is the definition of a worker in need of transition support. Fossil fuel workers are disproportionately high-income white men, but many other workers in fossil fuel communities who depend indirectly on the industry, such as food service and accommodation workers, are more likely to be women, immigrants, racialized

workers and other marginalized people. If a “just transition” policy does not have broad coverage it can make inequality worse.” The submission concludes: “The regulatory phase-out of coal-powered electricity generation in Canada provides a very clear model for how this can and should be done. Once a clear deadline is set, firms and workers can begin to plan for the transition into new industries. In contrast, the absence of a clear end date for oil and gas production encourages firms and workers to continue to invest into what will inevitably become stranded assets and stranded careers.” A more complete discussion was published by the CCPA in [Roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act: A path to a clean and inclusive economy](#).

The Energy Mix published “[‘No Mention of Workers’ as Fossil Lobby Aims to Refocus Just Transition on Producers’](#)” on September 28, describing the campaign of [Canada’s Energy Citizens](#), supported by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, to encourage and enable submissions to the Consultation process. Their website states: “Canadian oil and natural gas is some of the most sustainably produced energy in the world. If the world is going to demand energy and continue turning to coal, do we not have a responsibility to ensure our cleaner product is meeting demand?” Amongst their talking points: the federal government “...Should not lower Canadian standards of living or our capacity for investment in innovation. Canadian oil and gas jobs are some of the highest paying, middle class jobs in the country. It is not acceptable to cause the destruction of those jobs and to replace them with lower paying ones. This will hurt Canada’s middle class.”

Countering the CEC campaign, [350.org](#) and [Leadnow.ca](#) provide an online submission form and talking points “to drown out the fossil fuel lobbyists, and push the government to implement a bold and just economic transition plan.” The talking points at 350.org are, not surprisingly, very similar to those offered by Clayton Thomas-Müller in [op-ed for the Globe and Mail](#) (restricted access). Thomas-Müller, a 350.org campaigner, calls for Canada to mark the occasion of its first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 by affirming its commitment to a just transition for those most likely to be affected by the shift to a carbon-free economy—namely, rural, northern, and Indigenous communities. He calls for three conditions: 1. anyone who is facing job loss because of this transition is guaranteed a good, green, unionized job; a just transition must put people and communities first, over the interests of the oil industry; and the transition must be a matter of mind and spirit, aligning both with climate science and with ancestral Indigenous knowledge.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [CAPP](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Electric vehicle lobby group launches in Canada as GM announces more EV

truck production is coming to CAMI in Ontario

Posted on **October 4, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As **reported in iPolitics** on September 29, a new industry lobby group has launched in Canada: **Accelerate**, which describes itself as “ a 5-year national initiative bringing together key players across Canada, from mining to mobility, from R&D to commercialization, and from vehicle assembly to infrastructure. Accelerate will establish a forum for members to collaborate, strategize and advocate for priorities that will support the accelerated development of a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) supply chain in Canada.” One of the specific action areas is “ to align current talent development with the future needs of the emerging ZEV supply chain. Accelerate will create a forum for collaboration and coordination between colleges, universities and industry. This will help universities/colleges develop their curricula in line with the needs of the industry, which benefits both prospective workers and employers.” **Member organizations** of Accelerate include advocacy groups, manufacturers, as well as the union Unifor.

More Electric Freight Vehicles coming to Canada

The North American Council for Freight Efficiency issued **a press release** in September which states that if all U.S. and Canadian medium- and heavy-duty trucks became electric, about 100 million metric tons of CO2 would be saved, without disrupting the flow of cargo. They make their claim based on data from the **Run on Less-Electric** test run concluded in September, in which 13 electric trucks were monitored for three weeks while they followed their regular routes delivering beer, wine, packages, electrical equipment, etc. From the press release: “It’s clear from the data collected during the Run that it is time for fleets to go electric in certain market segments, including the van/step van, medium-duty box truck, terminal tractor and short heavy tractor regional delivery segments.” More on how the test run was developed and how drivers were trained **here** . The test run results are discussed by Canary Media **here** (Sept. 23).

In Canada, GM BrightDrop, the electric vehicle arm of GM, is building the EV600 at the CAMI assembly plant in Ingersoll, Ontario, beginning in November 2022. On September 28, BrightDrop **announced** that it will also produce a medium-sized delivery van, the EV410, with production at CAMI Ingersoll beginning in 2023. Unifor, which represents 1800 workers in **Local 88**, welcomed the news with **this press release**. In announcing the new model, the CEO of BrightDrop drew a straight line between climate change and electric vehicles: “As e-commerce demand continues to increase and the effects of climate change are felt like never before across the globe, it’s imperative that we move quickly to reduce emissions. BrightDrop’s holistic delivery solutions are designed to help tackle these challenges head on.”

The EV600 has been sold to FedEx in the U.S., while the press release states that the new and smaller EV410 is aimed at door deliveries for the food industry, or telecommunications repairs. Its first announced customer is Verizon U.S. .

World Health Organization issues new air quality standards in response to growing evidence of the health impacts of pollution

Posted on **October 1, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 22, for the first time in 16 years, the World Health Organization updated its ***Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs)***, based on the rapidly growing scientific evidence that air pollutants can effect human health at even lower concentrations than previously understood. WHO's new guidelines recommend air quality levels for 6 "classic pollutants": particulate matter (PM), ozone (O₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and carbon monoxide (CO), and also highlight good practices for the management of certain types of particulates for which there is not yet sufficient evidence to set guideline levels (for example, black carbon/elemental carbon, ultrafine particles, particles originating from sand and dust storms). The press release states: "Clean air should be a fundamental human right and a necessary condition for healthy and productive societies. However, despite some improvements in air quality over the past three decades, millions of people continue to die prematurely, often affecting the most vulnerable and marginalized populations." The accompanying ***Fact Sheet*** provides key statistics, and ***a report in The Guardian*** summarizes some of the most shocking, including:

"Every one of the 100 most populous cities in the world exceeded the new WHO guideline for tiny particle pollution in 2020, according to Greenpeace analysis. This includes Tokyo, Shanghai, New York, Lagos, London, and Delhi, with the latter exceeding the limit by 17 times."

And what is one of the most dangerous kinds of pollution, even in cities? "***Mortality risk attributable to wildfire-related PM2.5 pollution: a global time series study in 749 locations***" is a pioneering study published on September 1 in *Lancet Planetary Health*. It analyzes data from 749 cities in 43 countries and regions during 2000–16 and concludes that while wildfires are far from the only source of PM 2.5 pollution in cities, the PM 2.5 exposure from wildfires was more deadly, and longer-lasting, than fine particle pollution from other urban sources – probably because of the chemical makeup and smaller size of the particles in wildfire smoke.

New 5-year Electrification Plan for B.C. not even close to meeting demands of the Climate Emergency Campaign

Posted on **October 1, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

An **Open Letter** sent to the B.C. government in September is yet another manifestation of the frustration and impatience of activists amidst ongoing protests in B.C. – notably the **Fairy Creek blockade**, the **Coastal GasLink pipeline** and the **Trans Mountain pipeline** protests. The **Open Letter** was signed by approximately 200 organizations – mainly environmental and social justice activists, and including the **Climate Emergency Unit**, which has been instrumental in the formation of the **BC Climate Emergency Campaign**. Signatories also include five labour unions, the biggest being the Public Service Alliance of Canada (BC Region). The Open Letter is described more fully in a **National Observer article**, but can be summarized by its ten demands:

1. Set binding climate targets based on science and justice;
2. Invest in a thriving, regenerative, zero emissions economy
3. Rapidly wind down all fossil fuel production
4. End fossil fuel subsidies and make polluters pay (by 2022)
5. Leave no-one behind – workers and communities
6. Protect and restore nature
7. Invest in local, organic, regenerative agriculture and food systems
8. Accelerate the transition to zero emission transportation
9. Accelerate the transition to zero emission buildings (including ban new natural gas connections in new buildings as of 2022)
10. Track and report progress on these actions every year.

Meanwhile, from the Office of Premier of British Columbia on September 28, came the **announcement a new 5-year Electrification Plan** by BC Hydro. The Plan proposes new programs and increased incentives to switch from fossil fuels to clean electricity in homes, buildings, vehicles, businesses and industry (in addition to the **CleanBC Industrial Electrification Rates—Fuel Switching program**, already introduced earlier in 2021). According to the government backgrounder, the latest plan will ultimately reduce greenhouse gas emissions, keep customer rates lower than by about 1.6% than they would otherwise be in 2026, and will provide “good sustainable jobs by attracting investment from new energy-intensive companies (e.g., data centres, hydrogen production and clean technology) and by making B.C. a destination for new industry technologies. By reducing rate increases, the plan will also help new and existing industries remain cost competitive.” **The Electrification Plan – a clean future powered by water**, provides details but no specifics to back up its employment statement. **“BC’s Latest Climate Effort on Electrification Falls Short, Says Ecotrust”** (*The Tyee*, Oct. 1) says that the plan, even if it succeeds, will reduce only 1.3 per cent of B.C.’s total emissions, and that what is needed is a complete overhaul of the B.C. Utilities Commission.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **British Columbia, Climate Activism, electrification, Protests & Rallies, provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

“Every job can be a climate job”: Employee guide to climate action by Project Drawdown

Posted on **September 30, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Climate Solutions at Work is a newly published guide by [Drawdown Labs](#), focussed on the potential for all employees to take climate action through their workplace. The Guide acknowledges that “Inside most companies, only a handful of people with “sustainability” roles consider climate issues part of their workday. But in this most all-encompassing challenge in human history, every job must be a climate job.”

According to the [Drawdown website](#), “This employee-focused guide has two main objectives: 1. To democratize climate action, so that all employees can contribute – preferably through creating or joining collaborative group efforts; and 2. To use a “new drawdown-aligned business framework” to help companies look beyond their existing “net-zero” goals – (which [Greta Thunberg famously told us](#) on September 28, often are just “blah blah blah”). The Guide offers a detailed action plan for individuals in the workplace.

Drawdown Labs is an initiative of [Project Drawdown](#), founded in 2014 as a nonprofit organization that seeks to help the world reach “drawdown”—the point in the future when levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere stop climbing and start to steadily decline. Their flagship publication, the [Drawdown Review](#) was first published in 2017 and offers an holistic, long-term approach to climate actions. They also offer learning materials – for example, [Climate Solutions 101](#), a online video series produced with such partner organizations as the National Council for Science and the Environment in the U.S. (now the [Global Council for Science and the Environment](#)).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [employee initiatives](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s second largest pension fund joins Harvard, the MacArthur Foundation in divestment away from fossil fuels

Posted on **September 29, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), the second largest pension fund in Canada, **announced** on September 28 that it will exit oil production investments at the end of 2022. The new, complete *Climate Strategy* document is **here**, and is built on four “vital and complementary pillars, as summarized in a **press release**:

- Hold \$54 billion in green assets by 2025 to actively contribute to a more sustainable economy.
- Achieve a 60% reduction in the carbon intensity of the total portfolio by 2030.
- Create a \$10-billion transition envelope to decarbonize the main industrial carbon-emitting sectors.
- Complete our exit from oil production by the end of 2022.

Reaction from pension activist group ShiftAction states that the : “move to exclude investments in oil producers from its portfolio by the end of 2022 is a welcome and significant move that improves the CDPQ’s position as a climate leader among Canada’s major financial institutions. It is amazing that it took until 2021 for a Canadian pension fund to finally recognize that protecting our retirement savings from the worsening climate crisis inevitably requires abandoning market exposure to high-risk fossil fuels.... To achieve climate safety, investment in fossil gas production and infrastructure must also be urgently phased out..... The CDPQ’s progress stands in stark contrast to the Canada Pension Plan, whose CEO **said** earlier this year that the Canada Pension Plan has no plans to institute a blanket screen on oil and gas during his tenure.” (Neither does the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan, as quoted in the Toronto Star article, **“Canada’s oil industry dealt a financial blow as pension giant divests itself of investment in fossil fuel”**) .

New Canadian campaign demands information from pension fund managers

On September 29, letters were delivered to the boards and executive of Canada’s 10 largest pension fund managers, asking for specific and detailed answers by December, about how the funds are meeting their legal fiduciary obligations in the face of the global climate crisis. According to a Greenpeace **press release** , the letters were coordinated with ShiftAction and Ecojustice. The letters were signed by members of the respective pensions funds, along with some of their union representatives , and were accompanied by **appendices** of analysis and a legal brief. The 9-page **letter to the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System**, co-signed by Fred Hahn, President of CUPE-Ontario serves as an example.

Global divestment momentum

All of this is part of the growing momentum of the divestment movement in the lead-up to COP26. On September 10, after years of resisting activist campaigns, **Harvard University announced** that its \$42 billion endowment will bar any future investments in coal, oil and gas. **Stand.earth states**: “this landmark announcement marks a tipping point that will cascade throughout mainstream endowments and financial institutions globally.” On September 22, Reuters reported **“MacArthur Foundation joins investment shift away fossil fuels”**, stating that the \$8.2 billion fund “is the largest foundation in the world to commit publicly to fossil-fuel divestment to date.” Bill

McKibben, one of the architects of the global divestment movement, sums it all up, including the new Caisse de dépôt climate policy, in his article *“Starving the Beast”* (*Crucial Years*, Sept. 29).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec \(CDPQ\)](#), [Divestment](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [OMERS](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. begins process to set new national heat standard to protect outdoor and indoor workers, communities

Posted on **September 23, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Extreme heat is the leading weather-related killer in the U.S.. In recognition of the likelihood of increasing dangers from climate change, U.S. President Biden announced a coordinated, interagency effort on September 20, described in a White House Fact Sheet titled ***Biden Administration Mobilizes to Protect Workers and Communities from Extreme Heat***. Regarding workers, the Department of Labor, through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), will launch a rulemaking process to develop a national workplace heat standard for both outdoor and indoor workers, including agricultural, construction, and delivery workers, as well as indoor workers in warehouses, factories, and kitchens. This process, which is expected to take years, will allow for a “comment period” on topics including heat stress thresholds, heat acclimatization planning, and exposure monitoring. Along with setting the Heat Standard, OSHA will begin a new enforcement initiative which will prioritize heat-related interventions and workplace inspections on days when the heat index exceeds 80°F. OSHA will also work to formalize a National Emphasis Program (NEP) on heat hazard cases, which will target high-risk industries, hopefully before Summer 2022. Finally, OSHA will form a Heat Illness Prevention Work Group within its National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH), which will include a public representative, a labour representative, and a management representative, along with others.

The initiative is summarized in ***“As climate change warms workplaces, Biden directs safety agency to draft heat rules for workers”*** (*Washington Post*, Sept. 20) and in ***“Extreme Heat Is Killing Workers, So the White House Is Adding Protections”*** (*Vice Motherboard*, Sept 23), which describes the regulation in Washington, California and Minnesota, as well as legislation currently under debate in Texas, which would eliminate requirements for 10-minute water breaks every four hours. A new national standard would set minimum levels under which state regulations could not descend.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [outdoor workers](#) | **2**

Future job growth in the U.S. auto industry depends on supportive industrial and labour policies

Posted on **September 23, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As the inevitable transformation of the U.S. auto industry unfolds, supportive industrial and labour policy can help the industry reclaim its role as a source of well-paying, stable jobs, according to a report released on September 22 by the Economic Policy Institute. ***“The stakes for workers in how policymakers manage the coming shift to all-electric vehicles”*** was written in collaboration with the BlueGreen Alliance, AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council, United Auto Workers, United Steelworkers, and The Greenlining Institute.

Authors Jim Barrett and Josh Bivens report on the likely employment and job-quality implications of a large-scale shift to Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) under various scenarios. Their key findings: employment in the U.S. auto sector could rise by over 150,000 jobs in 2030 under two conditions: 1. Battery electric vehicles rise to 50% of domestic sales of autos in 2030 and 2. U.S. production of electric vehicle powertrain components increases. Supportive policies are seen to make the difference between job losses and job gains.

The report further states: “For the auto sector to continue providing good jobs for U.S. workers, strong labor standards—including affirmative efforts to encourage unionization—will be needed. ... The jobs embedded in the U.S. automobile supply chain once provided a key foundation for middle-class growth and prosperity. A cascade of poor policy decisions has eroded employment and job quality in this sector and this has helped to degrade labor standards across U.S. manufacturing and throughout the overall economy The industry transformation coming due to the widespread adoption of BEVs provides an opportunity to reverse these trends. The transformations necessary to ensure that this shift to BEVs supports U.S. employment and job quality—investment in advanced technology production and strengthening supply chains—will redound widely throughout manufacturing and aid growth in other sectors as well.”

The report is summarized in ***“What Will It Take for Electric Vehicles to Create Jobs, Not Cut Them?”*** (*New York Times* , Sept. 22) .

Posted in **Government Policy, Uncategorized, United States** | Tagged **auto manufacturing industry, electric vehicle battery manufacture, industrial policy, Job Quality, United States** | [Leave a reply](#)

Leading up to COP26: U.S. and China make important pledges; activists demand fossil-free future

Posted on **September 23, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

As the IPCC Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow approaches on Oct. 31 to Nov. 12, international leaders are grabbing microphones, activists are lobbying, and important new reports are being released . A chronology of some important highlights:

On September 13, an **Open Letter** was delivered to the UN General Assembly, calling for a **Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty**. Signed by over 2000 academics and scientists from 81 countries, the Letter calls for international cooperation on climate change and an end to new expansion of fossil fuel production in line with the best available science, and a phase-out of existing fossil fuel production of fossil fuels “in a manner that is fair and equitable”.

On September 16, World Resources Institute and Climate Analytics released **Closing the gap: The impact of G20 climate commitments on limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C**, which offers hope. The report argues that if G20 countries set ambitious, 1.5°C-aligned emission reduction targets for 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050, then global temperature rise at the end of the century could be limited to 1.7°C. This hinges on the fact that G20 countries account for 75% of global GHG emissions.

A new, related report from the UNFCCC is far less hopeful – in fact, Greta Thunberg , **as quoted in Common Dreams**, states that “this is what betrayal looks like”. The **Synthesis Report of Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement** compiled the emissions reduction pledges of 191 countries as of July 31 2021, and evaluated and analyzed their targets and plans . The bottom line: “The total global GHG emission level in 2030, taking into account implementation of all the latest NDCs, is expected to be 16.3 per cent above the 2010 level.” Such a course would lead to a “catastrophic” increase in average temperatures by 2.7 degrees C. by the end of the century. While Argentina, Canada, the European Union, United Kingdom and United States strengthened their 2030 emission reduction targets (compared to the NDCs they submitted five years ago), China, India, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have yet to submit their updated NDCs. The latter countries are responsible for 33% of global greenhouse gases.

On September 18, the EU and U.S. launched a **Global Methane Pledge**, promising to reduce methane emissions by 30% from 2020 levels by 2030 – which is a step in the right direction, but fails to meet the target of 45% reduction in this decade , as called for by the UNEP in its **Global Methane Assessment Report** released in May 2021. However, according to *Inside Climate News*, “**Global Methane Pledge Offers Hope on Climate in Lead Up to Glasgow**”, and *The Conversation U.S.* describes “**Biden urges countries to slash methane emissions 30% – here’s why it’s crucial for protecting climate and health, and how it can pay for itself**” (

Sept. 17). It remains to be seen if Canada will join the eight countries already signed on to the new Methane Pledge; in Canada, the existing **regulations for methane emissions from the oil and gas industry** target a reduction by 40% to 45% below 2012 levels by 2025. The **Liberal election platform** pledged to “Require oil and gas companies to reduce methane emissions by at least 75% below 2012 levels by 2030 and work to reduce methane emissions across the broader economy.” (More Canadian context **appears in *The Energy Mix***, and from the WCR **here**, which explains the federal-provincial equivalency agreement re methane regulations.

The opening of UN General Assembly on September 20, began with a **fiery speech by U.N. Secretary General António Guterres** about global inequality, saying that the world is “sleepwalking” to climate change disaster and pleading yet again for urgent action and international cooperation. Discussions around Covid-19, racism, and climate change are creating the **“sombre mood” of the meetings**. Yet speeches by U.S. president Biden and China’s Xi Jinping offer hope for climate change actions:

On September 21, US president Biden’s address to the General Assembly included a pledge that the US will become the world’s leading provider of climate finance, **promising to double U.S. aid to \$11bn by 2024**. Some reaction to the pledge was sceptical, given that the \$100 billion in aid already pledged by developed countries has not been achieved. Canada is one of the worst offenders, with an average contribution only 17% of its fair share in 2017 and 2018, according to **“Climate Finance Faces \$75-Billion Gap as COP 26 Looms 1,000 Hours Away”** (*The Energy Mix*, Sept. 21).

Also on September 21, China’s leader Xi Jinping announced to the United Nations General Assembly that China “will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad.” The impact, as explained **here by the *New York Times***, can be huge, given that “China built more than three times more new coal power capacity than all other countries in the world combined” last year. **“Betting on a low-carbon future’: why China is ending foreign coal investment”** (*The Guardian*, Sept. 22) highlights two important points: 1. the announcement signals that China is serious about climate action even though it hasn’t confirmed attendance at COP26, and 2. Real climate progress lies in reduction of China’s domestic coal production, which is 10 times higher than foreign production according to **the report in Germany’s DW**. So far, China has not specified plans re domestic production, nor re the timing of its commitment to end coal financing.

On September 22, a **statement by over 200 civil society organizations** from around the world called on progressive governments and public finance institutions to launch a joint commitment to end public finance for fossil fuels at COP26. According to the spokesperson for the International Institute for Sustainable Development, said: “While a growing number of governments are turning away from coal and oil, international financial institutions are still providing four times as much funding for gas projects as for wind or solar.” The full statement and list of signatories is **here** and includes 28 Canadian organizations – including the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and the Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec (SFPQ).

#Wemaketomorrow is an activist campaign coordinated by the Trade Union Caucus of the COP26 Coalition. Planning and actions for COP26 are already underway at

<https://www.wemaketomorrow.org/> . The *main COP26 Coalition website* organizes The People's Summit, “a global convergence space for movements, campaigns and civil society”, which this year, because of Covid-19, will feature in-person and virtual events.

More to come!

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [China](#), [climate finance](#), [Coal Industry](#), [COP26](#), [fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty](#), [International cooperation](#), [Juliana v. United States](#), [Labour Unions](#), [Methane Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

60% of Canadians voted for climate action platforms – and they are already mobilizing to hold the new minority government to account

Posted on **September 21, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Voting in Canada's Election 44 took place on September 20, **returning the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau** with an almost identical minority in the House of Commons. Green Party Leader Annamie Paul **failed to win her own seat** and her party received only 2.3% of the popular vote – with Paul Manly losing his seat in Nanaimo, to be balanced by a Green gain by Mike Morrice in Kitchener Ontario. Candidates endorsed as “**climate champions**” by **350 Canada** had mixed success, with defeats for Avi Lewis in B.C., Lenore Zann in Nova Scotia, and Angella MacEwen, CUPE senior economist, in Ottawa Centre . Yet at least seven were re-elected (some still too close to call), including: Peter Julian (NDP , New Westminster—Burnaby), Laurel Collins (NDP , Victoria), Elizabeth May (Green, Saanich—Gulf Islands), Matthew Green (NDP, Hamilton Centre), and Blake Desjarlais (NDP, Edmonton Greisbach).

Media commentators are keen to paint the election exercise as a waste of time and money. But environmental advocates are not deterred – as described by Jesse Firemong in “**What this election means for women, racialized and climate-vulnerable communities**” (National Observer, Sept.21). He states, “This election was a signal to the Prime Minister to step up or step aside. With their series of “**first 100 days**” promises, the Liberals have given us an easy litmus test to evaluate their sincerity on a few issues, such as legislation to ban conversion therapy, combat online hate, and institute paid sick leave. On keeping fossil fuels in the ground, reconciliation and defunding the police, movement voices will remain critical levers for mobilizing public accountability.”

And those movement voices are already speaking up. On September 21, Climate Action Network Canada issued a press release, “**Environmental organizations representing millions of Canadians urges Prime Minister Trudeau to listen to the majority – climate-concerned**

voters – and swiftly fulfil climate promises” – which states that nearly 60 per cent of Canadians voted for parties with strong climate commitments, and announces a new coalition called **No more Delays**, supported by Greenpeace Canada, Environmental Defence, SumofUs, Stand.earth, Climate Emergency Unit, Équiterre, Citizens Climate Lobby Canada, Climate Reality Project Canada, Grandmothers Advocacy Network and Climate Action Network Canada – Réseau action climat Canada (CAN-Rac Canada).

No More Delays calls on the newly-elected government to:

- “Work with MPs across party lines to make good on your promises to protect our communities and our planet. Within 100 days, put forward a plan to end fossil fuel subsidies & stop all new fossil fuel expansion
- Deliver a clear timeline and strategy to implement the TRC calls to action and UNDRIP
- Restart the Just Transition consultation and urgently work to develop and pass this important legislation
- Commit to at least 60 per cent reduction of domestic emissions from 2005 levels by 2030” .

Member organization Greenpeace goes further, **calling for all of the above plus**:

- Implement a just transition for workers including income support and funding for green jobs.
- End fossil fuel subsidies and cancel the Trans Mountain Pipeline immediately.
- Increase targets and develop a plan to hit 60% domestic emissions reductions by 2030 (versus 2005).
- Implement fair taxation of the wealthy to help pay for the transition.

350Canada maintains **an online petition** to the Minister of Natural Resources and all Party Leaders to act on the **Just Transition legislation – consultations**. The process was suspended during the campaign, and submissions are set to close on September 30. The Discussion Paper to guide submissions is **here** .

Leadnow.ca is maintaining an **online petition** calling on the parties to work together for climate action, and Seth Klein of the **Climate Emergency Unit** specifically suggests : “how about we stabilize our political lives with a formal Confidence and Supply Agreement (CASA), like we had in British Columbia from 2017-2020, like the Yukon has now, and similar to what the Ontario Liberals and NDP had in the 1980s or at the federal level from 1972-74. ... Numerous parties tabled good ideas in this election — let’s see them each put their best ones forward.

And as a refresher – the detailed **Liberal platform is here**; here are just a few of the climate-related promises to watch for:

- “Require oil and gas companies to reduce methane emissions by at least 75% below 2012 levels by 2030 and work to reduce methane emissions across the broader economy”;
- “Set 2025 and 2030 milestones based on the advice of the Net-Zero Advisory Body to ensure reduction levels are ambitious and achievable and that the oil and gas sector makes a meaningful contribution to meeting the nation’s 2030 climate goals.”;

- “Ban thermal coal exports from and through Canada no later than 2030.”;
- “Accelerate our G20 commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies from 2025 to 2023.
- Develop a plan to phase-out public financing of the fossil fuel sector, including from Crown corporations, consistent with our commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.”
- “Introduce a Clean Electricity Standard that will set Canada on a path to cut more emissions by 2030 and to achieve a 100% net-zero emitting electricity system by 2035.”
- “Launch a National Net-zero Emissions Building Strategy, which will chart a path to net-zero emissions from buildings by 2050 with ambitious milestones along the way.”
- ” Accelerate the development of the national net-zero emissions model building code for 2025 adoption.”
- “Accelerate the transition from fossil fuel-based heating systems to electrification through incentives and standards, including investing \$250 million to help low-income Canadians get off home-heating oil.”
- ” Establish a \$2 billion Futures Fund for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador that will be designed in collaboration with local workers, unions, educational institutions, environmental groups, investors, and Indigenous peoples who know their communities best. We will support local and regional economic diversification and specific placebased strategies.”
- ” Move forward with Just Transition Legislation, guided by the feedback we receive from workers, unions, Indigenous peoples, communities, and provinces and territories”
- “Create more opportunities for women, LGBTQ2 and other underrepresented people in the energy sector.”
- “Launch a Clean Jobs Training Centre to help industrial, skill and trade workers across sectors to upgrade or gain new skills to be on the leading edge of zero carbon industry.”
- ” Table legislation to require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to examine the link between race, socio-economic status, and exposure to environmental risk, and develop a strategy to address environmental justice.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Teachers Pension Plan sets target to reduce 45% carbon emission intensity in their portfolio by 2025

Posted on [September 20, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Ontario Teachers Pension Plan Board **announced** on September 16 “industry-leading targets to reduce portfolio carbon emissions intensity by 45% by 2025 and two-thirds (67%) by 2030, compared to its 2019 baseline. These emission reduction targets cover all the Fund’s real assets, private natural resources, equity and corporate credit holdings across public and private markets,

including external managers.” The press release continues: “By significantly growing our portfolio of green investments and working collaboratively with our portfolio companies to transform their businesses, we can make a positive impact by encouraging an inclusive transition that benefits our people, communities and portfolio companies.” **Reaction by pension advocacy group Shift Action** acknowledges that this is “the strongest climate commitment we’ve seen yet from a Canadian pension plan”, but called for OTPP to explain how it will eliminate its fossil fuel investments. The ShiftAction **Background**er which accompanies the press release challenges the OTPP’s own estimate that approximately 3% of their assets (\$6.6billion) are held in oil and gas assets, and compiles a list of company names and the extent of OTPP investments, including recent investments in 2020 and 2021.

If all of this sounds familiar, it may be because the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan released a **Net Zero Emissions Commitment** in January 2021, which was criticized as greenwashing in **“Breaking down Ontario Teachers’ 2050 net-zero emissions promise”** (*The National Observer*, Feb. 4). The article stated: “...If OTPP is serious about adopting a globally significant climate-safe investment strategy, it needs a plan to exclude all new oil, gas and coal investments; a timeline for phasing out existing fossil fuel holdings; a commitment to decarbonize its portfolio by 2030; ambitious new targets for increasing investments in profitable climate solutions; and a requirement for owned companies to refrain from lobbying activities that undermine ambitious climate policy, set corporate timelines for reducing emissions, and link executive compensation to measurable climate goals.” It seems OTPP is moving in the right direction, but ever so slowly – similar to the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) and the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), as explained in **An Insecure Future: Canada’s biggest public pensions are still banking on fossil fuels** released by the Corporate Mapping Project in mid-August .

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Ontario Teachers Pension Plan, Pension Fund management** | **Leave a reply**

Iron and Earth releases its Prosperous Transition Plan for Canada’s fossil fuel workers

Posted on **September 8, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

In its recently released **Prosperous Transition Plan**, Iron and Earth calls for a \$61-billion federal investment in Canada’s just transition process, including \$10 billion over 10 years to upskill over one million workers, at \$10,000 per worker on average. New I&E Director Luisa Da Silva and Board Director Bruce Wilson wrote **“Most oil patch workers believe Canada needs to pivot to a net-zero economy”** (Corporate Knights, Aug. 31), summarizing the plan. In addition to the retraining programs, the Prosperous Transition strategy calls for: 1. rapid refocusing and

repositioning of 10,000 Canadian enterprises to meet the emerging demand in net-zero industries. (costed at \$20 billion over 10 years); 2. retrofitting and repurposing initiatives for long-term infrastructure, including abandoned oil wells and remediation of well sites. This is costed at the equivalent of \$10-billion, “in the form of incentives and tax offsets, with green strings to carbon-intensive industries investing in net-zero technologies.” And finally, 3. use of nature-based solutions to prioritize green infrastructure development, expand carbon sinks and revitalize ecosystems and biodiversity (costed at \$22 billion over 10 years).

Iron & Earth describes itself as “a worker-led not-for-profit with a mission to empower fossil fuel industry and Indigenous workers to build and implement climate solutions.” Since she replaced the founding Executive Director, Liam Hildebrand, in the summer of 2021, Luisa da Silva has taken a higher-profile, and was recently quoted in “***Liberals pledge \$2 Billion to aid just transition***” (National Observer, Aug. 31), in which she called the Liberal Just Transition election proposals “a good start”. In the same article, she revealed that Iron and Earth, as part of the ***Just Transition consultation*** stakeholders, had received an email on Aug. 16 saying that, due to the election call, “consultation sessions on proposed just transition legislation are postponed until further notice, and any invitations sent for upcoming sessions are cancelled.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Iron and Earth](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s federal election: how do the parties compare on climate issues?

Posted on **September 8, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The federal election in Canada takes place on September 20, and according to an **Abacus poll conducted on September 4**, climate change remains one of the top concerns of voters. The **Liberal Party Platform document** was officially released on September 1, preceded by a **climate plan** announced on Aug. 29 (summarized by a 2-page **Fact Sheet**). The **Conservative platform** was accompanied by a separate climate plan, **Secure the Environment**. The **New Democratic Party platform** also is accompanied with specific climate action commitments [here](#). And just before the Leaders’ debates on Sept. 8 and 9, the **Green Party** released their full platform on Labour Day weekend.

The overall Platform statements are compared **by the CBC** and by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: the “Platform Crunch” for the **Liberals** (Sept. 3); **Conservatives** (Aug. 18); and for the **NDP** (Aug. 13).

How do the parties’ Platforms compare on climate change?

It is easy to summarize the differing GHG emissions reductions targets of the parties, with the **Green Party** committed to a target of 60 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels and net negative emissions in 2050. The **Liberal Party** commits to reducing emissions by 40-45 per cent by 2030

compared to 2005 levels, which is the target they have committed to as a government in the Net-Zero Accountability Act. The **NDP** target is to cut its emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, and commit to establishing multi-year national and sectoral carbon budgets. The Conservative Party promising to retreat to the Harper-era target of 30% reduction by 2030 – which would violate Canada’s obligation under the Paris Agreement.

Environmental Defence has produced a **2-page voter’s guide** identifying the other key issues, along with sample questions voters may want to ask their candidates. Here is a selection of comparisons and summaries on a variety of issues:

“Election 2021: How the four main federal parties plan to fight climate crisis” (National Observer, Aug. 18)

“Election 2021 A Comparison of Climate Policy in Federal Party Platforms (Smart Prosperity, Aug. 30)

“Where they stand. The parties on Climate Change” (The Tyee, Aug. 31)

“How do the federal parties stack up on climate change?” (Clean Energy Canada, Sept. 7)

“What the parties are promising so far” (Ecojustice, Sept. 7), which uniquely includes the Bloc Quebecois in its comparison. Ecojustice emphasizes promises related to environmental justice – the strongest of which are from the Green Party (to establish an Office of Environmental Justice at Environment and Climate Change Canada, and to support Bill C-230, the National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act); and the NDP, (to enshrine the right to a healthy environment in a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights and to create an Office of Environmental Justice) .

What’s in the Liberals’ \$78B platform? Plenty of Green (National Observer, September 2)

“Liberals move to outflank NDP on green issues” (Dogwood Institute, Aug. 31) which observes that the federal NDP is hampered by the provincial NDP government of British Columbia , which supports LNG development and has overseen the huge civil disobedience protests at the Fairy Creek Old Growth forest.

“Federal leaders promise action to protect B.C. old growth” (Stand.earth press release , Aug. 25)

“Liberals pledge \$2 Billion to aid just transition” (National Observer, Aug. 31), quoting the new head of Iron and Earth judgement that it’s a good start, but inadequate.

“Assessing climate sincerity in the Canadian 2021 election” by Mark Jaccard, (Policy Options, Sept.3) wherein the prominent energy economist argues that “the key policy indicators of sincerity are the carbon price level and regulatory stringency”, and assesses Liberal policies as “effective and affordable”, and the NDP as “Largely ineffective, unnecessarily costly”.

“Liberals are promising net-zero buildings by 2050. Can they make it happen?” (National Observer, Sept. 7)

“How Conservatives came around to supporting a carbon tax — and whether it’s here to stay” (CBC, Aug. 31)

“Conservative climate plan better than before, but still full of inconsistencies” (CBC, Aug. 30). Opinion piece by Jennifer Winter, associate professor and Scientific Director of Energy and Environmental Policy at the School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary, focussing on the Conservatives’ proposals for industrial emissions carbon pricing and calling it “a spectacularly bad idea” and “the worst of both worlds.”

“O’Toole defends climate plan while promising to revive oil pipeline projects” (CBC, Aug. 30), reporting that the Conservative leader has promised to revive the Northern Gateway pipeline and push forward with Trans Mountain pipeline.

“O’Toole Pledges to Break the Paris Agreement” (Energy Mix, Aug. 29). Conservatives are “pledged to move boldly backwards on Canada’s emissions reduction target”, reviving the Harper-era GHG reduction target of 30% by 2030.

“Erin O’Toole vows to increase criminal punishment for people who disrupt pipelines and railways” (The Narwhal, Aug. 19) O’Toole promises to enact the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act.

“Jagmeet Singh promises to kill fossil fuel subsidies” (National Observer, Aug. 23) A core demand of environmentalists, which Trudeau is still vague on.

“A vote against fossil fuel subsidies is a vote for our health” (National Observer, Sept. 3)

“Green platform promises big, largely uncosted social programs, end to fossil fuel industry” (CBC, Sept. 7)

Analysis of electric vehicles platform promises in Electric Autonomy, Aug. 30.

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Electrification of vehicles in Canadian mines

Posted on **September 8, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Trade magazine *Electric Autonomy* has published a series titled ***BEV's in Mining***, and while clearly from an industry point of view, the articles provide a useful overview of the transformation being wrought by electrification of the mining industry in Canada. “***Deep secrets: How Canada's mining sector grabbed the global lead in mining electrification*** “ (Nov. 2020) introduces the topic of Battery Electric Vehicles and highlights the specific activities of mining majors **Glencore, Vale** and **Newmont**, as well as **Maclean Engineering**, a Collingwood, Ontario-based equipment manufacturer. A related, **brief article** highlighted the use of **Rokion**-manufactured trucks at Vale Canada mining sites in Manitoba and Ontario. “***Human capital: How BEVs in underground mining change the working environment for the better***” was published in February 2021 – discussing the benefits for operators from less noise and vibration, cleaner air, and less fire risk underground. This healthier environment is linked to greater worker satisfaction and a competitive edge for employers to attract scarce talent. The article also states that “the ventilation system for an all-electric mine will operate at roughly 50 per cent of the cost of a diesel mine and cut greenhouse emissions per mine by 70 per cent, according to government data. The Canadian government estimates transitioning to electric could save 500 tonnes of CO2 emissions per vehicle, every year.”

Most recently, “***There's a skills shortage maintaining electric mining vehicles. One training program is trying to fix that***” (Aug. 25), which describes the new “ **Industrial Battery Electric Vehicle Maintenance Course**”, associated with Cambrian College's research-oriented **Centre for Smart Mining** in Sudbury, and with **Maclean Engineering**. What the series does *not* discuss are the other labour market implications – including layoffs – from the automation of vehicles and other operations.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **automation, Electric Vehicles, electrification, Job displacement, mining industry** | **Leave a reply**

U.S. Labour unions divided on carbon capture

Posted on **September 8, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

A new Labor Network for Sustainability background paper asks “***Can Carbon Capture Save Our Climate – and Our Jobs?***”. Author Jeremy Brecher treads carefully around this issue, acknowledging that it has been a divisive one within the labour movement for years. The report presents the history of carbon capture efforts; their objectives; their current effectiveness; and alternatives to CCS. It states: “LNS believe that the use of carbon capture should be determined by scientific evaluation of its effectiveness in meeting the targets and timetables necessary to protect the climate and of its full costs and benefits for workers and society. Those include health, safety, environmental, employment, waste disposal, and other social costs and benefits.”

Applying those principles to carbon capture, the paper takes a position:

“Priority for investment should go to methods of GHG reduction that can be implemented rapidly over the next decade” – for example, renewables and energy efficiency. ... “Carbon capture technologies have little chance of making major reductions in GHG emissions over the next decade and the market cost and social cost of carbon capture is likely to be far higher. Therefore, the priority for climate protection investment should be for conversion to fossil-free renewable energy and energy efficiency, not for carbon capture.”

“Priority for research and development should go to those technological pathways that offer the best chance of reducing GHGs with the most social benefit and the least social cost. Based on the current low GHG-reduction effectiveness and high market cost of carbon capture, its high health, safety, environmental, waste disposal, and other social costs, and the uncertainty of future improvements, carbon capture is unlikely to receive high evaluation relative to renewable energy and energy efficiency. Research on carbon capture should only be funded if scientific evaluation shows that it provides a better pathway to climate safety than renewable energy and energy efficiency.”

“.....People threatened with job loss as a result of reduction in fossil fuel burning should not expect carbon capture to help protect their jobs any time in the next 10-20 years. There are strong reasons to doubt that it will be either effective or cost competitive in the short run. Those adversely affected by reduction in fossil fuel burning can best protect themselves through managed rather than unmanaged decline in fossil fuel burning combined with vigorous just transition policies.”

This evaluation by LNS stands in contrast to the **Carbon Capture Coalition**, a coalition of U.S. businesses, environmental groups and labour unions. In August, the Coalition sent an **Open Letter** to Congressional Leaders, proposing a suite of supports for “carbon management technologies” – including tax incentives and “Robust funding for commercial scale demonstration of carbon capture, direct air capture and carbon utilization technologies.” Signatories to the Open Letter include the AFL-CIO, Boilermakers Local 11, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Laborers International Union, United Mine Workers of America, United Steelworkers, and Utility Workers Union of America. Although the BlueGreen Alliance was not one of the signatories, it did issue a **September 2 press release** which “applauds” the appointment of the Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy and Carbon Management within the U.S. Department of Energy. The new appointee currently serves as the Vice President, Carbon Management for the Great Plains Institute – and **The Great Plains Institute** is the convener of the Carbon Capture Coalition.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **AFL-CIO, Carbon capture and storage (CCS), Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS), labour union policies** | [Leave a reply](#)

Renewable Energy companies seen as barriers to a successful public energy transition

Posted on **September 8, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Recent issues of *New Labor Forum* include articles promoting the concept of energy democracy, and bringing an international perspective. In ***“Sustaining the Unsustainable: Why Renewable Energy Companies Are Not Climate Warriors”*** (*New Labor Forum*, August), author Sean Sweeney argues that renewable energy companies “are party to a “race to the bottom” capitalist dynamic that exploits workers – citing the example of alleged forced Uyghur labour in China-based solar companies, and the offshoring of manufacturing for the Scottish wind industry. He also argues that “large wind and solar interests’ “me first” behavior is propping up a policy architecture that is sucking in large amounts of public money to make their private operations profitable. They are sustaining a model of energy transition that has already shown itself to be incapable of meeting climate targets. In so doing, these companies have not just gone over to the political dark side, they helped design it.”

The theme of the Spring *New Labor Forum* was ***A Public Energy Response to the Climate Emergency***, and includes these three articles: ***“Beyond Coal: Why South Africa Should Reform and Rebuild Its Public Utility”***, ***“Ireland’s Energy System: The Historical Case for Hope in Climate Action”***; and ***“Mexico’s Wall of Resistance: Why AMLO’s Fight for Energy Sovereignty Needs Our Support”***.

The author of ***Sustaining the Unsustainable*** is Sean Sweeney, who is Director of the International Program on Labor, Climate & Environment at the School of Labor and Urban Studies, City University of New York, and is also the coordinator of ***Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED)***. In August, TUED convened a Global Forum, “COP26: What Do Unions Want?” – with participation from 69 unions, including the **Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)**, the **UK Trades Union Congress (TUC)**, the **International Transport Workers Federation (ITF)**, the **Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)**, the **UK’s Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)**, and **Public Services International (PSI)**. Presentations are summarized in ***TUED Bulletin 111***, (Aug. 18), and are available on YouTube **here**.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **COP26, energy democracy, renewable energy industry, Solar energy industry, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), wind energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

Fossil fuel unions in Texas sign on to a climate jobs plan

Posted on **September 7, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A July report from the Workers' Institute at Cornell University Industrial Relations School examines the state of play in Texas and makes a series of recommendations "that can help Texas simultaneously combat climate change, create high-quality jobs, and build more equitable and resilient communities." ***Combatting Climate Change, Reversing Inequality: A Climate Jobs Program for Texas*** identifies the current challenges : a COVID-19 public health pandemic and ensuing economic crisis; a growing crisis of inequality of income, wealth, race and power; and the worsening climate crisis, which has brought weather disasters to the state.

Texas is an interesting case study: it is the state with the most greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in the U.S., with 42.4% of emissions from its well-established oil and gas industry. Oil and gas (including extraction, refining, petrochemical production) employs over 450,000 Texans, with a state-wide unionization rate of 4.8%. But Texas also leads the states in wind power installations and has wind power manufacturing facilities. Into this mix, the researchers crafted a series of concrete recommendations for jobs-driven strategies to achieve a low-carbon, more equitable economy. These include targets for the installation of wind, solar and geothermal energy, along with an upgraded electricity grid to handle renewables; a target of 2040 to electrify school buses and State and Local government vehicle fleets ; construction of a High-Speed Rail Network between the five largest cities in Texas; a target to reduce energy use in existing buildings by 30% by 2035, and a mandate for Net-Zero Emissions for new construction by 2050; and the creation of a multi-stakeholder Just Transition Commission. The report also applies many of these recommendations for the cities of Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio.

Each of these state-wide recommendations is described in detail, with costing, GHG emissions reductions estimates, and job creation estimates by sector. Total direct jobs created over a range from 10 to 25 years is estimated at 1,140,186, with another 1,125,434 indirect and 913,981 induced jobs.

The report was written by Professors Lara Skinner and J. Mijin Cha, with research assistance from Hunter Moskowitz and Matt Phillips, in consultation with 27 Texas labour unions. It accompanies the launch of the Texas Climate Jobs Project , an offshoot of the **Texas AFL-CIO**. Lara Skinner describes the report and the Climate Jobs Project in ***"Why Texas Fossil Fuel unions signed onto a climate plan"*** (*Grist*, July 30). A ***press release from Texas AFL-CIO*** includes a summary of recommendations and endorsements from various unions.

Posted in **Green Economy, United States** | Tagged **AFL-CIO, Green Economy, Job Creation, Just Transition, labour union policies, Oil and gas industry, Texas** | [Leave a reply](#)

Medical journals around the world call climate change the world's leading health risk

Posted on **September 7, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The world's leading medical journals stepped into the climate change debate again with warnings of the dangers of climate change – grounded in health concerns but including concerns for equity, food security, and environmental destruction. On September 4, more than 220 leading medical, nursing and public health journals around the world published the same editorial, titled “**Call for emergency action to limit global temperature increases, restore biodiversity, and protect health**”.

An excerpt:

“Health is already being harmed by global temperature increases and the destruction of the natural world, a state of affairs health professionals have been bringing attention to for decades. The science is unequivocal; a global increase of 1.5°C above the pre-industrial average and the continued loss of biodiversity risk catastrophic harm to health that will be impossible to reverse.

Despite the world's necessary preoccupation with COVID-19, we cannot wait for the pandemic to pass to rapidly reduce emissions. Reflecting the severity of the moment, this Comment appears in health journals across the world. We are united in recognising that only fundamental and equitable changes to societies will reverse our current trajectory.”

The comment continues to state that “Targets are easy to set and hard to achieve”, and calls existing actions “insufficient”. It calls on governments to make “fundamental changes to how our societies and economies are organised and how we live. The current strategy of encouraging markets to swap dirty for cleaner technologies is not enough. Governments must intervene to support the redesign of transport systems, cities, production and distribution of food, markets for financial investments, health systems, and much more. Global coordination is needed to ensure that the rush for cleaner technologies does not come at the cost of more environmental destruction and human exploitation.”

The editorial initiative was coordinated by the **U.K. Health Alliance**. The list of journals in which this statement appears is [here](#), and includes *The Lancet*, the *British Medical Journal*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *The Journal of Climate Change and Health*, and more than 200 other titles. Canadian participants include the *Canadian Journal of Respiratory Therapy* and the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) did not participate (not having its own

journal), but on September 7 issued a echoed the same urgent concerns in **“A vote against fossil fuel subsidies is a vote for our health”**.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and health, health care professionals, health impacts, physicians** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Scientists sound the alarm in “Code Red” IPCC Report and WMO Atlas of mortality and economic damage

Posted on **September 7, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Alongside the continuing disaster of North America’s heat, drought, and wildfires has come Hurricane Ida on the Gulf Coast, U.S. Northeast, even **as far as Quebec**. Only **4% of broadcast media in the U.S. linked** Hurricane Ida to climate change – preferring to report on the flooding, storm surge, resulting power losses, evacuations, oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico, death and destruction. Yet with less media attention, scientists worldwide have published recent studies unequivocally linking such weather extremes with climate change and human activity. Notable examples over the summer : 1. **Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis**, the first installment of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group I, 2. **The WMO Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes (1970–2019)** released by the World Meteorological Organization on August 31, and 3. The WMO **Air Quality and Climate Bulletin** , launched on September 1.

The world’s scientists issue a Code Red warning in the IPCC 6th Assessment

At almost 4,000 pages, the full IPCC report, **Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis**, is a comprehensive compilation and assessment of the latest research by the world’s scientists. More readable and less technical: the **Summary for Policymakers** , or the official **Fact Sheet** . The U.N. **press release announcement** was accompanied by warnings of the “Code Red” situation: irreversible climate-related damage is already underway across the world, and immediate, strong and sustained reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are urgently needed. The report was summarized widely: for example, in **“Global Climate Panel’s Report: No Part of the Planet Will be Spared”** (*Inside Climate News*, Aug. 9); by Carbon Brief [here](#) ; or by *The Guardian* [here](#) .

An analysis of coverage by 17 international newspapers found that Canadian news outlets, with the exception of the *Toronto Star*, were particularly poor at explaining the IPCC report – as summarized in **“When Dire Climate News Came, Canada’s Front Pages Crumpled”** in (*The*

Tyee, Aug. 19). However, outside of the mainstream media, here are some noteworthy examples of Canadian news coverage:

“Climate scientist John Fyfe explains why new IPCC report shows ‘there’s no going back’”
(The Narwhal, Aug. 12)

“It’s Code Red for the Climate. Will BC Do Anything about It?” (The Tyee, Aug. 10)

Two blogs by David Suzuki in *Rabble.ca* **“Climate report shows world pushed to the brink by fossil fuels”** and **“IPCC report could be a legal game-changer for climate”** (Sept. 1)

“IPCC warns of climate breakdown, politicians warn of each other” (National Observer, Aug. 9)

“U.N. Climate Report scapegoats ‘human activity’ rather than fossil-fuel capitalism”
(Breach Media), which states: “We should welcome the latest IPCC Report for its scientific insight. But we should also understand it as an ideological document that obscures the crucial systemic causes of climate change. For advice on what social forces could push forward climate solutions, readers will have to look beyond the thousands of pages generated by the IPCC.”

Extreme weather disasters caused US\$ 3.64 trillion, 2 million deaths between 1970 and 2019

A second new international scientific report is ***The WMO Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes (1970–2019)***, released on August 31 by the World Meteorological Organization. It aggregates and analyses statistics on world disasters, with continent-level breakdowns. It reports that there were more than 11,000 disasters attributed to weather, climate and water-related hazards between 1970 and 2019, accounting for just over 2 million deaths and US\$ 3.64 trillion in economic losses. This represents 50% of all recorded disasters, 45% of related deaths and 74% of related economic losses over the last 50 years. Food for thought for those who say that fighting climate change is too expensive!

The *WMO Atlas* includes an extensive discussion of current and new statistical disaster databases, and how they can be used to reduce loss and damage. It also includes a brief explanation of “attribution research”, which seeks to determine whether disasters are human-caused. (A **recent article** in *Inside Climate News* is more informative on the issue of attribution science, highlighting the research of the **World Weather Attribution** network, which has already published its findings about the German flooding in July 2021).

Finally, on September 3, the WMO also published the first issue of its ***Air Quality and Climate Bulletin*** , highlighting the main factors that influence air quality patterns in 2020 – including a section titled **“The impact of Covid-19 on air quality.”** The Bulletin concludes that there is “an intimate connection between air quality and climate change. While human-caused emissions of air pollutants fell during the COVID-19 economic turndown, meteorological extremes fuelled by climate and environmental change triggered unprecedented sand and dust storms and wildfires that affected air quality.... This trend is continuing in 2021. Devastating wildfires in North America,

Europe and Siberia have affected air quality for millions, and sand and dust storms have blanketed many regions and travelled across continents.”

In another section, “Global mortality estimates for ambient and household air pollution” the new Bulletin states that global mortality increased from 2.3 million in 1990 to 4.5 million in 2019 (92% due to particulate matter, 8% due to ozone). Regionally, present-day total mortality is greatest in the super-region of Southeast Asia, East Asia and Oceania, with 1.8 million total deaths.

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [attribution](#), [climate change and health](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [climate liability](#), [Covid 19](#), [Disasters](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s public pensions at risk of stranded assets, as fund managers increase fossil investments

Posted on **September 7, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An Insecure Future: Canada’s biggest public pensions are still banking on fossil fuels was released by the Corporate Mapping Project in mid-August . It examines the investments of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) and the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ) over a five-year period from 2016 to 2020 – the two together manage \$862.7 billion, which fund the pensions of over 26 million Canadians. The report finds that, despite public declarations and climate strategies, CPPIB increased the number of shares in oil and gas companies by 7.7 per cent between 2016 and 2020. The CDPQ in 2017 pledged to increase its low-carbon investments by 50 per cent by 2020, but the authors calculate there was only a 14% drop in fossil fuel investments between 2016 and 2020, and also note that overall, the CDPQ holds over 52 per cent more fossil fuel shares than the CPPIB. The paper also highlights the funds’ investments in individual fossil fuel companies, including ExxonMobil ; TC Energy ; Enbridge; the world’s highest-producing coal companies, and in companies that are members of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. The numbers are startling, and demonstrate a high potential for stranded assets which will threaten Canadians’ pension security.

The authors propose a number of policy changes, including a call for Canadian public pension fund trustees/investment boards to “ Immediately design a plan to phase out fossil fuel investment in alignment with targets set by the Paris Agreement to limit global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius” and re-invest in renewables. Recommendations for the federal government include : “mandate a clear timeline for public pensions to withdraw from all fossil fuel investments. Define reinvestment criteria that support a just and equitable transition to a renewable-based energy system” .

The report is summarized in “[For climate’s sake, Canada Pension Plan needs to take a serious look at its investments](#)” (National Observer, September 7th), which also summarizes the “oily” corporate connections of the decision-makers of the CPPIB, and highlights the current election promises related to financial regulation of our pension funds.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec](#), [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Benefits of wind energy exceed its cost

Posted on [September 3, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Land-based Wind Energy Report 2021](#) released by the U.S. Department of Energy states that wind power represented the largest source of U.S. electric-generating capacity additions in 2020 – constituting 42% of all new capacity additions, with the state of Texas maintaining its status as having the most wind energy capacity. A forecasted decrease in land-based wind installation for 2022 and 2023 is attributed to the scheduled expiration of federal tax credits and anticipated growth of offshore wind.

Health and climate benefits of Wind

In addition to providing statistics and analyzing trends, the [Land-based Wind Energy Report 2021](#) states that “The health and climate benefits of wind are larger than its grid-system value, and the combination of all three far exceeds the levelized cost of wind. Wind reduces emissions of carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide, providing public health and climate benefits. Nationally, these benefits averaged \$76/MWh. almost three times the average LCOE ” (which has fallen to around \$33/MWh nationally).

A second new report from the U.S. Department of Energy is [Offshore Wind Market Report: 2021 Edition](#), which provides detailed information about technology and market trends in the U.S. and globally. The report describes the status of over 200 global operating offshore wind energy projects through December 31, 2020, with an update about the most significant domestic developments and events from January 1, 2020, through May 31, 2021. It also describes projects in various stages of development – stating that global offshore wind energy deployment is expected to accelerate in the future, and citing a forecast by Bloomberg New Energy Finance of a seven-fold increase in global cumulative offshore wind capacity by 2030. In the U.S., the expansion and growth of the offshore wind energy market is primarily attributed to increasing state-level procurement targets in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic, and growing infrastructure investments needed to keep pace with development. The Biden Administration’s national target goal of 30-GW-by-2030 goal is also noted (and is described in this [White House Fact Sheet](#) from March 2021). The report estimates that the average levelized cost of energy (LCOE) of fixed-bottom offshore

wind energy installations is now below \$95/megawatt-hour (MWh) globally –a decrease ranging from 28-51% between 2014 and 2020. The experts surveyed for the report predict LCOE levels of approximately \$56/MWh by 2030, and a range of \$44/MWh to \$72/MWh by 2050.

On 9 September, the Global Wind Energy Council will provide more statistics, when it releases its third annual *Global Offshore Wind Report 2021*. In the September 3 [press release](#) announcing the GWEC 2nd Quarter Report, the Council observed “Overly complex and bureaucratic permitting procedures remain a critical market barrier, which creates high attrition rates for project applications and are slowing down wind power deployment in countries around the world, from Germany to India. To achieve our international climate targets, a sensible and positive regulatory environment needs to be in place to ensure successful procurement and smooth project timelines for both onshore and offshore wind.” In July, the Council and 25 wind energy company CEO’s sent an [Open Letter](#) to G20 Ministers, calling on them to “get serious” about wind energy, and citing the International Energy Agency (IEA) assessment that annual wind deployment must quadruple from 93 GW in 2020 to 390 GW in 2030 to meet a net zero by 2050 scenario.

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

Impact on labour of the electrification of vehicles: new reports from Canada and Europe

Posted on **August 31, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In late August, the Pembina Institute released [Taking Charge: How Ontario can create jobs and benefits in the electric vehicle economy](#), discussing the economic and job creation potential for Canada’s main vehicle manufacturing province. The report considers manufacturing, maintenance, and the development and installation of charging infrastructure. Its modeling estimates that, “if Ontario were to grow its EV market to account for 100% of total light-duty automobile sales as of 2035, direct, indirect and induced economic benefits associated with EV manufacturing would include over 24,200 jobs, and over \$3.4 billion in GDP in 2035. In this scenario, Ontario’s EV charger and maintenance sectors can additionally benefit from nearly 23,200 jobs, and over \$2.7 billion in GDP in 2035.”

The report concludes with seven policy recommendations which centre on stimulating consumer demand and encouraging private capital to invest in electric vehicles and infrastructure, and which include the establishment of an Ontario Transportation Electrification Council. Such a council is seen as a coordinating body for “the departments responsible for transportation, economic development, energy, natural resources, and environment as well as labour, training, and skills development.”

Taking Charge includes a short discussion of the impacts on labour, relying largely on the analysis by the Boston Consulting Group, published in September 2020 as **Shifting Gears in Auto Manufacturing**. That report states that the labour requirements to assemble Battery Electric Vehicles and Internal Combustion Engine Vehicles are comparable — with the example of such tasks as fuel-tank installation and engine wiring shifting to battery alignment and charging-unit installation during vehicle assembly. However, the report sees a likely shift from assembly work to parts suppliers, in the likely event that automakers choose not to manufacture batteries in-house. In that scenario, The Boston Consulting Group analysis forecasts that labour hours would be reduced by 4%. The Pembina discussion concludes with:

“To maximize the potential for the shift to electrification to contribute to a just transition for autoworkers, policymakers should keep in mind changes in labour and skills requirements within the value chain, as well as the importance of keeping as much of the EV supply chain within the province as possible.”

In Europe: The new **Fit for 55** legislative proposals introduced on July 14, if approved, will mandate that vehicles’ average emissions are reduced by 55 percent in 2030 and 100 percent in 2035. Several publications have followed, including: a Clean Energy Wire Fact Sheet, **“How many jobs are at risk from the shift to electric vehicles?”**, which concludes that there is greater risk of job loss amongst the supply chain manufacturers than at the big assemblers such as VW Group (Volkswagen, Audi, Porsche, Skoda and Seat brands), Stellantis (Fiat, Peugeot, Citroen, Opel/Vauxhall), the Renault Group, BMW and Daimler (Mercedes).

Trade magazine *Automotive Logistics* published **“Electrifying Europe: EU ‘Fit for 55’ legislation will transform the automotive supply chain”** on August 23(restricted access), emphasizing that the new policy would “completely transform” the industry.

The European Automobile Manufacturers’ Association (ACEA) published **Making the transition to zero-emission mobility: Enabling factors for alternatively-powered cars and vans in the European Union**, a thorough analysis of the entire supply chain. And following an “auto summit” in August, involving industry, unions, and senior German government officials including Chancellor Angela Merkel, the details of a “future fund” of one billion euros by 2025 were revealed, as summarized in **“Billions in taxes for e-mobility”** (Aug. 18). Despite this support for the manufacturers, concerns remain regarding the capacity of charging infrastructure – summarized in **“The loading chaos remains even after the car summit: More electric cars, too few charging stations”** (Aug. 20).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada, electric vehicle manufacture, Electric Vehicles, Germany** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada can achieve net-zero electricity by 2035: Jaccard and Griffin

Posted on **August 31, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report by energy economists Mark Jaccard and Brad Griffin asserts that it is possible for Canada to achieve net-zero electricity by 2035, and describes and models how this can be achieved within the challenging jurisdictional structure. ***A Zero-Emissions Canadian Electricity System by 2035*** focuses on zero-emission policies that the federal government has the authority to implement, chiefly through the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, which has allowed the federal government to establish an industrial output-based pricing system. However, the report recognizes that the electricity sector is primarily a matter of provincial jurisdiction, resulting in wide variations which are described in a summary of the status and key features for each province. The report models two different future scenarios, both of which assume substantial growth of solar, wind, and other renewables; the growth of energy storage capacity; and continued resistance to interprovincial grid development. However, one scenario assumes continued use of fossil-fuel electricity generation with carbon capture and storage in Alberta and Saskatchewan, along with the development of large hydro in Atlantic Canada. In terms of cost, the authors state that the scenario allowing for fossil fuel generation will be cheaper in the short-term, and more expensive in the long-term. The authors recommend that the government continue with the existing structure of federal-provincial equivalency-based carbon pricing systems, but that those agreements be monitored by Canada's Net-Zero Advisory Body, "using the assessment expertise of the **Canadian Institute for Climate Choices**". (It should be noted that author Mark Jaccard is a member of the Institute's Expert Panel on Mitigation).

The report was commissioned by the David Suzuki Foundation, in collaboration with the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, the Ecology Action Centre and the Pembina Institute. A summary by Mark Jaccard appears [in his blog](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Electricity industry](#), [Greenhouse gas pollution pricing act](#), [output-based carbon allocations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations for increased climate action by federal and provincial governments

Posted on **August 31, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Pembina Institute and the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University published ***All Hands on Deck: An assessment of provincial, territorial and federal readiness to deliver a safe climate*** on July 24. Although completed before the election call, the report is a timely and helpful assessment of where we stand, what our ambitions should be, and reminds us that GHG emissions reduction is not up to the federal government alone. The report examines each province, territory and the federal government on 24 indicators across 11 categories, and concludes, in summary:

“The approach to climate action in Canada is piecemeal. It also lacks accountability for governments who promise climate action but don’t have timelines or policies to match the urgency of the situation. Despite the fast-approaching 2030 target, 95% of emissions generated in Canada are not covered by either a provincial or territorial 2030 target or climate plans independently verified to deliver on the 2030 target. No jurisdiction has developed pathways to describe how net-zero can be achieved.”

The report states that Canada’s overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have dropped by only 1% between 2005 and 2019, and forecasts a national emissions reduction of 36% below 2005 levels by 2030, even accounting for the measures announced in ***A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy*** plan, released in Dec. 2020. Despite the major impact of economy-wide carbon pricing and the phase-out of coal-fired electricity, emissions from other sources, particularly from transportation and oil and gas production, have increased since 2005.

Taken in an international context, Canada has the third highest per capita emissions among the 36 OECD countries (approximately 1.6 times the OECD average), and was the second highest per capita emitter amongst the G7 countries in 2018. Perhaps most troubling, Canada is not moving fast enough to change – it has one of the lowest percentage reductions in GHG emissions per capita between 2005 and 2018. The ***All Hands on Deck report*** offers specific recommendations for improvement for each province, as well as the following sixteen objectives that all jurisdictions should act on, listed below:

1. Set higher emissions reduction targets and shrinking carbon budgets. Governments prepared to deliver on climate promises will:

- Commit to net-zero emissions by 2050 and model a pathway to achieve that goal
- Commit to a 2030 target aligned with Canada’s historic contribution and ability to mitigate climate change
- Translate targets into carbon budgets.

2. Make governments accountable. Accountability requires that federal, provincial and territorial governments:

- Create an independent accountability body, and mandate independent evaluation and advice to the legislature, not the government of the day

- Legislate targets and carbon budgets for regular, short-term milestones between 2021 and 2050
- Mandate a requirement that climate mitigation plans, including actions to achieve legislated milestones, adaptation plans and evaluations, are tabled in their respective legislatures.

3. Prioritize reconciliation and equity. To begin the process of building reconciliation and equity into climate policy, governments need to:

- Pass legislation committing to full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Commit to monitoring, publicly reporting on, and mitigating the impacts of climate change and climate change policy on Indigenous Peoples and their rights
- Commit to monitoring, publicly reporting on, and mitigating the gendered, socio-economic and racial impacts of climate change and climate change policy.

4. Set economy-wide sectoral budgets and map net-zero pathways. In nearly every province and territory, either oil and gas or transportation (or both) are the largest source of emissions. As such, governments need to:

- Set economy-wide sectoral budgets and strategies at national, provincial, and territorial levels
- Prioritize emissions reductions in the highest-emitting sectors
- Decarbonize electricity by 2035.

5. Plan for a decline in oil and gas. The federal government, and governments in fossil fuel-producing provinces and territories, need to:

- Create transition plans for the oil and gas sector that are based on net-zero pathways and include comprehensive strategies to ensure a just and inclusive transition.

6. Accelerate the push to decarbonize transportation. Governments need to:

- Mandate 100% zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) sales by 2035 and provide incentives for purchase and infrastructure
- Develop decarbonization strategies for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles and goods movement
- Develop and fund public transit and active transportation strategies.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Strategy for Greening Government needs improvement, and Canada Post sets unambitious targets

Posted on **August 30, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Although the federal government is directly responsible for only 0.3% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions (mostly through its buildings and fleet operations), it also has the potential to act as a model for emissions reductions by other governments and corporations. Yet surprisingly, federal government emissions have risen by 11% since 2015 (after falling between 2005 and 2015), according to ***Leading the Way? A critical assessment of the federal Greening Government Strategy***, released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in early August.

The report describes and critiques how the **Green Government Strategy** works. It identifies three main problem areas: 1. The Strategy doesn't include the biggest public emitters, such as the Department of National Defence, nor federal Crown corporations like Canada Post, Via Rail and Canada Development Investment Corporation; 2. there is a lack of urgency and specificity in the Strategy itself; and 3. there is inadequate support for the public service to administer the Strategy, and to manage its own workplace operations. The report states: "Public service unions have a role to play in pushing for these sorts of changes to reduce workplace emissions, including through the appointment of workplace green stewards and the inclusion of green clauses in collective bargaining."

Canada Post, one of the Crown Corporations mentioned in the *Leading the Way* report, released its **Net Zero 2050 Roadmap** on August 6, setting goals to:

- "reduce scope 1 (direct) and scope 2 GHG emissions (from the generation of purchased electricity) by 30 per cent by 2030, measured against 2019 levels;
- use 100 per cent renewable electricity in its facilities by 2030; and
- engage with top suppliers and Canada Post's subsidiaries so that 67% of suppliers (by spend) and all subsidiaries adopt a science-based target by 2025."

In reaction to the *Net Zero Roadmap*, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers issued a press release, "**Canada Post's Unambitious Emissions Targets Disappoint CUPW**", which highlights that the newly-released Roadmap calls only for 220 electric vehicles in a fleet of over 14,000. CUPW offers more details about its goals for electrifying the fleet in its ***Brief to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on Bill C-12*** in May, and sets out its broader climate change proposals in its updated ***Delivering Community Power*** plan.

Regarding the Canada Post delivery fleet: The [Canada Post Sustainability Report of 2020](#) reports statistics which reveal that Canada Post has favoured hybrid vehicles, with more than 353 new hybrid electric vehicles added in 2020, bringing the total number of “alternative propulsion vehicles” in the fleet to 854, or 6.5%. Canada Post pledges to use other means to reduce delivery emissions, for example by using telematics to optimize routing, to use electric trikes for last-mile delivery (see a CBC story re the Montreal pilot [here](#)), and by piloting electric vehicle charging stations for employees at mail processing plants in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver, and at the Ottawa head office. Canada Post is also a member of the [Pembina Institute’s Urban Delivery Solutions Initiative \(USDI\)](#), a network which also includes environmental agencies and courier companies, to research emissions reduction in freight delivery.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada Post](#), [Canadian Union of Postal Workers \(CUPW\)](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [fleet purchases](#), [Government operations](#), [government workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Industrial policy in Europe and new “Fit for 55” proposals

Posted on **August 30, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

For a fair and effective industrial climate transition is a working paper newly published by the European Trade Union Institute, evaluating the support mechanisms for heavy industry (such as steel, cement and chemicals) over the past twenty years. Looking specifically at Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany, the paper describes and evaluates policies related to the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), energy tariffs, and other taxes and subsidies at the national level. The authors conclude that the policies have largely been defensive and insufficiently ambitious, and have had negative distributional effects. They call for a more cooperative approach across EU national jurisdictions, and highlight some “best case” current practices, particularly from the Netherlands. Finally, the paper makes specific suggestions for future transition roadmaps which incorporate a “polluter pays” approach, and which incorporate an environmental and social evaluation of all subsidies, tax breaks and other support mechanisms.

The ETUI working paper was completed before the European Commission announced its **‘Fit for 55’ package** on July 14 – proposals for legislative reforms to reduce emissions by at least 55% from 1990 levels by 2030. Fit for 55 includes comprehensive and controversial proposals which must survive negotiation and debate before becoming law, but offer reforms to the Renewable Energy Directive, the Energy Taxation Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive, and the European ETS, including a carbon border adjustment mechanism. Also included: a circular economy action plan, an EU biodiversity strategy, and agricultural reform. *The Guardian* offers an [Explainer here](#); the *Washington Post* [calls](#) the scope of the proposals “unparalleled”, and highlights for example the transportation proposals, which mandate reducing new vehicles’ average emissions by 55

percent in 2030 and 100 percent in 2035, which “amounts to an outright ban of internal combustion engine vehicles by 2035”.

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Environmental racism in Nova Scotia and calls for changes to Canadian climate change policy

Posted on **August 27, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“Environmental Racism and Climate Change: Determinants of Health in Mi’kmaq and African Nova Scotian Communities” was published in July by the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices. Author Ingrid Waldron, HOPE Chair in Peace and Health at McMaster University, presents case studies of several communities, based on her nine-year research and advocacy **ENRICH project** at Dalhousie University. The article links to the ENRICH **Project Map**, which locates polluting industries in Nova Scotia, showing the proximity of waste incinerators, waste dumps, thermal generating stations, and pulp and paper mills near Mi’kmaq and African communities. Specific communities described in some detail include historic sites such as the Sydney tar ponds and Africville, as well as lesser-known examples and more current disputes, such as Boat Harbour and the Alton Gas dispute near Shubenacadie.

These are examples of environmental racism, “the idea that marginalized and racialized communities disproportionately live where they are affected by pollution, contamination, and the impacts of climate change, due to inequitable and unjust policies that are a result of historic and ongoing racism and colonialism.” Such locations, combined with such “structural determinants” of health as income and employment, come together to make residents more susceptible and sensitive to climate change impacts, and Waldron concludes the article with recommendations for policies to achieve “health equity”. These include: environmental justice legislation focused on eliminating differential exposure to, and unequal protection from, environmental harms, (such as **Bill C-230**, the private member’s bill by Lenore Zann). Waldron also states: “health equity impact assessment must be incorporated into the environmental assessment and approval process to examine and address the cumulative health impacts of environmental racism in Indigenous and Black communities that are outcomes of long-standing social, economic, political, and environmental inequities.” More broadly, her **accompanying blog**, states : “To be effective, climate policy must focus on undoing the structural inequities that lead to power imbalances within society and, consequently, differential exposure to climate devastation.”

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Global heating, health, earnings, and environmental justice

Posted on **August 25, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Most Canadians experienced global heating directly this summer – and in British Columbia, the chief coroner attributed 570 of the 815 sudden deaths during the June extreme heat event to the record-breaking temperatures, as **reported by the CBC**. “**July 2021 was Earth’s hottest month ever recorded, NOAA finds**” (*Washington Post*, Aug. 13) states that the combined land and ocean-surface temperature in July was 1.67 degrees Fahrenheit above the 20th-century average, with North America 2.77 F above average. **The IPCC Report** released in August includes long-term temperature trends in its overview of the physical impacts of climate change, and makes dire forecasts for the future.

Health, earnings, and environmental justice

Two new medical articles on the theme of heat and health appeared in the prestigious journal **The Lancet**, and are summarized in “**Extreme heat-caused deaths have jumped 74% in the last 30 years**” in *Axios* in August.

Examining the economic impacts on workers, in mid-August the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) released **Too hot to work: Assessing the Threats Climate Change Poses to Outdoor Workers**. The UCS report is summarized in “**If we ignore climate change, it will be hell on outdoor workers**” in HuffPost, re-posted by the *National Observer* on August 24. One of its unique findings: a forecast that between now and 2065, (assuming no action to reduce global emissions), the exposure to hazardous levels of heat will quadruple, resulting in a potential loss of 10 percent or more of earnings annually for more than 7.1 million US workers. Economy-wide, this translates into up to \$55.4 billion of earnings at risk annually. In **Health Costs of Climate Change**, published by the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices published in June 2021, the estimate for Canada was that the labour productivity impact of higher temperatures is projected as “a loss of 128 million work hours annually by the end of century—the equivalent of 62,000 full-time equivalent workers, at a cost of almost \$15 billion.”

Too Hot to Work counts farm labourers and construction workers, but also truck drivers, delivery and postal workers, firefighters, police, and forestry workers as outdoor workers. Given that Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino workers disproportionately comprise many U.S. outdoor occupations, the report highlights the environmental justice aspects of extreme heat. This environmental justice aspect has been described anecdotally by many articles over the summer – notably, in the poignant text and photos of “**Postcard From Thermal: Surviving the Climate Gap in Eastern Coachella Valley**” (*ProPublica*, Aug. 17), which contrasts the living conditions of the wealthy in California, living relatively unaffected, and the real suffering of the mainly immigrant workers who live close by and work on the farms and as service workers.

Climate crisis a key issue in Canada's election campaign

Posted on **August 25, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Apparently prompted by a desire to strengthen his political power, Prime Minister Trudeau called a federal election, to be held on September 20. Following this summer of heat, drought and wildfires, the climate emergency is top of mind for voters – for example, 46% of Canadians ranked climate change as one of their top three issues of concern in the election, in an [Abacus Data poll](#) commissioned by the Professional Institute of the Public Service and The Broadbent Institute, summarized [here](#). Two leadership debates are planned, on September 8 (French language) and September 9 (English language). But as reported by *The Tyee*, four elders of Canada's climate community sent an open letter to the head of the Leaders Debate Commission, calling for a special Climate Emergency Leadership Debate as well – described in "[Suzuki, Atwood, Ondaatje, Lewis Call for Emergency Leaders Debate on Climate](#)" (Aug. 18, *The Tyee*).

The full platform statements of the major parties, as of August 25, are here: [Liberal](#); [Conservative](#), (with the climate plan, [Secure the Environment](#), in a separate document); [New Democratic Party](#), (with specific climate action commitments [here](#), plus on Aug. 23 Leader Jagmeet Singh pledged to [eliminate fossil fuel subsidies](#) "once and for all"); and the [Green Party](#), whose proposals are not gathered in one document, but who have made a clear [statement on Just Transition](#).

The *National Observer* offers an explainer summarizing the climate platform proposals of each of the main federal parties, [here](#), and Shawn McCarthy contrasts the Liberal and Conservative platforms in "[Climate crisis remains wedge issue on campaign trail](#)" (*Corporate Knights*, Aug. 23). More analysis will no doubt follow – watch the *National Observer* Special section of the election [here](#); sign up [here](#) for *The Tyee* election newsletter, *The Run*; follow the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Election coverage and commentary at <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/Election44>; or the Council of Canadians coverage [here](#). New indie newsletter *The Breach* also offers election coverage, including "[Wielding the balance of power](#)", analysing the historical record of minority governments in Canada.

What are the demands and proposals from climate and labour groups?

The [Canadian Labour Congress](#) hasn't so far released specific statements regarding climate policies, but has spoken out against Conservative proposals which might lead to [privatization of](#)

pensions and restriction to EI (also criticized by the **National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE)**), and **against O’Toole’s outreach to workers** – summarized in *“O’Toole’s rhetoric cannot hide his record of hurting workers”* by the CBC.

Unifor’s 2021 Election campaign is sponsoring TV and social media ads, targeting O’Toole’s Conservatives as taking Canada in the wrong direction.

United Steelworkers have a clear statement of support for the New Democratic Party at their election website. Their support statement doesn’t mention any climate-related policies.

Public Service Alliance of Canada surveyed their membership in June, and found approximately half ranked climate change as a top concern, with a focus on what the federal government and military can do to reduce their impact. PSAC calls for a commitment “ to a diversified, green economy that supports workers and communities, serves the wellbeing of society, and drastically cuts our greenhouse gas emissions.”

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) released a statement of approval of the NDP transit and transportation policies.

Let’s Build Canada is a coalition of building and construction trade unions, advocating for candidates and political parties “to commit to supporting Canadian workers and well-paying, middle-class jobs.” This includes: supporting labour mobility in the construction industry; building good green jobs and a just transition for energy workers; and government programs and initiatives to support the workforce. (Coalition members include: **International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers**; **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)**; **International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT)**; **Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART)**; **International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers**; **United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA)**; and **Canada’s Building Trades Unions**).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **climate change and politics**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **labour union policies** | [Leave a reply](#)

GHG emissions rising as governments fail to “Build back better”

Posted on **July 22, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Analysis released by the International Energy Agency on July 20 warns that 2023 is now on track to see the highest levels of carbon dioxide output in human history, equalling or surpassing the record set in 2018. Why? According to analysis based on the new [IEA Sustainable Recovery Tracker](#), more than US\$16 trillion has been spent on the COVID-19 recovery, but only 2% is going to clean energy investments. The report calls for first world countries and agencies such as the IMF to provide more sustainable financing so that emerging economies can improve their clean energy investment performance. The [IEA Sustainable Recovery Tracker](#) provides an exhaustive list of the green recovery programs for countries around the world, including Canada.

Also in July, Vivid Economics also released the sixth and final [Report of their Greenness of Stimulus Index \(GSI\)](#), which analyses the G20 countries plus ten other countries. Covid economic stimulus spending had a negative environmental impact in 20 of the 30 countries surveyed, and of the \$17.2 trillion spent, only 10% had been spent on projects which could be considered green. Denmark ranked first, Russia ranked last, and Canada outperformed the U.S. in terms of positive environmental impact of the economic stimulus. The Vivid report is summarized by The Guardian [here](#).

Others tracking the “greenness” of economic recovery, include [Carbon Brief](#), and the U.K. Trades Union Congress, which published [Ranking G7 Green Recovery Plans and Jobs](#) in June 2021. That report includes Canada and the other G7 countries as comparators to U.K. spending, with a focus on the job impacts.

An early study from researchers at Oxford University’s Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, was the influential academic paper in May 2020 : [“Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change?”](#)

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Canadian, Ontario governments launch youth consultations on climate issues

Posted on [July 21, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

It’s almost as if Canadian governments have noticed the international [Fridays for Future movement](#), or the [Sunrise Movement](#) in the U.S.! On July 21, both the federal and Ontario government announced the formation of youth councils, to engage with young people on climate issues. The federal Environment and Climate Change Youth Council was announced in this [press release](#), inviting Canadians between the ages of 18 to 25 to apply by August 18, to participate in

consultations regarding climate change, biodiversity loss, and how to better protect the natural environment. “In particular, inaugural members will engage on Canada’s top priorities, including achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and zero plastic waste by 2030.” Applicants must be sponsored/nominated by an NGO or charitable organization which relates to the mandate of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Ten people will be chosen to serve a two-year term on a voluntary basis and meet every four months. The Youth Council website, with application information, is [here](#).

In Ontario, high school youth are invited to apply by August 4th to be members of a Youth Environment Council, which will meet monthly from September to April 2021 to hear from expert guest speakers, discuss a range of environmental and climate change issues and provide input to ministry officials, including the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Details and an application form are [here](#).

Note to governments: the next [Global Fridays for Future Climate Strike](#) will be held on September 24, 2021, under the banner #UprootTheSystem. Demands are explained [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [Ontario](#), [public opinion](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Green Jobs Taskforce recommendations address green skills, Just Transition

Posted on **July 21, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On July 14, the Independent Green Jobs Taskforce delivered its report to the government of the United Kingdom, making fifteen recommendations on how best to deliver the green jobs and skills of the future. A summary of the report and steps taken to date appear in the [government’s press release](#). The full Report is [here](#), with an [Annex called Sectoral Transitions to Net Zero](#), profiling specific sectors and occupations.

The U.K. Trades Union Congress (TUC), which participated in the Taskforce, reacted with a blog post titled, [A greener economy can be positive for workers too](#), highlighting key recommendations – and pointing out real-world examples of best practice, including the example of collaboration between EDF and Unite, Prospect and GMB in [the successful creation of transition pathways for workers at Cottam coal power station](#) before it closed. The Senior Deputy General Secretary of the Prospect union was also member of the Green Jobs Taskforce, and summarized her thoughts in this blog: [“It’s time the government moved from lofty climate change ambitions to action”](#), saying “ I am pleased that the Green Jobs Taskforce not only uses the language of Just Transition, but recommends the establishment of a new national body to help

shape this change and ensure that no worker or community is left behind in the race for net zero. That recommendation is one of many that we on the task force have made to the government, including establishing a ‘green careers launchpad’, making sure that the curriculum reflects the green skills we will need in the future, and publishing a comprehensive net zero strategy ahead of November’s COP26 summit.”

The government will not endorse any of the Report’s recommendations immediately but they are promised to feed into the development of the U.K.’s Net Zero Strategy; in the meantime, “ a cross-cutting delivery group” has been established “to oversee the development and delivery of the government’s plans for green jobs and skills. This group will maintain the momentum generated by the Taskforce and drive meaningful action across the green skills agenda.”

The Green Jobs Taskforce **was established in November 2020** , and included labour representatives from the TUC and Prospect union, along with academics, business representatives and the training sector, including Construction Industry Training Board, Engineering Construction Industry Training Board, East London Institute for Technology, Retrofit Works, Edinburgh University and National Grid.

Related reports: Unionlearn (part of the TUC) published a labour education document, ***Cutting Carbon, Growing Skills: Green Skills for a Just Transition*** in March 2020, providing discussion and case studies.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [green skills](#), [Green skills training](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour education materials](#), [labour union policies](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia launches public consultation for Coastal Protection regulations

Posted on **July 21, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Recognizing the dangers of rising sea levels to their 13,000 km coastline, the government of Nova Scotia passed a **Coastal Protection Act** in 2019. On July 15 2021, two days before dissolving the Legislature and **calling a general election**, the provincial government **launched a new public consultation** on the Regulations, which, once passed, will enable the Act to come into force. Without duplicating the federal and municipal regulations which also exist to protect the coast, the proposed provincial regulations will define the “Coastal Protection Zone” where the act will apply; ensure that any construction on submerged Crown land (such as wharfs, infilling and shoreline protections) are designed, constructed, and/or situated where disruption of valuable coastal ecosystems is minimized. The Regulations will also apply to construction on private or public land (homes, cottages, commercial or industrial buildings), to minimize risk from sea level

rise, coastal flooding and erosion. The consultation will run from July 15, and will continue until Sept. 17. Documentation is available at <https://novascotia.ca/coast/>.

This follows **another public consultation process** regarding the province's GHG emissions reduction targets, which closed on July 26. Voting in the Nova Scotia election is scheduled for August 17, 2021.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **climate change legislation, Coastal Cities, Nova Scotia** | [Leave a reply](#)

California unions endorse a plan for Green Recovery and fossil fuel phase-out

Posted on **July 21, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A Program for Economic Recovery and Clean Energy Transition in California, released in June, is the ninth in a series of reports titled ***Green Economy Transition Programs for U.S. States***, published by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), and written by researchers led by Robert Pollin. In this latest report, the authors address the challenge of economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and contend that it is possible to achieve California's official CO2 emissions reduction targets—a 50 percent emissions cut by 2030 and zero emissions by 2045—and at the same time create over 1 million jobs. The investment programs they propose are based on the proposed national THRIVE Agenda, **(introduced into the U.S. Congress in February 2021)**, and rely on private and public investment to energy efficiency, clean renewable energy, public infrastructure, land restoration and agriculture. The report discusses these sectors, as well as the manufacturing sector, and also includes a detailed just transition program for workers and communities in the fossil fuel industry.

In Chapter 6, "*Contraction of California's Fossil Fuel Industries and Just Transition for Fossil Fuel Workers*", the authors note that only 0.6% of California's workforce was employed in fossil fuel-based industries in 2019 – approx. 112,000 workers. They model two patterns for the industry contraction between 2021-2030: steady contraction, in which employment losses proceed evenly, by about 5,800 jobs per year; and episodic contraction, in which 12,500 job losses occur in just three separate years, 2021, 2026, and 2030. After developing transition programs for both scenarios, they estimate that the average annual costs of episodic contraction would be 80% higher (\$830 million per year) than the costs of steady contraction (\$470 million per year). As with previous PERI reports, the authors emphasize the importance of the quality of jobs to which workers relocate: "It is critical that all of these workers receive pension guarantees, health care coverage, re-employment guarantees along with wage subsidies to insure they will not experience income losses, along with retraining and relocation support, as needed. Enacting a generous just

transition program for the displaced fossil fuel-based industry workers is especially important. At present, average compensation for these workers is around \$130,000. This pay level is well above the roughly \$85,000 received by workers in California's current clean energy sectors.” ***Relief Programs for Displaced Oil & Gas Workers Elements of an Equitable Transition for California's Fossil Fuel Workers*** is a 2-page Fact Sheet summarizing the chapter.

The report was commissioned by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299, the California Federation of Teachers, and the **United Steelworkers Local 675**, which represents workers in the oil and chemical industry. The report has been endorsed by nineteen labour unions – not only those who commissioned it, but also the Alameda Labor Council, Communication Workers of America District 9 ; International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers Local 21 ; various locals of the Service Employees International Union ; two locals of the United Auto Workers; UNITE HERE Local 30 ; United Steelworkers Local 5 ; and the University Professional and Technical Employees— Communications Workers of America 9119.

Lead author Robert Pollin is interviewed about the report in two articles: ***“Labor Unions Rally Behind California's Zero-Emissions Climate Plan”*** (*Truthout*, June 10) and ***“A Green Transition for California”*** (*American Prospect*, June 11), which includes a video of the interview.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **California, Clean energy industry, Clean Energy Investment, Just Transition, labour union policies, Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

Canada launches consultation for Just Transition legislation – updated

Posted on **July 20, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

On July 20, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources **announced** the launch of a public consultation on its long-promised Just Transition legislation. The accompanying **Discussion Paper** states: “ we are committed to developing legislation that could: · Include people-centred just transition principles that put workers and communities at the centre of the government's policy and decision-making processes on climate change action. · Establish an external Just Transition Advisory Body to provide the government with advice on regional and sectoral just transition strategies that support workers and communities.”

The Discussion Paper asks for feedback on these proposed Just Transition Principles, to be incorporated into legislation:

“1. Adequate, informed and ongoing dialogue on a people-centred, just transition should engage all relevant stakeholders to build strong social consensus on the goal and pathways to net zero.

2. Policies and programs in support of a people-centred, just transition must create decent, fair and high-value work designed in line with regional circumstances and recognizing the differing needs, strengths and potential of communities and workers.

3. The just transition must be inclusive by design, addressing barriers and creating opportunities for groups including gender, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, Black and other racialized individuals, LGBTQ2S+ and other marginalized people.

4. International cooperation should be fostered to ensure people-centred approaches to the net-zero future are advancing for all people. ”

The Discussion Paper poses a number of other questions, to which Canadians are invited to respond via email to nrcan.justtransition-transitionequitable.nrcan@canada.ca, or at www.just-transition.ca. Invitation-only stakeholder sessions will be held over the summer, and a “What we Heard” report is promised for Fall 2021, with updates at #JustTransition from <https://twitter.com/NRCan> .

Early reactions to the announcement are summarized in “***Now’s your chance to weigh in on Canada’s just transition***” (*National Observer*, July 21), which compiles reactions from politicians and the Director of Iron and Earth. Iron and Earth issued a separate email statement, citing **their recent poll which shows that 69% of surveyed fossil fuel workers are willing to switch to clean energy careers** . The emailed statement continues: “Fossil fuel industry workers have the knowledge and expertise to build Canada’s net-zero future that will support our families and communities – if they get the training they need. We’re pleased to hear Minister O’Regan say that fossil fuel industry workers will have a central role in the consultations for Just Transition legislation. Now it’s time to put those words into action. We’ll be watching to ensure fossil fuel industry and Indigenous workers have a seat at the table to ensure the legislation meets their needs and leaves no one behind.”

The government already has a useful discussion available to it, in ***Roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act*** , co-published on April 1 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) and summarized in “***Canada needs an ambitious, inclusive Just Transition Act***” (*National Observer*, April 1) by the report’s author Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood.

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Teaching climate change in Canada

Posted on **July 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Education International, which represents 32.5 million educators in 178 countries, launched a “**Teach for the Planet**” campaign in April 2021, with a ***Manifesto for Quality Climate Change***

Education for All . The **Canadian Teachers Federation** has endorsed the campaign, raising the profile of climate change amongst Canadian educators. Earlier, in January 2020, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) held its first **Climate Action Summit** in response to youth global climate strikes, which resulted in the launch of OISE's **Sustainability and Climate Action Plan** in February 2021. Although much of that Plan relates to the operation or governance of OISE as a teaching faculty within the University of Toronto, it also sets out goals and strategies to conduct an inventory of sustainability and environmental content in courses, expand sustainability and environmental content in curriculum, encourage research by faculty, and “consider sustainability expertise as an asset in the hiring of new staff and faculty.”

“Are Canadian schools raising climate-literate citizens?” (*Corporate Knights* magazine, Summer 2021), states that at best, K–12 sustainability and climate change content in schools is “uneven,” and provides an overview of grassroots initiatives amongst educators aiming to improve that situation. **Ellen Field**, an assistant professor in Lakehead University, is quoted: “We have a responsibility, especially for those who are educators, to be honest with young people about the reality of the urgency we are facing”. Field authored an important survey: **Canada, Climate Change and Education: Opportunities for Public and Formal Education** (2019), which among many findings, reports that teachers identified the three main barriers to more climate education: lack of time to include during class; lack of classroom resources; lack of professional knowledge.

Other examples of grassroots activism regarding climate education: Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF), housed at York University in Toronto is a national non-profit that promotes environmental awareness and social responsibility for students and teachers, and hosts **Resources for Rethinking**, an online collection of lesson plans, books, videos related to environmental, social and economic issues. (The B.C. Teachers Federation also offers a **collection of lesson plans**).

Climate Education Reform BC is a student-led coalition which published an **Open Letter** to the provincial education minister in April 2021, recommending 6 points, including revisions to climate change for K-12 curriculum, and support for teacher training.

The **Alberta Council for Environmental Education (ACEE)** has operated since 2005, and recently adopted the **K-12 Environmental Education Guidelines for Excellence**, published by the North American Association for Environmental Education. ACEE also maintains an online resource centre of teaching materials related to climate change, including professional development materials such as the quarterly **Green Teacher magazine** .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and youth, teachers, Youth and climate** | **Leave a reply**

Retrofitting Canadian buildings could bring 200,000 jobs, along with healthier spaces

Posted on July 19, 2021 by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada's Renovation Wave: A plan for jobs and climate was released by the Pembina Institute on July 14. Borrowing a term originated in a **2020 European Commission report**, the authors present a simplified scenario outlining how we could convert the 63% of Canadian buildings currently heated with natural gas or oil to electricity. This, combined with the rapid decarbonization of the electricity grid, would result in significantly lower carbon emissions while generating more than \$48 billion in economic development and creating up to 200,000 jobs. Drawing on a **2018 report from Clean Energy Canada**, ***Canada's Renovation Wave*** asserts that energy efficiency jobs are inherently labour intensive and create a higher number of jobs than other industries – for example, whole building retrofits are estimated to create an average of 9.5 gross direct and indirect jobs for every \$1 million invested.

The authors estimate that “priming the pump for this transformation” will require public investments of about \$10 to \$15 billion per year, from now until 2040 (or until appropriate regulatory drivers are in place). Much of this sum is directed to subsidies and incentive programs, but it also includes a recommendation for \$300 million per year to be spent on skill development, capacity building and recruitment to grow and diversify the energy efficiency and green building workforce.

Related reading: “***If heat waves become the new normal, how will our buildings have to change?***” (*The National Observer*, July 2) quotes Pembina author Tom-Pierre Frappé-Sénéclauze who relates the need for retrofitting to the health impacts of the recent B.C. heatwave.

Also, ***Canada's Climate Retrofit Mission*** emphasizes the urgency of the task and outlines market and policy innovations to speed up the process and achieve economies of scale to reduce costs. Authors Brendan Haley and Ralph Torrie state that, at the current pace, it will take 142 years to retrofit all low-rise residential buildings and 71 years to retrofit all commercial floor area in Canada. The report was published by Efficiency Canada in June 2021.

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B.C. burns while the government partners with Shell to research

carbon capture technology

Posted on **July 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As British Columbia mourns **over 800 lives lost in the June heat wave**, firefighters from Mexico and Quebec arrived to help fight **the province's raging forest fires**, more than **400 people have been arrested** protesting logging of Old Growth forests, and scientists have confirmed that oil and gas facilities in B.C. are producing 1.6 to 2.2 times more **methane pollution** than current estimates, it doesn't take long to find strong and serious criticism of the B.C. government's climate policies. A few recent examples:

"BC's Climate Adaptation Plan won't protect you from heat waves, or much else" by Andrew Gage of West Coast Environmental Law (July 9)

Subsidizing Climate Change 2021: How the Horgan government continues to sabotage BC's climate plan with fossil fuel subsidies, a report by Stand.earth

"B.C. is in a state of climate emergency with no emergency plan" by Seth Klein in (*National Observer*, July 19)

"Seven Big Warnings from the Killer Heat Wave" (*The Tyee*, July 19)

"Lytton Burned, People Died. Who Should Pay?" (*The Tyee*, July 13)

And on July 16, to add insult to injury, the **Premier announced the formation of a new B.C. Centre for Innovation and Clean Energy** to "help B.C.-based companies develop, scale up and launch new low-carbon energy technologies and will help establish B.C. as a global exporter of climate solutions." The province will partner with the federal government and Shell Canada to fund a new centre whose first priorities include carbon capture, hydrogen production, biofuels and battery technology. Stand.earth reacted with: **"Partnership with Shell Canada sets country and province on the wrong path to address climate change"**.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Carbon capture and storage \(CCS\)](#), [Royal Dutch Shell](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Scottish Trades Union Congress calls for a national energy company, and "Climate Skills Scotland"

Posted on **July 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Green Jobs in Scotland is a recent report commissioned by the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), written by economists at Transition Economics. In a highly-readable format, it sets out how Scotland can maximise green job creation, along with fair work with effective worker voice. It takes a sectoral approach, examining the changes needed, the labour market implications and job creation opportunities of those changes, and makes recommendations specific to the sector, for each of 1. Energy 2. Buildings 3. Transport 4. Manufacturing/Heavy Industry 5. Waste 6. Agriculture And Land-Use. As an example, the chapter on Energy is extensive and detailed, and includes recommendations to invest £2.5 billion – £4.5 billion (to 2035) in ports and manufacturing to supply large scale offshore renewables and decommissioning, 2. to establish a Scottish National Energy Company to build 35GW of renewables by 2050, as well as run energy networks and coordinate upgrades; and 3. Encourage local content hiring, with a target to phase in 90% lifetime local content for the National Energy Company. (Note that an auction is currently underway for rights to North Sea offshore development, as described by the BBC [here](#)).

Overall, the report concludes that smart policies and large-scale public investment will be required, and recommends “the creation of a new public body – Climate Skills Scotland – to play a co-ordinating and pro-active role to work with existing providers As many of the occupations in the energy, construction, and manufacturing industries are disproportionately male-dominated, Climate Skills Scotland and other public bodies should also work with training providers and employers to make sure climate jobs and training programmes follow recruitment best practice, and prioritise promotion and incentives to historically marginalised groups, including women, BAME people, and disabled people.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Green skills training](#), [Job Creation](#), [labour union policies](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Scotland](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil well clean-up can create jobs – but not the way Alberta spent Green Recovery funding

Posted on **July 15, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Big Cleanup: How enforcing the Polluter Pay principle can unlock Alberta’s next great jobs boom was released in June by the [Alberta Liabilities Disclosure Project](#) . It makes thirteen recommendations, including the creation of an independent, non-profit Reclamation Trust to wind down end-of-life companies and use their remaining revenue to fund the cleanup of their wells. The report states that implementing all its recommendations will create 10,400 jobs and generate \$750 million in wages, and contribute nearly \$2 billion Alberta’s Gross Domestic Product annually for the next 25 years. The report also includes new calculations and analysis on the growing crisis of Alberta’s oil and gas well liabilities, stating that the average projected cost of cleaning up

Alberta's over 300,000 unreclaimed oil and gas wells is \$55 billion dollars, with the top 20 Alberta municipalities alone facing \$34 billion in cleanup liabilities in their boundaries.

In April 2020, the government of Canada announced its Covid-19 Economic Response Plan, including \$1.72 billion directed toward the cleanup of inactive and abandoned oil and gas infrastructure across the western provinces. \$1 billion of this funding was directed to Alberta. Dianne Saxe, the former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, had been one of the early critics of this program, for example in "[Canada's murky bail-out deal for oil and gas will cost us all](#)" (*National Observer*, April 21). In early July, a further evaluation was published by Oxfam Canada, the Parkland Institute, and the Corporate Mapping Project : [Not Well Spent: A review of \\$1-billion federal funding to clean up Alberta's inactive oil and gas wells](#) . The report finds some alarming failures on many fronts – including that the program is not tracking methane emissions, so it is impossible to determine the emissions reduction impact. Author Megan Egler also cautiously argues that the public funds were used to accomplish what industry should have been responsible for, according to a polluter pays principle.

One of the stated goals of Alberta's \$1 Billion Site Rehabilitation Program (SRP) was to create 5,300 jobs. However, [Not Well Spent](#) states: " If this is met, funding of \$1billion will create 5,300 jobs at \$188,680 per job. This is \$41,800 more per job than money injected into the industry through the Orphaned Well Association to do similar work in 2018. There has been no clear explanation from the Government of Alberta why the public dollars to create one job are higher in the SRP program." The report also notes that 23% of the total amount of funds disbursed went to only five companies out of the 363; only 10% was allocated to clean-ups on Indigenous lands. The author makes recommendations for improvement in future funding, to ensure better accountability and transparency, which would be more consistent with a "polluter pays" objective.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Covid-19](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Job Creation](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [orphaned wells](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

69% of Canada's fossil fuel workers willing to move to clean energy jobs, says new poll

Posted on [July 15, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On July 14, Iron and Earth Canada released the results of online poll done on their behalf by Abacus Data , surveying 300 Canadians who currently work in the oil, gas, or coal sectors. The survey showed that 61% agreed with the statement: "Canada should pivot towards a net-zero emissions economy by 2050 to remain a competitive global economy", and 69% answered "yes" to "Would you consider making a career switch to, or expanding your work involvement in, a job in the net-zero economy?". The survey also measured workers' interest in skills training and

development for jobs in the net-zero economy, with 88% interested for themselves, and 80% supporting a National Upskilling Initiative .

Although workers reported a high degree of optimism for the future (58% agreed that “ I will likely thrive in a Canadian economy that transitions to net-zero emissions by 2050”), workers also expressed their concerns – with 79% of workers under age 45 worried about reduced wages, and 77% of workers under 45 worried about losing their job. 44% of all workers would not consider taking a clean economy job if it resulted in a wage cut.

The full survey results are [here](#) , with breakdowns by age, sex, province, occupation, and Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous. Articles summarizing the survey appeared in [The National Observer](#), [The Narwhal](#) , and [The Energy Mix](#).

On a related note: many younger people are not attracted to a future in the fossil fuel industry, as described in the recent CBC News article [“University of Calgary hits pause on bachelor’s program in oil and gas engineering”](#) (July 8), and [“U of C sees ‘remarkable’ drop in undergrads focusing on oilpatch engineering and geology “](#) (Oct. 6 2020).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Coal Industry](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Toronto passes new standards for new buildings, retrofits

Posted on **July 15, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

55% of GHG emissions in the city of Toronto are attributed to homes and buildings (60% of that from residential buildings and 40% from commercial and institutional buildings). On July 14, Toronto City Council took one more step to address those emissions, by approving new building policies. As described in the City’s [press release](#), the policies include a “Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy to decarbonize all existing residential, commercial and institutional buildings within the next 30 years; a Net Zero Carbon Plan to reduce emissions in City-owned buildings; and an update to the Toronto Green Standard to achieve net zero emissions in new development by 2030.”

The Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy: is expected to increase local building retrofit economic activity by 87 per cent over the next 30 years, and nearly double annual investment in existing buildings. It is also expected to create an additional 7,000 direct, full-time jobs in local construction, energy services and supportive work over 30 years. Further,

- it will begin with voluntary emissions performance measures and targets, transitioning to mandatory requirements in 2025, at which time it will require annual emissions performance

reporting and public disclosure;

- Expand and enhance retrofit financing;
- Support workforce development and training;
- City Council will lead by example with a plan to retrofit all City-owned buildings to net zero emissions by 2040.

The Green Standard for New Buildings: Emissions reductions in new buildings will be regulated by the newly approved the Toronto Green Standard Version 4. The original Toronto Green Standard was introduced in 2010 and has been updated approximately every 4 years. The latest Version 4 addresses requirements for “building energy and GHG reduction and electric vehicle parking, and introduces tracking of embodied emissions in building materials used in construction. It addresses resilience through enhanced green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff, reduce urban heat island impacts and promote biodiversity, including extensive and higher performance green roofs, bioswales, rain gardens, native pollinator species plantings and a new requirement for “green streets” (roads or streets that incorporate green infrastructure).”

Version 4 will apply to new development applications beginning on May 1, 2022.

According to Mayor John Tory: “Implementing this strategy will also be essential to public health and resilience in the face of a changing climate. Extreme heat is already causing an average of 120 premature deaths annually, and this number is expected to double by 2050 without strong action. Retrofit measures such as improving building envelopes and installing heat pumps greatly reduce exposure to extreme heat and will ensure Torontonians are safe during increasingly frequent and severe heat waves.”

Related reading:

“TAF congratulates the City of Toronto on passing two landmark low-carbon building policies” reaction by the Toronto Atmospheric Fund to Council’s new policies.

“‘No Vaccine for Climate Change’, Departing Toronto Energy Director Warns, in Critique of City’s Climate Performance” (The Energy Mix, April 2021) offers an overview of Toronto’s recent climate initiatives

Canada’s Climate Retrofit Mission, published by Efficiency Canada in June 2021. Authors Brendan Haley and Ralph Torrie state that, at the current pace, it will take 142 years to retrofit all low-rise residential buildings and 71 years to retrofit all commercial floor area in Canada. The report emphasizes the urgency of the task and outlines market and policy innovations to speed up the process and achieve economies of scale to reduce costs.

Efficiency Canada also recently released ***Codes4Climate: A Building Code Advocacy Toolkit***, to encourage net-zero energy performance through improvements to building codes across Canada.

Workforce 2030 website offers reports and information about the labour market aspects of green building skills for Ontario.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Building Codes, energy efficiency, green buildings, retrofitting, Toronto** | [Leave a reply](#)

Heat, fire, death in British Columbia show us the reality of climate change

Posted on **July 8, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The town of Lytton British Columbia became a real-world symbol of climate change for Canada, setting temperature records for three days, reaching 49.6 C (121.1 F) on June 29th — the highest ever recorded in Canada. The next day, the town was virtually destroyed by sudden, irresistible wildfire. As humans and animals have died in unprecedented numbers across the North American West from the heat, other effects were also recorded – wildfires and their smoke, damage to roads and rail lines, power outages, destruction of crops, deaths of shellfish, a shortage of emergency responders, and the stress of their work.

Here is a sampling from the cascade of news coverage:

“For third straight day, B.C. village smashes record for highest Canadian temperature at 49.6 C” (CBC News, June 29)

“Deaths Spike as Heat Wave Broils Canada and the Pacific Northwest” (New York Times, June 30)

“Most homes in Lytton destroyed by catastrophic fire minister says” (CBC, July 1)

“B.C. still a tinderbox as firefighters arrive from other provinces” (National Observer, July 6) – stating that there were 199 active wildfires in B.C. as of July 5 – 13 of which are “wildfires of note”, 5 of which merited evacuation orders.

“Stories of bravery amid ‘unimaginable horror’ of Lytton wildfire” (National Observer, July 8)

“Canadian inferno: northern heat exceeds worst-case climate models” (The Guardian, July 2)

“B.C.’s heat wave likely contributed to 719 sudden deaths in a week, coroner says — triple the usual number” (CBC News, July 2) – quoting the Chief Coroner that the province had previously experienced three heat-related deaths in the past three to five years before the heat wave.)

“More than a billion seashore animals may have cooked to death in B.C. heat wave, says UBC researcher” (CBC News, July 5,6)

“B.C. heat wave ‘cooks’ fruit crops on the branch in sweltering Okanagan and Fraser valleys” (CBC News, July 6)

“B.C. Wildfires damaged key rail lines, backloging Canada’s freight supply chain”(CBC News, July 8)

“North America has its hottest June on record” (NYTimes, July 7) – “average temperature was more than 2 degrees Fahrenheit higher than the average from 1991-2020” across North America”

Some Context and discussion:

“Just How Historic Was Western Canada’s Heat Wave? ‘Nothing Can Compare’” (*The Tyee*, July 3, reposted from Yale Climate Connections)

“Hundreds died during B.C.’s heat dome. Who is responsible for deaths caused by extreme heat?” (CBC News, July 7) . The article cites a 9-page ***memorandum by the Vancouver City Planning Commission (VCPC)*** which makes recommendations to address heat and air quality concerns, with an emphasis on equity and housing concerns for the unhoused and poorly housed.

“The Future of Fire in Canada” (*The Tyee*, July 5) by Ed Struzik, a fellow at the Institute for Energy and Environmental Policy at Queen’s University, author of *Firestorm, How Wildfire Will Shape Our Future*.

“BC’s Municipalities Are Not Economically Ready to Weather Disaster” (*The Tyee*, July 7)

“A Deadly Summer in the Pacific Northwest Augurs More Heat Waves, and More Deaths to Come” (Inside Climate News, July 1)

“The link between extreme weather and climate change” a media brief (June 28) in which Clean Energy Canada compiles links to studies on the topic.

The Limits of Livability (Climate and Health Alliance in Australia, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, and the WONCA Working Party for the Environment, June 2021) – a report on the smoke impacts on health from forest fires and climate change, with case studies of major recent fires in Australia, Canada and Brazil .

From a workers’ perspective:

“The case for a Youth Climate Corps in Canada” (*National Observer*, June 1) – Seth Klein includes disaster response as one of the tasks for his proposed Youth Climate Corps, to treat the climate disaster as an emergency.

“Heat wave shows that climate change is a workers rights issue” (*Portside*, July 2)

“Heat wave, wildfires underline need for climate action” (NUPGE, July 8) – statement by the National Union for Public and General Employees, whose members are firefighters and disaster workers.

“Orange skies: Biden raising federal pay to fight wildfires” (AP news, June 30) summarizes the White House press release, ***“Biden-Harris administration acts to address the growing wildfire threat”*** (June 30) – addresses a broad range of strategies including increasing firefighter pay (which currently has a start rate of \$13US/hour), and converting many seasonal positions to permanent status, acknowledging that wildfires are now an ongoing threat.

“Constant, compounding disasters are exhausting emergency response” (*Circle of Blue*, July 6) referring to the international scene and a call from the United Nations secretary general

“Let the Birds Eat Them’: Crops Shrivell as Heat Wave Hits Washington” (*New York Times*, July 3) – anecdotal reports of heat experiences, including for farm workers

And from the recent past:

“Hundreds Of Firefighters. 20 Bulldozers. Intentional Burns: Inside Washington’s \$328M Push To Break Cycle Of Disastrous Fires” (*InvestigateWest*, April 16, 2021)

A People’s Framework for Disaster Response: Rewriting the Rules of Recovery after Climate Disasters, a report written by Saket Soni and Andrea Cristina Mercado, published by Resilience Force in January 2020, takes an environmental justice perspective on the Florida response to hurricanes, with recommendations for victims and exploited disaster recovery workers.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, climate change and health, disaster response, health impacts, Heat Stress, heat waves, wildfires** | **Leave a reply**

Net-Zero Advisory Board debuts with a call for urgent action and real GHG reductions

Posted on **July 7, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Canada’s new Net-Zero Advisory Board has published its first report on a **newly-launched website** on July 5. The report, ***Net-Zero Pathways: Initial Observations***, outlines the ten values and principles that will guide the Board in its consideration of “transition pathways”, and in turn, determine the advice it will provide to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

This **Initial Observations** report is written in careful and diplomatic language, but provides an insight into the thinking and approach that this advisory body will take. The five foundational values include: “Put people first” (which calls for a just transition and states: “A just transition will lead to more equitable outcomes on gender, racial justice and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.”). Value #4 is “Collaborate every step of the way” (“Pathways must be multidisciplinary, taking into account the contributions of workers, economists, investors, engineers, entrepreneurs, social scientists, and Indigenous knowledge holders, among others. They must be grounded in the reality facing everyday, hardworking Canadians.”) and Value #5, recognizing political realities, is: “Recognize and respect regional differences and circumstances” . . . (“In many parts of the country, jobs, communities, and the economy are closely connected to GHG-intensive activities. Canada’s net-zero transition will take place in a context with tensions and tradeoffs, as well as benefits.”).

The five “design principles” begin with “Act early, and urgently”, and emphasize the need to “be bold and proactive” – pointing to the example of the recent **IEA Net-Zero by 2050 report**, and stating: “the public and private sectors need to be prepared to take appropriate risks and back potential “game changers” now—both in terms of new technologies and infrastructure.” At the same time, the report states that we should begin with known technologies – such as electrification and energy efficiency, and warns “Don’t get caught in the “net”” – stating that we must achieve actual emissions reductions, and warning “the “net” in “netzero” cannot become an excuse to allow continued emitting, growth of emissions, or slow action.” Finally, “Beware of dead-ends” states, “While there may be interim actions that serve as bridges on the path to net-zero, some projects or activities may obscure or misdirect us from the ultimate goal or lead to inaction.”

The analysis was the result of fourteen **briefing sessions** with Canadian and international net-zero experts, who were identified by a scan of the net-zero literature. Two appendices at the end of the report identify the experts and the reading list – which includes a cross-section of Canadian reports as well as international ones. The Net-Zero Advisory Board, consisting of fourteen members, was appointed by Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change on February 25, 2021, to serve as an ongoing, permanent body. One of the members is Hassan Yussuff, formerly President of the Canadian Labour Congress and now a Senator. The full terms of reference for the Board are [here](#) , and include an annual report to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change policies](#), [net zero policies](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Build back Better begins with funding to green Algoma Steel

Posted on **July 6, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On July 5, the federal government **announced** that \$420 million in federal funding will go to **Algoma Steel** in Sault Ste. Marie Ontario, to enable the company to retrofit their operations and

transform their coal-fired steelmaking processes to Electric-Arc Furnace production. The [press release](#) from the Prime Minister's Office explains that Electric-Arc Furnace production is an electricity-based process, expected to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by more than 3 million metric tonnes per year by 2030, making Algoma the "greenest" steelmaker in Canada. At the same time, the transformation will create an estimated 500 construction and subcontracting jobs, as well as over 600 new co-op placements for students, and approximately 75 high-tech STEM jobs.

The total cost of Algoma's transformation is estimated at \$703 million over four years – \$220 million will come from the federal Infrastructure Bank, and up to \$200 million from the [Net Zero Accelerator program](#), under the Strategic Innovation Fund. A major expenditure, but small compared to the \$23 billion worth of support the government has provided since 2018 to the Coastal GasLink, Trans Mountain, and Keystone XL pipelines, according to [a new report](#) from the International Institute for Sustainable Development .

Algoma's [press release](#) and its [Environmental policies](#) offer information about the company. A CBC summary of the funding announcement is [here](#), and the *Toronto Star* offers an Opinion piece, "[Justin Trudeau just gave one of Canada's biggest polluters hundreds of millions of dollars – why won't he show us the deal?](#)" (July 5) . In that essay, author Heather Scofield states: "Algoma was first in line to get the federal funding because it was meant to set the tone for building back better. Let's make sure it sets more than a tone, and actually sets standards of transparency, accountability and weaning our economy off fossil fuels too. "

Workers at Algoma are represented by United Steelworkers [Local 2251](#). From the national office, an article, "[Canada's Steel Industry Has A Secret Weapon That Could Soon Beat China's Cheaper Bid](#)" discusses the union's hope that government green procurement policies will favour Canadian-made, low-carbon steel in future infrastructure projects. A February 2021 report from BlueGreen Canada made the same point about steel, aluminum and lumber products in [Buy Clean: How Public Construction Dollars can create jobs and cut pollution](#) . The *Work and Climate Change Report* previously reviewed some of the Canadian and international reports about greening steel in 2020, [here](#) . In summer 2021, European developments have been profiled "[Green steel is picking up steam in Europe](#)" from Canary Media, and "[From Sweden, a Potential Breakthrough for Clean Steel](#)" in *Inside Climate News* (June 24).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [green steel](#), [steel industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Groundbreaking moment as Canada passes climate accountability law

Posted on [July 5, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Down to the wire on June 29, before adjourning for summer recess, the Senate of Canada passed **Bill C-12, An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050**. C-12 had been approved in the House of Commons on June 22, following a determined campaign by environmental advocacy groups, described by Climate Action Network-Canada [here](#). And Andrew Gage of West Coast Environmental Law wrote, urging passage in ***"To amend or not to amend – Why Bill C-12 should be passed even though it could be better"*** (June 16).

The reactions of many of those groups are compiled in ***"Senate Vote on Climate Accountability Act Counters 'Decades of Broken Promises'"*** (*The Energy Mix*, June 30) – including Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Climate Action Network-Canada, Ecojustice, Leadnow, and West Coast Environmental Law. Their general consensus was that the bill is far from perfect, but as Catherine Abreu of CAN_RAC states, it is: "a groundbreaking moment and ushers Canada into a new era of accountability to its climate commitments." EcoJustice provides an excellent summary and reaction [here](#), pointing out the positives, such as clearer, more detailed GHG reduction targets, improved timelines, and a requirement for 5-year reviews. However, many remain concerned about "the independence of its advisory body, transparency around the role of provinces and territories in achieving Canada's climate targets, and how we define the term "net-zero." "

The full Legislative history of C-12 is [here](#), including links to the meetings of and briefs to the House Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Senate Pre-Study of the Bill. For an excellent summary, see ***"How Bill C-12 aims to guide Canada to net-zero"*** (*National Observer*, June 30).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Bill C-12](#), [climate accountability](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Ghg emissions reduction targets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Feds announce mandatory zero emissions vehicle sales by 2035

Posted on **June 30, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 29, the federal government **announced** that it will set a mandatory target: all new light-duty cars and passenger trucks sales in Canada must be zero-emission by 2035. The federal [press release](#) continues: "the government will pursue a combination of investments and regulations to help Canadians and industry transition ...It will work also with partners to develop interim 2025 and 2030 targets, and additional mandatory measures that may be needed beyond Canada's light-duty vehicle greenhouse gas emissions regulations." As explained in Clean Energy Canada's 2020 Brief, ***"What is a Zero Emission Vehicle Standard and why does Canada need one?"*** this is a necessary step to address Canada's problem with electric vehicle supply (also

recently discussed in [a report by Environmental Defence](#)). Environmental Defence **reacted** to the new standard with lukewarm enthusiasm saying, “ A target is one thing, but it’s an empty promise if it’s not backed up by policy to ensure it’s met.”

An article in *Corporate Knights* magazine asserts that “While ramping up sales of electric passenger vehicles is important and inevitable, last-mile freight delivery offers the lowest-hanging fruit for rapid reduction of carbon emissions”. “**Prime Time to electrify last-mile deliveries**” , published in *Corporate Knights* in June cites the need for government investment, re-tooling of manufacturing, and conversion to electric fleets by corporations. The article describes progress so far, with details on manufacturing and sales by Lion Electric and Ford, and the electric vehicle fleet purchases by Purolator, Amazon, and FedEx.

The Pembina Institute has published a number of reports on the issue of decarbonizing urban freight, with electric vehicles as a major part of that puzzle. On June 22, Pembina organized a webinar (recorded [here](#)) which launched a “toolkit” directed to local government planners.

Building healthy cities in the doorstep-delivery era: Sustainable urban freight solutions from around the world was jointly published by Pembina Institute, Bloomberg Associates, and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) in the U.S., and considers electric vehicle fleets amongst other options to reduce urban pollution and improve gridlock.

According to Clean Energy Canada in its June 2021 report, ***The New Reality***, jobs in electric vehicle technology were on track to grow 39% per year, with 184,000 people set to be employed in the industry in 2030, even before the new mandatory sales policy was announced.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green procurement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

UFAW-Unifor proposals to save the Pacific salmon fishery not included in government announcement of closures

Posted on **June 30, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 29, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) **announced the closure of 79 salmon fisheries** on the Pacific coast. Along with the closures, the press release also announced a new Pacific Salmon Commercial Transition Program – described so far only as a voluntary program which offers harvesters the option to retire their licenses for fair market value, with the goal of permanently reducing the number of fishers and reducing the size of the industry. The government press release states: “Over the coming months DFO will be engaging with commercial salmon licence holders to work collaboratively on developing the program, assess the fair market value or

their licences and confirm the design of the program. All commercial salmon licence holders will have an opportunity to participate in this initiative.” This is part of the [Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative \(PSSI\) announced on June 8](#), and falls under the “Harvest transformation pillar” of the strategy.

UFAWU-Unifor is the union representing commercial fishers. Their response to the closures is [here](#) (June 29), and reflects surprise and concern for the future. Further, it states: “While it’s widely agreed that a license retirement program is needed, it is only one part of what should be a multi-pronged approach to solving the issues in salmon fisheries... Pinniped reduction has to be part of the equation. We need habitat restoration and investments in hatcheries.”

The union, along with other commercial salmon harvesters, had proposed their own specific recommendations, addressing all of these aspects as well as the relationship with First Nations fishers in May 2021 in: [The Report on the Future of B.C. Commercial Salmon Fishing](#) . As with the growing consensus amongst coal and fossil fuel workers, the UFAWU-Unifor report acknowledges the crisis and the need for change, stating: “The regular commercial salmon fishery is clearly in a state of crisis. This is a result of DFO policies and recent low salmon productivity, in part driven by higher predation and climate change, that have reduced harvests in regular commercial fisheries to the point where no one can survive.” (The report has strong criticism for the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans on many fronts). Regarding the kind of licence retirement program that the government has announced, the report states: “This program must offer commercial salmon harvesters the ability to exit the industry with dignity and grace. For the future, it recommends all commercial salmon licences be held by harvesters or First Nations for active participation. A commercial salmon licence bank where licences from a buyout can be held will also allow for future re-entry into the industry. Licences must not be allowed to become investment paper or security for production for processors.” Unlike the federal DFO, the union is not seeking to shrink the industry, and argues that their proposals will allow for a viable and profitable future. The subtitle of their report reflects this optimism: *An Active Fishermen’s Guide to a Viable, Vibrant, and Sustainable Commercial Fishery*. To date, the government has not responded to the union’s proposals.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Commercial Fisheries](#), [First Nations](#), [Fisheries Industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [UFAWU-Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Health impacts of smoke from wildfires call for more preparation as well as more research

Posted on [June 24, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Reports of the **heat, drought and wildfires in the U.S.** this summer are alarming, but Canada is also at risk. Though conditions are not as extreme as the U.S., **British Columbia** is under a warning for a prolonged heat wave, wildfire evacuations have already begun in **Alberta**, and **Ontario's wildfires** are so much more numerous than normal that Alberta has responded to the province's appeal for more firefighters. Against this backdrop, the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA) released a report in early June: ***The Limits of Livability – The emerging threat of smoke impacts on health from forest fires and climate change***. Accompanying the main report are country briefs specific to **Australia**, **Brazil** and **Canada**. The overview report documents the impacts of wildfires, emphasizes how unprepared we are, and warns that governments must act to prepare public health systems for the health impacts of recurring air pollution episodes. Lead author Dr. Frances MacGuire states: "The short term health effects of forest smoke are now well documented but the long term effects of extended exposure are unknown. It is clear that there are significant research gaps in understanding the full health impacts of smoke from increased wildfire risk in a warming world, and on primary and secondary health services."

The ***Country Brief for Canada*** provides health statistics about the 2018 B.C. wildfires and the Summer of Smoke around Yellowknife Northwest Territories in 2014. One of the detailed medical papers referenced is ***SOS! Summer of Smoke: a retrospective cohort study examining the cardiorespiratory impacts of a severe and prolonged wildfire season in Canada's high subarctic***, which appeared in *BMJ Open* in 2021. The authors of the Country Brief call for greater urgency to combat climate change, as well as specific calls to 1. Strengthen the pan-Canadian emergency response, 2. develop easy to understand emergency response plans for residents and communities, and 3. Tackle inequalities in smoke exposure, including recognition of greater vulnerability of Indigenous people living in remote areas.

Australia's disastrous wildfires of 2019/20 resulted in a **Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Management Arrangements** (also known as the Bushfire Royal Commission), and much of the ***Australia Country Brief*** summarizes the issues covered by the commission – notably, Indigenous practices and knowledge. (Note that the Terms of Reference for the Commission included firefighter safety and training). The Brief reports that the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has secured funding for a large-scale research project to study the medium-term health impacts of smoke and ash exposure, including mental health, for frontline responders and affected communities.

The ***Brazil Country Brief*** is centred on the role of deliberate fires set for land clearance for agriculture. The Brief calls for a moratorium on deforestation and fires for clearing land, combined with strong supervision.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and health, firefighters, first responders, health care providers, health effects of climate change, wildfires** | [Leave a reply](#)

Telecommuting holds promise for decarbonizing Canada's economy

Posted on **June 24, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Connecting Canada on the Road to 2030 is a report released by the Pembina Institute on June 16, with the subtitle: *Exploring the climate benefits and impacts of teleworking*. The report states that in 2020, the pandemic resulted in a global GHG emissions drop of 3.9% – and in Canada, GHG emissions dropped by 7% compared to 2019. By August 31, 2020, 27% of Canadians were teleworking full-time (up from 18% in March 2020). The report attributes the greatest proportion of emissions reduction to reduced transportation, but given that the research was commissioned by TELUS Canada, the main focus of the report is to examine the GHG impacts of greater use of the internet.

Using U.S. data when Canadian data is not available, the report states that the increase in residential emissions by employees was outweighed by the decrease in emissions from transportation and commercial buildings, indicating that there is the potential for decarbonization through telework. Residential emissions from internet use are primarily attributed to the energy demand of access devices, such as phones, laptops, and TVs, and the emissions intensity of the electricity grid that powers them – and the report discusses the differences and complexities of renewable energy by Canada's ICT sector. The attention to the differences in rural and urban Canada is key aspect of this report – both in terms of commuting distances and installed broadband internet capacity. The report concludes that: “governments must recognize the environmental value of connecting homes in rural and underserved areas to broadband, coupled with investments from government and industry in clean energy to ensure all possible emissions reductions are achieved.” It makes clear that Canada requires further research into the GHG emissions of internet use.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Green Recovery](#), [Internet](#), [telecommunications sector](#), [telecommuting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Avoiding Dangerous Distractions such as Net-zero emissions goals

Posted on **June 21, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Dangerous Distractions: Canada's carbon emissions and the pathway to net zero is a newly published report by Marc Lee, of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – B.C. The report argues that “Net zero has the potential to be a dangerous distraction that reduces the political

pressure to achieve actual emission reductions in favour of wishful thinking about future technologies and “nature-based solutions.... This permits business-as-usual to continue for longer than it should, perpetuating the era of fossil fuels including other adverse health and environmental impacts.” Instead, the Canadian government should invest in proven climate change solutions such as renewal energy.

A working definition of “net zero” might be similar to that offered by the Institute for Climate Choices: “Achieving net zero emissions requires shifting to technologies and energy systems that do not produce greenhouse gas emissions, while removing any remaining emissions from the atmosphere and storing them permanently.” “Net zero” targets have been increasingly adopted by governments – including Canada – and by businesses – whose use has been challenged by many – notably by Friends of the Earth International in ***Chasing Carbon Unicorns: The Deception of Carbon Markets and Net Zero*** (Feb. 2021).

Dangerous Distractions concerns the **Canadian government policy** approach to a net zero goal, particularly focusing on carbon removal technologies such as carbon capture and storage, forestry management, and the use of carbon offsets, especially the international trade in carbon offsets (such as proposed by the international **Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets**, founded by Mark Carney). Lee concludes: “It’s impossible to know what carbon removal technologies of the future could achieve. For now, they are a dangerous distraction that diverts resources away from bona fide solutions. Scaling these ideas is very expensive and impractical, while perpetuating the era of fossil fuels prolongs other costly adverse impacts on human health, such as those due to air pollution.”

What follows are several recommendations, the first of which is: “Plan to reduce domestic emissions to “real zero” and to phase out the extraction and production of fossil fuels for export.” He continues, “Don’t subsidize carbon capture and storage (CCS) with public funds. Require CCS for any proposed fossil fuel projects and phase in requirements for CCS in current projects”, and “Fund conservation of intact forests and nature-based solutions recognizing their important carbon, biodiversity and other co-benefits but treat this as a global public service. They should not be counted towards the 2050 target”; “Reject international carbon markets and do not plan on meeting domestic GHG targets by buying credits from outside Canada.”

The government of Canada legislated its net-zero emissions goal in ***Bill C-12, The Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act***, introduced in November 2020 and currently before Committee. In February 2021, Canada’s federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change established a permanent **Net-Zero Advisory Body**, consisting of fourteen experts, and also in February, the Institute for Climate Choices published a lengthy report, ***Canada’s Net Zero Future: Finding our way in the global transition***. That report contrasts to ***Dangerous Distractions*** by advocating for two pathways forward: “safe bets” in the short term, and in the long term, “wild cards” which include negative emission technologies that are not yet commercially available.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon capture and storage (CCS), Carbon Offsets, Climate change policy, Forestry Management, negative emissions, net zero policies** | [Leave](#)

Job growth in clean energy will more than offset fossil fuel losses

Posted on **June 21, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Clean Energy Canada released a new report on June 17, projecting that Canada's clean energy sector will grow by almost 50% (over 200,000 jobs) by 2030, to reach 639,200 jobs. The report states that this will far exceed the 125,800 jobs expected to be lost in fossil fuels. Surprisingly, the province with the greatest increase in clean energy jobs will be Alberta – forecast to increase by 164% by 2030. As the introduction concludes: “Oil and gas may have dominated Canada's energy past, but it's Canada's clean energy sector that will define its new reality.”

The New Reality report is the latest in the “Tracking the Energy Transition” series, updating the 2019 report. It is based on modelling by Navius Research – presented in a technical report [here](#). Employment and GDP numbers are considered under two policy scenarios: the Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change (the Liberal government's previous policy) , and the **Healthy Environment, Healthy Economy** policy, unveiled in December 2020. The definition of “clean energy jobs” is broad, and forecasting breaks down into industry sectors – for example, stating that jobs in electric vehicle technology are on track to grow 39% per year, with 184,000 people set to be employed in the industry in 2030—a 26-fold increase over 2020. The report also highlights specific examples of the pioneering clean energy companies in Canada.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [electric vehicle manufacture](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C.'s Dirty Dozen mines

Posted on **June 16, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

SkeenaWild and the BC Mining Law Reform network released the **Dirty Dozen 2021** report in May (B.C.'s “Mining Month”), to expose the province's worst offending mines which risk the health and safety of communities and the environment. The twelve mines were selected “based on their proven or probable impacts to sensitive environments and species, violation of Indigenous rights, unsafe management of tailings waste and/or water contamination, inadequate reclamation funding, and/or non-compliance with environmental permits.” Included in the 2021 “**Dirty Dozen**”: five coal mines owned and operated by Teck Resources, B.C.'s largest mine operator, in the Elk River Valley, which is known to have been leaching toxic Selenium from their waste rock piles for decades. Another on the list: Copper Mountain mine on the Similkameen River, with a long history of polluting in a watershed that is home to steelhead trout and salmon. The Copper Mountain Mine

is planning to raise the height of its tailings dam by 65 per cent to 255 metres – risking catastrophe in the case of a collapse. Another notorious mine included in the 2021 list is the Mount Polley copper and gold mine owned by Imperial Metals Corp., which in 2014 was “the site of the most significant environmental mining disaster in Canadian history, in which a tailings dam collapse released 24 billion litres of tailings and contaminated water into surrounding salmon habitat.” The report states that the company continues to ignore the recommendations of the [Independent Review Panel into the Mount Polley disaster](#), and the government is failing to follow through on enforcement.

The Dirty Dozen report concludes that “there is still a gap between the rosy picture the B.C. government and the mining industry are trying to promote and what is actually happening on the ground.” It refers to recommendations for improvement, including those from the [First Nations Energy and Mining Council](#) and from the [B.C. Mining Law Reform Network](#) (endorsed by nearly 30 local, provincial and national citizen and community groups, First Nations, academics, and social justice and environmental organizations). Nikki Skuce, co-chair of the BC Mining Law Reform network says: “By permitting these risks and pollution issues to continue, the government is putting the mining industry itself at risk as more and more purchasers around the world shift to socially and environmentally responsible sourcing”.

A related article [“Supplying the green wave”](#) (*Corporate Knights*, May 3) describes the organizations working towards more environmentally responsible mining, including [Mining Watch Canada](#) and [The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance \(IRMA\)](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [mining industry](#), [Mount Polley disaster](#), [Pollution](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: Agreement reached to save Terra Nova offshore oil and gas field in Newfoundland

Posted on [June 16, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

UPDATE: As reported by CBC News on June 16 in [“New hope for Terra Nova as Suncor announces tentative deal to save N.L. oilfield”](#), and by a [Unifor press release](#), an agreement in principle has been reached to restructure ownership of the Terra Nova oil fields, offering a path forward which may save the jobs of the workers. Details are not yet available, but Suncor will increase its equity stake and previous owners may participate in the new structure, contingent on the province honouring its commitment to provide \$205 million from the oil industry recovery fund, and some \$300 million in royalty relief.

Workers demonstrated outside the Newfoundland legislature on June 14 and 15, as politicians debated inside about the fate of the Terra Nova oil field and an ultimatum from Suncor Energy, asking for the government to buy the assets of the Terra Nova FPSO, an offshore production and storage platform which employed nearly 1,000 workers in 2019, which is the last time oil was produced. Suncor is the last company remaining in the consortium which owned the oil field. The complexity of the situation is described in several CBC articles, including: “**Talks to save Terra Nova oilfield collapse after N.L. government rules out equity stake**” (June 10), and “**As deadline for Terra Nova approaches, pressure mounts to save troubled oilfield**” (June 11). To date, the government has refused to buy the asset, saying that the risks are too great because the oilfield is estimated to be 85% depleted. Instead, it has agreed to provide about \$500 million in cash and incentives to the company. As of June 16, Suncor Energy has still not announced a decision, as reported by CBC in “**Terra Nova deadline comes — and goes — without word of its fate**”.

Unifor Local 2121 represents the workers at Terra Nova, and organized the demonstrations at the legislature. Unifor describes the rally [here](#), and in [this press release](#) asserts that the Terra Nova decision is a harbinger of the future of the Newfoundland oil and gas industry.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Newfoundland](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

State of carbon pricing in Canada, with recommendations for improvement

Posted on **June 15, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian Institute for Climate Choices was commissioned by Environment and Climate Change Canada to undertake an assessment of carbon pricing in Canada. The resulting report, ***The State of Carbon Pricing in Canada*** was released in June along with an accompanying detailed technical report, ***2020 Expert Assessment of Carbon Pricing Systems***. Focusing on the design of carbon pricing systems across all jurisdictions (and not measuring performance), the authors identify five key challenges: Not all policies apply to the same emissions; Not all policies have the same price; Not all policies impose the same costs on industry; Almost all policies lack transparency about key design choices and outcomes; and Long-term and transparent price signals are typically absent from programs.

Their recommendations for improvement are:

- Develop a common standard of emissions coverage for carbon pricing across all jurisdictions.

- Remove point-of-sale rebates that are tied to fuel consumption: such rebates should be replaced with other approaches such as direct rebates, income tax reductions, or abatement technology subsidies.
- Define a “glide-path” to better align and increase average costs to large emitters
- Engage Indigenous people in carbon pricing – at present, some communities are exempt and some are subject to full carbon costs
- Ensure continuous improvement through more transparency and more independent evaluation.

A related blog, [“3 Maps That Show Why Carbon Pricing in Canada Needs a Tune-Up”](#) summarizes the differences in carbon pricing design choices across the country, in a less formal style.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian oil companies rely on carbon capture technology in their new net zero alliance

Posted on **June 15, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 9, five Canadian oil companies – Canadian Natural Resources, Cenovus Energy, Imperial, MEG Energy and Suncor Energy – **announced** their alliance in the Oil Sands Pathways to Net Zero initiative, whose goal is to achieve net zero GHG emissions from their operations in Alberta’s oil sands by 2050 (but not including the emissions created from the oil consumption after it is extracted). Importantly, the companies still forecast a global demand for oil, so they do not discuss reducing production, but rather they will rely on a Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) trunkline running from the Fort McMurray and Cold Lake regions to a carbon sequestration hub near Cold Lake Alberta. Other means to reduce GHG’s will include existing technologies at oil sands operations, including “CCUS technology, clean hydrogen, process improvements, energy efficiency, fuel switching and electrification”, as well as “potential emerging emissions-reducing technologies including direct air capture, next-generation recovery technologies and small modular nuclear reactors.”

The companies are aided in developing these new technologies by the federal government, which **announced** a \$750-million Emissions Reduction Fund in October 2020 , providing loans to promote investment in greener extractive technologies. It is hardly surprising then that the new alliance calls for “ Collaboration between industry and government” , and in case that wasn’t clear enough, the press release continues: “In addition to collaborating and investing together with industry, it is essential for governments to develop enabling policies, fiscal programs and regulations to provide certainty for this type of long-term, large-scale investment. This includes

dependable access to carbon sequestration rights, emissions reduction credits and ongoing investment tax credits. We look forward to continued collaboration with both the federal and Alberta governments to create the regulatory and policy certainty and fiscal framework needed to ensure the economic viability of this initiative.”

Professors Kathryn Harrison, Martin Olszynski, and Patrick McCurdy offer guidance on how to read the Alliance goals, in “[Why you should take oilsands giants’ net-zero pledge with a barrel of skepticism](#)” in *The National Observer* (June 10). “[Alberta is gambling its future on carbon capture](#)” (*The National Observer*, June 11) compiles reaction (mostly skeptical) from Environmental Defence and the Pembina Institute. *The Energy Mix* reacted with: “[Fossils’ ‘Net-Zero’ Alliance has no Phaseout Plan, Relies on Shaky Carbon Capture Technology](#)”, which surveys a broader range of reaction and quotes Pembina Institute’s Alberta regional director, Chris Severson-Baker, at length.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [carbon capture and storage](#), [Energy policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [net zero policies](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean energy jobs as a transition destination

Posted on [June 15, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Released on June 3, [Responding to Automation: Building a Cleaner Future](#) is a new analysis by the Conference Board of Canada, in partnership with the Future Skills Centre. It investigates the potential for clean energy jobs as a career transition destination for workers at high risk of losing their jobs because of automation. The clean energy occupations were identified from three areas: clean energy production, energy efficiency, and environmental management and the “rapid growth” jobs identified range from wind turbine technicians and power-line installers to industrial engineers, sheet metal workers, and geospatial information scientists. Based on interviews with clean economy experts, as well as the interview responses from over five hundred workers across Canada, the analysis identifies the structural barriers holding employers and workers back from transition: Lack of consistent financial support for workers to reskill • Employer hesitancy to hire inexperienced workers • Current demand for relevant occupations which makes change less attractive • Lack of awareness around potential transition opportunities • Personal relocation barriers, such as high living costs in new cities, and family commitments. None of the recommended actions to overcome the barriers include a role for unions, with the burden for action falling largely on the individual employee. Only summary information is presented as a web document, but this research is part of a larger focus on automation, so it can be hoped that a fuller report will be published – if so, the partner group, [Future Skills](#), maintains a Research website where it will likely be available.

Other news about renewable energy jobs:

“Renewable Energy Boom Unleashes a War Over Talent for Green Jobs” appeared in *Bloomberg Green News* (June 8), describing shortages of skilled workers in renewable energy, mainly in the U.S.. It also summarizes a U.K. report which forecasts a large need for workers in the U.K. offshore industry, which is expected to be met by people transferring from the oil and gas sector.

A **report by the Global Wind Energy Council** forecasts a growth of 3.3 million wind jobs worldwide by 2025, and suggests that offshore wind energy jobs could offer a natural transition for workers dislocated from offshore oil and gas and marine engineering workers. According to the analysis, in 2020, there were approximately 550,000 wind energy workers in China, 260,000 in Brazil, 115,000 in the US and 63,000 in India. A related report, ***The Global Wind Workforce Outlook 2021-2025*** forecasts a large training gap: the global wind industry will need to train over 480,000 people in the next five years to construct, install, operate and maintain the world’s growing onshore and offshore wind fleet. That report is available for download **here** (registration required), and is summarized in **this press release**.

And forthcoming: **Clean Energy Canada will release its research** on the clean energy labour market in Canada on June 17. Their last jobs report, ***The Fast Lane: Tracking the Energy Revolution***, was released in 2019.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **automation, Clean energy industry, Job displacement, renewable energy industry, wind energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

Government policy: Thermal coal mining not consistent with Canadian climate commitments

Posted on **June 14, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

A **press release** by Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change on June 11 spells the end of thermal coal mining in Canada, stating that the Government considers that new thermal coal mining or expansion projects “are likely to cause unacceptable environmental effects and are not aligned with Canada’s domestic and international climate change commitments.” The specific details of the new policy are **here**, and are summarized in ***“Feds toughen permit requirements for thermal coal mining projects”*** (*National Observer*, June 11). At the same time as the Minister released the thermal coal policy, he **officially notified** Coalspur Mines Ltd. that the policy applies to its proposed, **controversial thermal coal mine expansion** at the Vista Coal Mine near Hinton, Alberta. (the company challenges the federal jurisdiction over its development). Alberta launched its own **review of coal-mining policies** in March, with a report promised for November.

The new federal policy is a welcome improvement, but it applies to thermal coal only, not metallurgical coal which is used for steel-making. The **Grassy Mountain** metallurgical coal mining project is currently under federal-provincial review, with a decision due in June. Andrew Nikoforuk describes the issues of the Grassy Mountain project in *The Tyee*, in “***The Fate of the Canadian Rockies May Rest on This Decision***” (May 31). *The Narwhal* has archived several in-depth article focused on coal in Canada, [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate change policy](#), [thermal coal](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Talk, but no firm climate plans from G7 meetings in U.K.

Posted on **June 14, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The issue of global climate finance was seen as crucial to the success of the meetings of G7 leaders in the U.K. on June 11-13, as outlined in “***As leaders gather for G-7, a key question: Will rich countries help poor ones grapple with climate change?***” in *The Washington Post* (June 7). In the meeting aftermath, reaction is muted and disappointed: according to *The Guardian* headline, “***G7 reaffirmed goals but failed to provide funds needed to reach them, experts say***”. Guardian reporter Fiona Harvey quotes the executive director of Greenpeace, who says: “The G7 have failed to set us up for a successful Cop26, as trust is sorely lacking between rich and developing countries.” *Common Dreams* assembles the harshest reactions of all, in “***On Climate and Covid-19 Emergencies, G7 Judged a ‘Colossal Failure’ for All the World to See***” – which quotes the representative from Oxfam, who states that the leaders of the richest nations “have completely failed to meet the challenges of our times. Never in the history of the G7 has there been a bigger gap between their actions and the needs of the world. In the face of these challenges the G7 have chosen to cook the books on vaccines and continue to cook the planet.”

What did the G7 actually say? The ***G7 Leaders Communique*** covered a wide range of topics, with statements about health, economic recovery and jobs, free and fair trade, future frontiers, gender equality, global responsibility and international action – and Climate and the Environment. As well as the Communique, the G7 leaders approved the ***Build Back Better World (B3W) partnership***, designed to mobilize private sector capital in four areas—climate, health and health security, digital technology, and gender equity and equality . The B3W statement explicitly states: “The investments will be made in a manner consistent with achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.” And in recognition of the importance of biodiversity and conservation in the climate fight, the ***2030 G7 Nature Compact*** pledges new global targets to conserve or protect at least 30% of global land and ocean.

“***Canada Boosts Finance Commitment As G7 Falls Short On Climate, Vaccines***” in *The Energy Mix* summarizes reaction, including from Oxfam Canada and Climate Action Network

Canada – whose full statement is [here](#) . It highlights the “good news” of Canada’s largest-ever climate finance pledge, which doubles our climate finance to \$5.36 billion over the next five years for vulnerable nations.

While the [CBC report](#) displays their typical lack of interest in climate issues, the [press release](#) from Prime Minister Trudeau’s office placed most emphasis on the climate change issue, describing the leaders’ “bold action”, and continuing:

“... the G7 leaders have each committed to increased 2030 targets, which will cut the G7’s collective emissions by around half compared to 2010. .. That’s why Prime Minister Trudeau announced a doubling of Canada’s climate finance, from \$2.65 billion in 2015 to \$5.3 billion over five years, including increased support for adaptation, as well as nature and nature-based solutions that are in line with the G7 Nature Compact. The Prime Minister also announced Canada will increase its provision of grants to 40 per cent, up from 30 per cent previously, for improved access by impacted communities. This funding will help developing countries build domestic capacity to take climate action, build resiliency, and reduce pollution, including by finding nature-based solutions to climate change like protecting biodiversity and planting trees, and supporting the transition to clean energy and the phasing-out of coal.

..... As G7 Leaders met to discuss climate change, Canada took further action at home to curb harmful coal emissions, announcing [a new policy statement](#) on new thermal coal mining and expansion projects that explains that these projects are likely to cause unacceptable environmental effects and are not aligned with Canada’s domestic and international climate change commitments.

G7 leaders also adopted the [2030 G7 Nature Compact](#), committing to conserve and protect at least 30 per cent of global and domestic land and ocean by 2030, which matches Canada’s ambitious domestic target. ...”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change policies](#), [coal mining industry](#), [G7](#), [International cooperation](#) | [2 Replies](#)

B.C. consultation on climate adaptation open from June to August

Posted on [June 14, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 9, British Columbia [released a new draft *Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy*](#), to launch a consultation process which will run until August 12 on the [government’s public engagement website](#) . The [Draft Strategy Paper](#) highlights current actions for 2021-2022, and proposes actions for 2022-25 to address increasing wildfires, more frequent flooding, longer summer droughts and heatwaves, as well as adaptation to slower issues such as changes

in growing seasons, ecosystem shifts and sea level rise. This Strategy document is itself the result of a consultation process, documented [here](#), all of which have been based on the substantive 2019 report, [Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment for British Columbia](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Adaptation](#), [British Columbia](#), [climate change impacts](#), [Climate change risks](#), [Flooding](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Keystone is dead!

Posted on [June 11, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 9, TC Energy issued a [press release](#) announcing that the company, in consultation with the Alberta Government, has terminated the Keystone XL Pipeline project, although it will continue “to co-ordinate with regulators, stakeholders and Indigenous groups to meet its environmental and regulatory commitments and ensure a safe termination of and exit from the project.” The [Alberta government had invested over \\$1 billion](#) in the project as recently as March 2020 , and [continued to defend it](#) even after U.S. President Biden rescinded the permit in January 2021. The WCR compiled sources and reactions in January in [“President Biden’s Executive Orders and Keystone XL cancellation – what impact on Canada?”](#) A new compilation of Alberta Government statements is [here](#) . CBC Calgary describes [“Keystone XL is dead, and Albertans are on the hook for \\$1.3B”](#) .

Climate activists in Canada and the U.S. rejoiced at the latest news: [“Keystone XL Is Dead!': After 10-Year Battle, Climate Movement Victory Is Complete”](#) , and activist Bill McKibben (and others) are hammering home a message of “never give up, activism works!”. The [article from Common Dreams](#) quotes Clayton Thomas Muller, longtime KXL opponent and currently a senior campaigns specialist at 350.org in Canada: “This victory is thanks to Indigenous land defenders who fought the Keystone XL pipeline for over a decade. Indigenous-led resistance is critical in the fight against the climate crisis and we need to follow the lead of Indigenous peoples, particularly Indigenous women, who are leading this fight across the continent and around the world. With Keystone XL cancelled, it’s time to turn our attention to the Indigenous-led resistance to the Line 3 and the Trans Mountain tar sands pipelines.” The *National Observer* expands on this with [“Keystone XL is dead, but the fight over Canadian oil rages on”](#) (June 10). The [Indigenous Environmental Network news](#) chronicles the ongoing resistance to pipeline development, as well as [the reaction to the Keystone announcement](#).

Here is a closer look at the [TC Energy press release](#) which stated, in part:

“after a comprehensive review of its options, and in consultation with its partner, the Government of Alberta, it has terminated the Keystone XL Pipeline Project. We remain grateful to the many organizations that supported the Project and would have shared in its benefits, including our partners, the Government of Alberta and Natural Law Energy, our customers, pipeline building trade

unions, local communities, Indigenous groups, elected officials, landowners, the Government of Canada, contractors and suppliers, industry associations and our employees.

Through the process, we developed meaningful Indigenous equity opportunities and a first-of-its-kind, industry leading plan to operate the pipeline with net-zero emissions throughout its lifecycle. We will continue to identify opportunities to apply this level of ingenuity across our business going forward, including our current evaluation of the potential to power existing U.S. assets with renewable energy.

....Looking forward, there is tremendous opportunity for TC Energy in the energy transition with its irreplaceable asset footprint, financial strength and organizational capabilities positioning it to capture further significant and compelling growth. The Company will continue to build on its 70-year history of success and leverage its diverse businesses in natural gas and liquids transportation along with storage and power generation to continue to meet the growing and evolving demand for energy across the continent.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate Activism](#), [First Nations](#), [Keystone XL](#), [Oil pipelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The high health costs of climate change in Canada, focused on heat stress and air pollution

Posted on **June 8, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Health Costs of Climate Change was released in June by the Institute for Climate Choices, the second in their series on the costs of climate change. This report attempts to quantify how air quality, increased cases of Lyme disease, and heat will impact people's health, using two different GHG scenarios until the year 2100. The report also discusses broader issues such as the socio-economic factors which determine unequal health results, mental health impacts, impacts on Indigenous culture and food security, and the impacts on health infrastructure. Results show that Lyme disease will be the least costly of the projected impacts, but air pollution and heat threats will increase dramatically – even under the low-emissions scenario, heat-related hospitalization rates will increase by 21 per cent by mid-century and will double by the end of the century. The labour productivity impact of higher temperatures is projected as “a loss of 128 million work hours annually by the end of century—the equivalent of 62,000 full-time equivalent workers, at a cost of almost \$15 billion.” Unlike most reports which focus on the impacts of heat on outdoor workers only, the report acknowledges the impact on indoor space too, and offers some analysis and cost

analysis of the installation of green roofs and shading on manufacturing facilities. It concludes with recommendations for government policy, and includes a 10-page bibliography of Canadian health research. **“Climate change is set to cost Canada’s health system billions”** (The National Observer, June 3) summarizes the report.

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

Global vaccine justice seen as a test of climate justice at G7 meetings in June 2021

Posted on **June 8, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

G7 finance ministers and the global financial elite issued an important **Communique** on June 5, and while the mainstream media (and **Finance Canada’s own press release**) focused mainly on a 15% minimum global tax rate for corporations, the Communique made ambitious statements regarding international climate finance too, with calls which seem to acknowledge the importance and inequity of climate risk to the global financial order. **“G7 Ministers Recommit to Climate Finance, Leave Details for Later”** in *The Energy Mix* summarizes the general reaction that the Communique is too vague and “unambitious”. The article states that the scale of global climate investment (both public and private) is estimated at \$100 billion per year, and that Canada’s fair share would be US\$4 billion per year.

The issue of global climate finance is seen as crucial to the success of the upcoming G7 meetings of world leaders in the U.K. on June 11-13. **“As leaders gather for G-7, a key question: Will rich countries help poor ones grapple with climate change?”** in *The Washington Post* (June 7) describes how global climate finance and the issue of global vaccine disparity are being conflated, for example in a quote from a senior advisor to Climate Action Network International: “The G-7 meeting will be a test for international solidarity. This implies solidarity on both ensuring equitable and rapid access to vaccines globally, as well as on finance and support for the climate crisis”. **“World Climate Deal Could Fail unless G7 Solves Vaccine Disparities”** (June 8, *The Energy Mix*) quotes the head of the international Chamber of Commerce: “We can’t have global solidarity and trust around tackling climate change if we do not show solidarity around vaccines.” *The Guardian* writes: **“Share vaccines or the climate deal will fail rich countries are told”** (June 5) – which points out that “Canada has the highest number of procured doses per head, with a total of 381 million procured vaccine doses for a population of just over 37 million.” – and contrasts Canada with the low vaccine availability in such countries as Columbia, Indonesia, South Africa, and Pakistan.

Climate Change is one of the **priorities of the G7 meetings**. Reports released in anticipation of the G7 meeting include:

Ranking G7 Green Recovery Plans and Jobs published by the U.K.'s Trades Union Congress, which shows that the U.S. had the highest level of green jobs and recovery investment per person, followed by Italy and then Canada. The U.K. ranks sixth, with Japan 7th. The report critiques specific U.K. policies and makes recommendations for improvements.

Oxfam International **posted analysis** on June 7 which estimates that the economies of G7 nations contracted by about 4.2 per cent on average in the pandemic, and compares that to the greater economic impacts which will result from extreme weather, the effects on agricultural productivity, and heat stress and health. The report includes estimates of GDP losses by 2050, assuming 2.6°C of warming, using the modelling of the Swiss Re Insurance ***Economics of Climate Change Index***, and predicts the worst affected countries will be India, Australia, South Africa, South Korea, The Phillipines (with a 35% loss of GDP), and Columbia. Canada's GDP loss is estimated at 6.9%. The report is summarized in ***"Covid shrunk the economy but climate change will be much worse"*** (The Guardian, reposted in *The National Observer*, June 8) and also in ***"Climate inaction will cost G7 countries 'billions'"*** in *Deutsche Welle*.

The official G7 Ministers meeting website is **here** and will post official documents/news. The Resist G7 Coalition will present different information, and aims to coordinate protests on their **Facebook page** and their **website**. A **Reuters article** states that police will number 6,500, and Extinction Rebellion alone estimates 1,000 protestors will be present.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Climate Justice, Covid 19, financial disclosure, financial institutions, Green Recovery, International Climate Summit, Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian Labour Congress and Climate Action: Pre-convention event June 10; Policy discussion on June 18

Posted on **June 7, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The 29TH **Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress** will be held virtually from June 16 to 18. Some important **pre-convention events** are available – notably, **A Climate Action Agenda** on Thursday, June 10, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., hosted by Samantha Smith of the ITUC Just Transition Centre, with Keynote speaker Autumn Peltier, Wiikwemkoong First Nation. Panelists for a discussion of the role of workers and unions include: Lara Skinner, (Labor Leading on Climate Initiative, New York State Just Transition Working Group); Matt Wayland, (International

Brotherhood of Electrical Workers); Chris Wilson, (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists), and Grace Moyo, (Toronto Community Benefits Network QuickStart Graduate). To attend this event, download an [Observers registration form here](#).

The [Climate Action Policy Paper](#) is included in the compendium of policy papers , with the presentation and discussion scheduled for Friday June 18. Calling climate action “urgent union work”, the Policy Paper highlights renewable energy, green building and retrofitting, green industrial policy, Just Transition, and the importance of the public sector. The introduction sums it up with this:

“Labour’s Climate Action Agenda aims to achieve ambitious, enforceable renewable energy targets for electricity and transportation by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions in our economy by 2050. Crucial to this plan will be ensuring that the transition be democratic and worker-focused, leveraging the power of the public sector to lead the transition. A just transition that aims to create good jobs for workers and communities and that applies a gender, reconciliation and intersectional lens, is essential to all aspects and phases of a Climate Action Agenda.”

Climate Resolutions are included in the [242-page Resolutions document](#) , in the Economic and Social Policy section beginning on page 25.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New B.C. forest policy fails to defuse protests and journalists fight RCMP for access to Fairy Creek site

Posted on [June 4, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 1, the government of British Columbia released [Modernizing Forest Policy in British Columbia](#), an “Intentions Paper” which attempts to address the intense protests in the province over logging of old growth forests. The [government press release](#) includes several backgrounders, including highlights of how the policy addresses the Old Growth issue, but environmentalists are not satisfied. [“Five ways B.C.’s new forestry plan sets the stage for more old-growth conflict”](#) in *The Narwhal* explains. [Stand.earth reacted](#) with an immediate call for deferral of logging for all at-risk old growth forests, and on June 4, after company bulldozers breached protest blockades, [Stand.earth repeated their call](#), in order to “to reduce tensions and the threat of violence or injury in Fairy Creek and keep old growth forests standing — while the

province undertakes a paradigm shift for forestry rooted in Indigenous rights and consent, ecological values, and community stability.”

Protests and unions

Protests began in Fairy Creek on Vancouver Island in August 2020, explained in “***The Fairy Creek blockaders: inside the complicated fight for B.C.’s last ancient forests***” (*The Narwhal*, March 2020) . Since then, protests have grown in size and intensity, with **five people arrested on May 17**, and 137 arrested by June 1. “***Three days in the theatre of Fairy Creek***” in *The Tyee* offers a lengthly personal front line account, as does “***Three weeks on the front line: The battle for Old Growth in B.C.***” in *Ricochet* , filled with photos. The forestry workers tell their side of the bitter story, as reported by CBC, “***Forestry workers and supporters from across Vancouver Island rally to denounce Fairy Creek blockades***” on May 30.

“***BC’s Cynical Attack on Old-Growth Forests***” in *The Tyee* (May 19) blames NDP Premier John Horgan for the prolonged dispute, and states that “John Horgan’s alliance with corporate and union logging interests is stalling protection for remaining ancient trees.” The criticism stems from “***A Strategy for B.C. Forests That Benefits All British Columbians***”, an article written jointly in April by Jeff Bromley, Chair of the United Steelworkers’ Wood Council, and Susan Yurkovich, president and CEO of the BC Council of Forest Industries, defending the government’s position. In contrast, in March 2021, co-authors Andrea Inness (a campaigner at the Ancient Forest Alliance) and Gary Fiege (president of the Public and Private Workers of Canada, formerly the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada) wrote a ***Vancouver Sun Opinion piece*** , calling on the government to live up to their promise to implement **the recommendations of their own Strategic Review** , and stating “We can protect old growth forests and forestry jobs at the same time”.

Protests and freedom

Amidst the heated protests, RCMP have been criticized for blocking journalists from covering the protests. In a May 26 **press release**, the **Canadian Association of Journalists** and a coalition of news organizations released a statement, demanding that the RCMP immediately stop applying “exclusion zones” to journalists, so that the media can freely access protest sites, and get close enough to record video and sound, conduct interviews and take photographs. The statement continues: “Journalists must be allowed to move freely on site, as long as they do not interfere with the execution of RCMP activities. This means that journalists should not be corralled or forced to move as a group or with a police escort; The equipment of journalists must not be seized or otherwise interfered with, and journalists should not be arrested or detained while trying to document protest events.”

Members of the journalists’ coalition are: the Canadian Association of Journalists, Ricochet Media, The Narwhal, Capital Daily, Canada’s National Observer, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, The Discourse and IndigiNews. The Narwhal explanation appears in “***Enough is enough: Canadian news organizations file legal action for press freedom at Fairy Creek***” ; “***The Other Fight at Fairy Creek: Press Freedom***” appeared in *The Tyee* (May 27); and “***We’re taking the RCMP to Court***” appeared in *Ricochet*.

A framework of six essential policies for the U.S. to THRIVE

Posted on **June 3, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report by Jeremy Brecher of the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) was released in May. ***Making “Build Back Better” Better: Aligning Climate, Jobs, and Justice*** is a cast as a “living document” to provide a framework for discussion by the labour and environmental movements. *Common Dreams* [summarizes it here](#). Brecher begins by identifying the range of climate-related policy proposals in the U.S.: “There are many valuable plans that have been proposed in addition to Build Back Better. The ***original Green New Deal resolution*** sponsored by Sen. Ed Markey and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; the ***THRIVE (Transform, Heal, and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy) Agenda*** ; the ***Evergreen Action Plan***; the Sierra Club’s ***“How to Build Back Better” economic renewal plan***; the AFL-CIO’s “Energy Transitions” proposals; the BlueGreen Alliance’s ***“Solidarity for Climate Action,”*** and a variety of others. All offer contributions for overall vision and for policy details.”

The contribution of this report from LNS is to frame these policy proposals around “six essential elements” : • Managed decline of fossil fuel burning • Full-spectrum job creation • Fair access to good jobs • Labor rights and standards • Urgent and effective climate protection • No worker or community left behind. The new report links to many of the previous LNS reports which have discussed these elements in more detail.

Labor Network for Sustainability has [endorsed the THRIVE Agenda](#), with its strong emphasis on climate justice. At the end of April, The ***THRIVE Act*** was introduced in the U.S. Congress, spearheaded by Representative Debbie Dingell of Michigan and Senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts, and supported by progressive Democrats, environmentalists, and unions. *The Rolling Stone* summarized the provisions [here](#) , stating: “Bold” may be an understatement. While President Biden’s [proposed infrastructure plan](#) calls for spending \$2 trillion over the next 10 years, the THRIVE Act green-lights the investment of \$1 trillion annually. The money would go toward creating an estimated 15 million “family-sustaining” union jobs, rebuilding the nation’s physical and social infrastructure, and cutting carbon emissions in half by 2030.”

The Green New Deal Network has compiled extensive documentation of the economic studies behind the THRIVE Agenda [here](#) , based heavily on the work of the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), led by Robert Pollin.

Canada's oil and gas industry provides Canada with declining royalty revenues, jobs

Posted on **June 1, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Earth scientist David Hughes argues that Canada cannot possibly meet its national GHG emissions targets while expanding exports in the oil and gas industry, building pipelines, and developing liquified natural gas in a new report, ***Canada's Energy Sector: Status, evolution, revenue, employment, production forecasts, emissions and implications for emissions reduction***, released on June 1. Hughes documents the declining health and importance of the sector with economic statistics: "The energy sector's contribution to Canada's GDP, currently at 9 per cent, has declined over the past two decades, and government revenues from royalties and taxes have dropped precipitously. Despite record production levels, royalty revenue is down 45 per cent since 2000, and tax revenues from the oil and gas sector, which totalled over 14 per cent of all industry taxes as recently as 2009, declined to less than 4 per cent in 2018. Direct employment, which peaked at over 226,000 workers in 2014, was down by 53,000 in 2019 although production was at an all-time high due to efficiencies adopted by the industry."

Combining statistics from the Petroleum Labour Market Information office with industry projections from the federal Canada Energy Regulator, Hughes concludes that energy jobs have peaked and previous levels of employment are unlikely to return.

"Jobs are often cited by industry proponents as a reason to support expansion of oil and gas production. Yet despite record production levels, jobs in the oil and gas sector are down from their peak in 2014 by 23 per centThanks to technological advances, the sector has become more efficient and is able to increase production using fewer workers....This jobs scenario is particularly true in the oil sands, where much of the production growth is expected. Oil sands production per employee is 70 per cent higher than it was in 2011 (production per employee has increased by 37 per cent in conventional oil and gas and by 50 per cent in the sector overall since 2011). In Canada's overall employment picture, the oil and gas sector accounted for only 1 per cent of direct employment in 2019 (5.5 per cent in Alberta)."

At the same time, oil and gas production accounts for the largest portion of GHG emissions in Canada, at 26 per cent of the total – and **Canada's GHG emissions have actually increased by 3.3 per cent since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2016** – the highest increase of any G7 country. With such limited benefits and such serious negative consequences, Hughes argues against expansion of oil and gas exports – especially LNG in British Columbia and the TransMountain pipeline expansion, and Line 3.

Canada's Energy Sector: Status, evolution, revenue, employment, production forecasts, emissions and implications for emissions reduction is summarized by the *National Observer*, [here](#). Author David Hughes has written substantive reports previously, for example: ***A Clear Look at B.C. LNG*** (2015); ***Can Canada increase oil and gas production, build pipelines and meet its climate commitments?*** (2016); ***B.C.'s Carbon Conundrum: Why LNG exports doom emissions-reduction targets and compromise Canada's long-term energy security*** (2020); and ***Reassessment of Need for the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion: Project Production forecasts, economics and environmental considerations*** (2020).

The full report was published by the Corporate Mapping Project, a project of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in British Columbia and the Parkland Institute in Alberta. The report was co-published with Stand.earth, West Coast Environmental Law, and 350.org.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Ghg emissions reduction targets](#), [Labour Productivity](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Public consultation on climate policy underway in Nova Scotia

Posted on **May 31, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A **public consultation process** is underway until July 26 in Nova Scotia, managed by the Clean Foundation on behalf of Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change. Following the consultations, the government will update its climate policies, as well as emission reduction goals under the ***Sustainable Development Goals Act***, passed in 2019 but sidetracked by Covid-19. The current Nova Scotia GHG emissions reduction commitment calls for emissions at least 53 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050, with all coal plants closed by 2030 and 80 per cent renewable energy for the electricity sector by 2030. Although this is the toughest emissions reduction target in Canada to date, the Halifax-based Ecology Action Centre is advocating for a legislated GHG reduction target of 50% below 1990 levels by the year 2030. This, along with the other EAC priorities, is described in ***20 Goals to Advance the Environmental and Economic Wellbeing of Nova Scotia***. In 2019, when the legislation was being debated, EAC commissioned and published ***Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act: Economic Costs and Benefits of Proposed Goals (Sept 2019)***, which outlined six policy areas estimated to result in 15,000 green jobs per year by 2030.

The government provides two Discussion Papers to guide input for the consultation: a ***Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth Discussion Paper***, and the ***Discussion Paper for the Sustainable Development Goals Act***.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [public opinion](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

For Alberta oil workers facing a future of industry volatility- policy options include Just Transition, green tax reform

Posted on **May 31, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

In Search of Prosperity: The role of oil in the future of Alberta and Canada was released on **May 26, that cataclysmic day** of bad news for the oil and gas industry when the Dutch courts ordered Royal Dutch Shell to reduce its emissions immediately, and shareholders at Exxon and Chevron defied management to press for climate-friendly policies. The future of the oil and gas industry is also grim in Canada, according to ***In Search of Prosperity***, published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). Using economic models, it concludes that “the volatility of the industry poses a much greater threat than low prices to the Alberta economy – more than five times worse than the effect of just low prices.” And further: “..... unless there are innovations in the uses of oil for non-combustion, also known as “bitumen beyond combustion,” the oil sector will contribute less and less to Alberta’s prosperity.” According to the modelling, employment in the oil sector will potentially decrease by an average 24,300 full-time jobs per year toward 2050 (accompanied by a potential 43% drop in royalties to the Alberta government).

How to cope with those upcoming job losses? Another report from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), also released on May 26, suggests the EU Just Transition Mechanism as one of its model strategies for the future. ***10 Ways to Win the Global Race to Net-Zero: Global insights to inform Canadian climate competitiveness*** offers an overview of the global policy literature and describes successful case studies, including the innovation of green steel in Sweden; hydrogen policy in Germany; collaboration in the form of the European Battery Alliance and the European Transition Commission; the Biden “all of government” approach to governance in the U.S.; New Zealand’s consultation with and inclusion of the indigenous Maori; and the EU’s Just Transition Mechanism as part of the European Green New Deal. The report’s conclusion offers five strategies, including that the Canadian government must take action as a “top priority” on its promised Just Transition Act.

The discussion of Just Transition in ***10 Ways to Win*** provides a brief, clear summary of the complexity of the EU Just Transition Mechanism, and states that the EU approach is consistent with the recent report, ***Employment Transitions and the Phase-Out of Fossil Fuels*** by Jim Stanford, published by the Centre for Future Work in January 2021. Stanford argues that a gradual transition from fossil fuels is possible without involuntary layoffs, given a “clear timetable for phase-out, combined with generous supports for retirement, redeployment, and regional diversification”.

The IISD also recently published [Achieving a Fossil Free Recovery](#) (May 17), an international policy discussion with a focus on ending subsidies and preferential tax treatments for the fossil fuel industry. The report concludes with a brief section on Just Transition as the predominant framework for the transition to a clean energy economy, and calls for a social dialogue approach. As in previous IISD reports (for example, [Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform and the Just Transition](#) in 2017), the authors argue that dollars spent to support and subsidize the fossil fuel industry could be better spent in encouraging clean energy industries. This argument also relates to an April 2021 IISD report, [Nordic Environmental Fiscal Reform](#), which offers case studies of the success of environmental taxes – for example, in the use of tax revenue to support the Danish wind energy industry which now employs 33,000 workers.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [phase-out of fossil fuels](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Victory for climate activists in the Dutch Courts and in Exxon and Chevron boardrooms

Posted on **May 27, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

May 26 will go down in history as a very bad day for the fossil fuel industry for three reasons: in the Netherlands, the courts issued [a landmark decision that requires Royal Dutch Shell to cut its carbon emissions](#) – including Scope 3 emissions – by 45% by 2030. Also on May 26, activist shareholders won separate victories at the corporate annual meetings of [ExxonMobil and Chevron](#). Bill McKibben reflects on all three events in [“Big Oil’s Bad Bad Day”](#) in *The New Yorker*, and Jamie Henn wrote [“A Landmark Day in the fight against fossil fuels”](#) in *Fossil Free Media*.

The case of Royal Dutch Shell is summarized by Friends of the Earth Canada in their [press release](#), which also links to [an English-language version of the Court’s decision](#).

“On May 26, as a result of legal action brought by Friends of the Earth Netherlands (Milieudéfensie) together with 17,000 co-plaintiffs and six other organisations the court in The Hague ruled that Shell must reduce its CO2 emissions by 45% within 10 years.

.....“This is a turning point in history. This case is unique because it is the first time a judge has ordered a large polluting company to comply with the Paris Climate Agreement. This ruling may also have major consequences for other big polluters,” says Roger Cox, lawyer for Friends of the Earth Netherlands.

The verdict requires Royal Dutch Shell to reduce its emissions by 45% by the end of 2030. Shell is also responsible for emission from customers and suppliers. There is a threat of human rights violations to the “right to life” and “undisturbed family life”.

German news organization *Deutsche Welle* offers an excellent, more thorough discussion in **“Shell ordered to reduce CO2 emissions in watershed ruling”**, which points out that the case was argued on human rights grounds – much like the **precedent-setting Urgenda case** and the **recent German constitutional case**. In those cases however, governments were called upon to defend the human right to a future safe from the dangers of climate change. The Shell case is the first time such an argument has been tried against a corporation – and is seen as a harbinger of future legal action. The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) in Amsterdam also provides a succinct summary in **“The Shell climate verdict: a major win for mandatory due diligence and corporate accountability”**: “Shell must reduce its CO2 emissions by net 45% by 2030 (compared with 2019) regardless of the actions or policies of the Dutch government. But the ruling is historic for other reasons as well: the court based its verdict to a large extent on two soft law standards – the **United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)** and **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (OECD Guidelines)**. In addition, it asserts that companies have an individual responsibility to combat climate change throughout their value chains, and it very clearly links climate change to human rights. This means the judgment is likely to play an important role in the realisation of mandatory due diligence legislation”.

An even more thorough review of the decision comes from the Columbia University Sabin Center Law Blog : **Guest Commentary: An Assessment of The Hague District Court’s Decision In *Milieudefensie et al. v. Royal Dutch Shell Plc*** .

Shareholder Activism at ExxonMobil and Chevron Oil Majors: “The Showdown over Exxon’s climate future is here” appeared in *Axios* on May 24, anticipating “ the highest-profile effort by climate activist investors to force any of the oil majors to diversify away from fossil fuels more quickly – targeting the highest-profile company.” The *Washington Post* also described the conflict in **“The fight for the soul – and the future – of ExxonMobil”** on May 22. As events unfolded at the annual shareholders meeting of ExxonMobil on May 26, the small activist investor group Engine No. 1 won a victory when two of the four Board members it nominated to the Exxon board were confirmed, against the company’s slate. (A **third Board member was also subsequently confirmed**). The victory was all the more impactful because Engine No. 1 was supported by the three biggest U.S. pension funds — the California Public Employees’ Retirement System, the California State Teachers’ Retirement System and the New York State Common Retirement Fund, as well as the giant BlackRock, the world’s largest asset manager. According to **“Exxon activist wins board seats in historic climate victory”** in *The Financial Post* (May 26) “The result is an embarrassment for Exxon, unprecedented in the rarefied world of Big Oil, and a sign that institutional investors are increasingly willing to force corporate America to tackle climate change.” The article concludes: “the message from shareholders is clear: The status quo cannot continue.” **“After Big Oil’s very bad week, the message for Alberta is clear”** by Mitchell Beer appeared in *Policy Options* (June 2), linking the May 26 events and the International Energy Association report, ***Net Zero in 2050: A roadmap for the global energy system***.

While the Exxon battle grabbed most headlines because of the high-profile participants, a similar story played out at the Chevron Oil annual meeting, where 61% of shareholders rebelled against the company's board by voting in favour of an activist proposal from Dutch campaign group Follow This to force the group to cut its carbon emissions. The press release from Follow This [is here](#). The website of [Follow This](#) is titled: "Green Shareholders Change the World". It states that "Follow This compels oil majors to commit to the Paris agreement." and invites readers to "Buy a green share and become a co-owner of an oil company. Together we file green resolutions and get a vote in the future of the oil industry."

Much more will be written about these landmark events. For now, *The Guardian* offers : "[Climate activist shareholders to target US oil giant Chevron](#)" (May 20) and "[ExxonMobil and Chevron suffer shareholder rebellions over climate](#)".

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Chevron](#), [climate change litigation](#), [ExxonMobil](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [legal action](#), [Royal Dutch Shell](#), [Shareholder Activism](#), [Urgenda Decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How Canada can compete in the growing international battery supply chain

Posted on [May 26, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report, [Turning Talk into Action: Building Canada's Battery Supply Chain](#), summarizes a forum of experts convened in March 2021 by Clean Energy Canada. The resulting report discusses the existing state of electric vehicle and battery manufacturing in Canada, and makes a series of recommendations for action. Expert participants included the union Unifor, along with industry/employer groups: the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, The Battery Metals Association of Canada, the Delphi Group, Electric Mobility Canada, The Lion Electric Co., Dunskey Energy Consulting, Lithion Recycling, the Mining Association of Canada, Li-Cycle, E3 Metals, the Transition Accelerator, General Motors Canada, E-One Moli Energy (Canada), Magna International, Propulsion Québec, Blue Solutions Canada, and Polaris Strategy + Insight.

The experts argue that Canada has many advantages which allow it to seize this moment of opportunity and establish itself as a major player in the global battery sector – where the global market for lithium-ion batteries is growing rapidly and expected to exceed \$100 billion by 2030. Although 80 per cent of the world's batteries are currently produced in Japan, South Korea and China, the report sets forth ideas for an industrial strategy for an integrated North American industry, starting with an Interprovincial Battery Secretariat to bring together various provincial agencies within Canada, and an industry-led, government-supported task force to work with the Secretariat and deliver advice by the end of 2021. With a unified battery plan in place, Canada

would then be able to enter a North American Battery Alliance with the U.S., modelled on the European Battery Alliance, to leverage the existing, highly integrated automotive market and emphasizing a “clean” advantage over Asian suppliers. Recommendations regarding the materials supply chain also emphasize sustainability and transparency in mining. Although there is already government funding available through an \$8-billion NetZero Accelerator Fund, the report states that “the federal government must create a \$15 billion battery supply chain fund dedicated to addressing challenges and investing in strategic projects along the Canadian value chain. The fund must be carved out specifically for the batteries versus being another stream within the Strategic Innovation Fund.” Finally, noting that Canada already has technological and R&D expertise in batteries, the report calls for “ a government-funded, industry-led Centre of Excellence focused on commercializing advanced battery technology and manufacturing R&D. The centre would cluster university researchers, mining companies, battery manufacturers, and auto OEMs into one hub to support testing, demonstration, and the commercialization of new technologies.” Recycling would also be one of the areas included.

The report is summarized in this [Clean Energy Canada press release](#) .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [Lithium Ion Batteries](#), [mining industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Future skills for the energy efficient building workforce

Posted on **May 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A recent report from ECO Canada, *[Assessment of Occupational and Skills Needs and Gaps for the Energy Efficient Buildings Workforce](#)*, focuses on the occupations and skills needed for designing, constructing, managing, and retrofitting energy efficient commercial and institutional buildings and multi-unit residential buildings. The report states that much of the technology, materials, and processes are in place, but workforce skills still need to be developed – for example, under a “building-as-a-system” approach, workers are increasingly called upon to function within multi-disciplinary teams, requiring soft skills such as collaboration and facilitation. Such a system also requires a workforce culture shift. A section called “ Future-Proofing the Energy Efficient Building Sector” provides a summary of core and growing occupations and skills related to design, construction, operation, and retrofitting of energy efficient buildings. The report assesses specific occupation skills and gaps, and recommends ways to connect with workers– and includes unions amongst the stakeholder groups which can support skills acquisition. The 73-page report is available for [free download from this link](#) (registration required).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [architects](#), [construction occupations](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Skilled Workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's banks continue to finance oil and gas

Posted on **May 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report released at the end of April examines the performance and the links between Canada's oil companies and the big banks which form Canada's "comfortable oligopoly": Royal Bank (RBC), Toronto-Dominion Bank, Bank of Nova Scotia, Bank of Montreal, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and the National Bank of Canada. ***Fossilized Finance: How Canada's banks enable oil and gas production*** is written by Donald Gutstein and published by the B.C. Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives as part of its Corporate Mapping Project. The report outlines the bank presence in the Canadian energy sector since the collapse of oil prices in 2014 – lending, underwriting, advising and investing. It also examines interlocking directorates, executive transfer, industry conference sponsorships and industry association memberships. This reveals different details than the international report, ***Banking on Climate Chaos***, published by BankTrack in late March.

While acknowledging that the banks have begun to invest in some renewable energy projects, ***Fossilized Finance*** shows that this leopard has not changed its spots:

“In contrast to the need to reduce financing of fossil fuels, banks actually increased their lending and commitments to the industry by more than 50 per cent—to \$137 billion—between 2014 and 2020. Toronto-Dominion, in particular, upped its lending by 160 per cent over the seven-year period, to nearly \$33 billion in 2020. As well, banks have invested tens of billions of dollars in fossil fuel and pipeline company shares. Here, Royal Bank leads the pack with nearly \$21 billion invested in the top 15 fossil fuel and pipeline companies as of November 2019. Banks continue to underwrite fossil fuel company stock and bond issues, and they continue to provide key advice on mergers, acquisitions and other corporate moves.”

Many of the researchers involved in the CCPA/Corporate Mapping Project have written chapters in ***Regime of Obstruction: How Corporate Power blocks Energy Democracy***, a book edited by William Carroll and published by Athabasca University Press. Readers of the WCR may be particularly interested in Chapter 15, “*From Clean Growth to Climate Justice*” by Marc Lee, but all the excellent chapters are available for **free download here**. The publisher's summary states: “Anchored in sociological and political theory, this comprehensive volume provides hard data and empirical research that traces the power and influence of the fossil fuel industry through economics, politics, media, and higher education. Contributors demonstrate how corporations secure popular consent, and coopt, disorganize, or marginalize dissenting perspectives to position the fossil fuel industry as a national public good. They also investigate the difficult position of Indigenous communities who, while suffering the worst environmental and health impacts from carbon extraction, must fight for their land or participate in fossil capitalism to secure income and jobs. The volume concludes with a look at emergent forms of activism and resistance, spurred by

the fact that a just energy transition is still feasible. This book provides essential context to the climate crisis and will transform discussions of energy democracy.”

If you are outraged by what these researchers reveal, a personal option to switch banks is now made easier through the [Bank Green website](#), launched in April in association with BankTrack. So far, [Bank.Green](#) covers more than 300 banks globally, including only two “ethical banks” in Canada: Vancity, and Duca Credit Union. The website provides information for customers and encourages them to switch banks and divest from fossil fuels.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [Corporate Climate Policy](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [industry capture](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IEA calls for a future without fossil fuel investment

Posted on **May 18, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Net Zero in 2050: A roadmap for the global energy system was released by the International Energy Agency on May 18, and has been described as a “bombshell”, and a “landmark”. Why? The normally conservative IEA describes the global energy future bluntly and urgently, calling for “... from today, no investment in new fossil fuel supply projects, and no further final investment decisions for new unabated coal plants. By 2035, there are no sales of new internal combustion engine passenger cars, and by 2040, the global electricity sector has already reached net-zero emissions.”

This special report claims to be “ the world’s first comprehensive study of how to transition to a net zero energy system by 2050 while ensuring stable and affordable energy supplies, providing universal energy access, and enabling robust economic growth.” It sets out 400 indicators for “an economically productive pathway to 2050”, where energy production will be dominated by renewables instead of fossil fuels. The report also flags and discusses bioenergy, carbon capture, and behavioural changes as “key uncertainties” for the future.

Highlights from the discussion of employment in Chapter 4:

- In 2021, approx. roughly 40 million people work directly in the oil, gas, coal, renewables, bioenergy and energy network industries .
- By 2030 in the Net Zero scenario, 30 million more people will be working in clean energy, efficiency and low-emissions technologies.
- By 2030, employment in oil, gas and coal fuel supply and power plants will decline by around 5 million jobs.

- Nearly two-thirds of workers in the emerging clean energy sectors will be highly skilled by 2030, and the majority will require substantial training.
- The new jobs created in the net zero economy will have more geographic flexibility. Around 40% are jobs located close to where the work is being done, e.g. building efficiency improvements or wind turbine installation, and the remaining are jobs tied to manufacturing sites.

Summaries and reaction to the IEA report:

“Planet’s pathway to net-zero means no new oil and gas spending, IEA says” in the *Globe and Mail*

“Nations Must Drop Fossil Fuels, Fast, World Energy Body Warns” in the *New York Times*

“No new investment in fossil fuels demands top energy economist” in *The Guardian*

“IEA: Tripling the Speed of Efficiency Progress a Must for a Net-Zero Carbon World” from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) outlines the report’s findings regarding energy efficiency

Reaction by Oil Change International describes the importance of the adjustment to the IEA modelling – it follows years of campaigning by climate advocates through the **FixTheWEO campaign**, calling for the IEA to align its annual World Energy Outlook (WEO) report with the 1.5 degree C Paris Agreement goals.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **employment impacts, Fossil Free, fossil fuel industry, renewable energy industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Climate Emergency Unit seeks to light a spark across Canada

Posted on **May 17, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Climate Emergency Unit** is a newly-launched initiative of the David Suzuki Institute, with the **Sierra Club B.C.** and the **Rapid Decarbonization Group** of Quebec as Strategic Partners. The Unit is led by Seth Klein and inspired by his 2020 book, ***A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency***, which argues that climate mobilization requires an effort similar to what previous generations expended against the existential threat of fascism during the Second World War. (This is an approach shared with the U.S. group **The Climate Mobilization**, and others). The stated goal of the CEU is “to work with all levels of government and civil society organizations – federal, provincial, local and Indigenous governments, businesses, trade unions, public institutions and agencies, and industrial/sectoral associations” – to network, educate and advocate for the

mobilization ideas in *A Good War*, to decarbonize and electrify Canadian society and the economy, while enhancing social justice and equity.

In [an article in *Policy Options* in November 2020](#), Klein summarizes the four hallmarks of a government committed to an urgent, emergency response:

- It spends what it takes to win;
- It creates new economic institutions to get the job done;
- It shifts from voluntary and incentive-based policies to mandatory measures;
- It tells the truth about the severity of the crisis and communicates a sense of urgency about the measures necessary to combat it.

Seth Klein was the founding Director of the [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in British Columbia](#), and continues to publish in the [CCPA Policy Note](#), as well as in the [Climate Emergency Unit blog](#), and as a columnist for *The National Observer* – for example, with [“Feds need to treat climate crisis like a national emergency”](#) on April 30.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Seth Klein](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Growth of ZEV’s impacts trucks, buses – and their drivers too

Posted on **May 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Energy Agency released its annual [Global Electric Vehicle Outlook](#) report for 2021 in April, providing data, historical trends and future projections. Despite the pandemic, there was a 41% increase in electric vehicle registrations in 2020 – compared to a 16% contraction of the overall global automobile market. There are now more than 10 million electric cars on the world’s roads, and for the first time, Europe overtook China as the centre of the global electric car market. In addition, there are roughly 1 million electric vans, heavy trucks and buses globally. A separate forecast by Bloomberg New Energy Finance, as [summarized by *The Guardian*](#), projects that electric vehicles will reach price parity with internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles by 2027. Another April [report from Boston Consulting Group](#) forecasts that zero-emission vehicles will replace ICE vehicles as the dominant powertrain for new light-vehicle sales globally just after 2035.

Most policy discussions of the electrification of transportation focus on the potential for GHG emissions reductions, consumer preferences, and the economic impacts for the automotive industry. There has been a lack of attention on operational workers – with a few exceptions. A 2020 report from the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Economic

Commission for Europe, ***Jobs in green and healthy transport: Making the green shift***, offers modelling of employment impacts in a broad definition of transportation, including personal vehicles, trucks and public transport. It focuses on Europe, and discusses the employment impacts in both manufacturing and operation.

A second notable report: ***The Impacts of Zero Emission Buses on the Transportation Workforce*** – is a Policy Statement regarding public transit, was released on April 21 by the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and the Transport Workers Union in the U.S.. Their statement warns that major job losses could occur and workers could be left without adequate training, and calls for the federal government in the U.S. to mandate worker protections, including: the Federal Transit Administration should require “advance notification of procurements and workforce impact assessments including potential job displacements or significant changes in responsibilities due to the introduction of new technologies to employee representatives”; a right of first refusal for existing employees to newly created jobs; and requirements for employers and employees to bargain in good faith over the terms of implementing the project. The Statement also call for a national workforce training center to be established to train current employees on the new systems, and a guarantee that workers will be represented on task forces and committees around climate change and technology.

These are policies which might be relevant to the response of the Amalgamated Transit Union in Toronto, where the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), announced a “green fleet expansion”, in partnership with Toronto Hydro and Ontario Power Generation. Their April 9 **press release** states: “The TTC is currently operating 60 battery-electric buses, the largest zero-emissions fleet in North America, made by three different manufacturers: BYD Canada Co. Ltd., New Flyer Industries Inc. and Proterra Inc. All three have been part of TTC’s innovative ongoing head-to-head evaluation The Board is expected to discuss the results of the evaluation and subsequently greenlight the procurement of approximately 300 long-range battery-electric buses that will be delivered between Q1 2023 and Q1 2025.”

Other EV News from Canada

British Columbia’s new report, ***Zero-Emission Vehicle Update 2020***, states that B.C. has the highest electric vehicle uptake in North America – with 54,469 light-duty ZEVs registered and over 2,500 public charging stations in the province at the end of 2020. On May 14, the province **announced** increased weight allowances for trucks, “to offset the loss of payload capacity that commercial operators experience with greener vehicles. Low-carbon options weigh more than standard diesel trucks due to the size of their battery packs and hydrogen tanks.” In Vancouver, a ***draft Climate 2050 Transportation Roadmap*** was presented to City Council on April 21 – the second in a series of ten Roadmaps that will guide the region’s climate actions to 2050. The Roadmap describes and recommends strategies to increase EV uptake –including an outreach program to large employers to encourage the installation of EV charging stations at workplaces, and facilitate fleet replacement.

In Ontario, two new reports from the Pembina Institute discuss fleet replacement: ***Making the Case for Electric Urban Delivery Fleets in the GTHA*** and ***Making the Switch to Electric Urban***

Delivery Fleets in the GTHA. Both are directed at fleet managers, but act as useful overviews of the complex issues in such a conversion. *Making the Switch* acknowledges (though only briefly) the need for training for both drivers and maintenance workers. Information about the impact of driver attitudes and habits appears in ***Long-haul trucking fleets take emission reductions into their own hands*** – an April report with case studies of three companies with heavy-duty trucks. These reports are the latest in a series of reports from Pembina, reflecting their sustained interest in the transportation sector.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Electric Busses](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Job Quality](#), [Training](#), [Transit](#), [Trucking Industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

UNEP report: Reduce methane emissions to meet climate goals and save lives

Posted on **May 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An urgent message about the dangers of methane comes in ***The Global Methane Assessment*** – a new report from the United Nations Environment Program and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. Methane as ground-level ozone (smog) is a key culprit in air pollution, and is also 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a climate-changing greenhouse gas. In Canada, **methane constituted 13% of GHG emissions** in 2019, mainly from the oil and gas sector. ***The Global Methane Assessment*** documents the extent of the problem, but offers the prospect and a path for human-caused methane emissions to be reduced by up to 45 per cent this decade with known technologies. The result of the sectoral strategies recommended would be to avoid nearly 0.3°C of global warming by 2045, making it possible to limit global heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Those reductions would also prevent 260,000 premature deaths, 775,000 asthma-related hospital visits, 25 million tonnes of crop losses annually, and 73 billion hours of lost labour from extreme heat. For the oil and gas, the top strategies are: 1. Upstream and downstream leak detection and repair 2. Recovery and utilization of vented gas 3. Improved control of unintended fugitive emissions (including regular inspections and repair of sites); replacement of gas-powered devices or diesel engines with electric motors); capping unused wells. For coal, the report highlights: pre-mining degasification and recovery and oxidation of ventilation air methane; flooding abandoned coal mines.

The message is not new to Canadians. In 2017, Environmental Defence published ***Canada's Methane Gas Problem: Why strong regulations can reduce pollution, protect health and save money***. On January 1, 2020, **new Canadian regulations came into force** “in order to fulfill Canada’s commitment to reduce emissions of methane from the oil and gas sector by 40% to 45% below 2012 levels by 2025”. The December 2020 climate plan, ***Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy*** states that Canada is a member of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and

“Together with the International Energy Agency, the Coalition is targeting a 45% reduction in methane emissions by 2025 and 60-75% by 2030.” and promises “The Government will publicly report on the efficacy of the suite of federal actions to achieve the 2025 methane target in late 2021.” (page 38). In October 2020, the **Minister of Natural Resources announced a \$750-million Emissions Reduction Fund**, providing loans to the oil and gas industry to promote investment in greener technologies to reduce methane and other GHG emissions. But how to measure progress? The problem of under-reported methane emissions is widely recognized, and was documented in 2020 in Canada by two reports **summarized by the CBC here** .

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) presents the industry side of the story on its **webpages relating to innovation and technology**. It states: “Industry is serious about meeting Canada’s commitment to reduce methane emissions from oil and natural gas operations by 45% from 2012 levels by 2025. An array of technologies and approaches are being developed and implemented, such as using solar panels to power pumps installing systems to capture vented gases, including methane, which can then be used as fuel, providing a supplemental power source for the facility. Within the industry, the **Petroleum Technology Alliance of Canada (PTAC)** is “a neutral non-profit facilitator of collaborative research and development and technology development”, with current projects including the **Advanced Methane Detection, Analytics and Mitigation Project** and the **C-DER Centre for the Demonstration of Emissions Reductions**.

Related reading: Bill McKibben’s column, **“It’s Time to kick Gas”**, comments on the UNEP report and reminds us that natural gas was once seen as a “bridge” fuel, but: “Now we understand that natural gas—which is primarily made of methane—leaks unburned at every stage from fracking to combustion, whether in a power plant or on top of your stove, in sufficient quantities to make it an enormous climate danger.” He also cites the new Australian report, ***Kicking the Gas Habit: How Gas is Harming Our Health***, which estimates that children living in houses with gas stoves is were 32 per cent more likely to develop asthma than those who didn’t – comparable to living with a smoker.

Posted in **Environmental Policy, Uncategorized** | Tagged **Ghg emissions reduction strategies, Methane Emissions** | [Leave a reply](#)

Utility Workers Union and UCS estimate costs to transition U.S. coal miners and power plant workers in joint report

Posted on **May 12, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Hard on the heels of the April statement by the United Mine Workers Union, ***Preserving Coal Country: Keeping America's coal miners, families and communities whole in an era of global energy transition***, the Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) **jointly released a report** with the Union of Concerned Scientists on May 4: ***Supporting the Nation's Coal Workers and Communities in a Changing Energy Landscape***. This report is described as “a call to action for thoughtful and intentional planning and comprehensive support for coal-dependent workers and communities across the nation.” The report estimates that in 2019, there were 52,804 workers in coal mining and 37,071 people employed at coal-fired power plants – and that eventually all will lose their jobs as coal gives way to cleaner energy sources. Like the United Mine Workers, the report acknowledges that the energy shift is already underway, and “rather than offer false hope for reinvigorated coal markets, we must acknowledge that thoughtful and intentional planning and comprehensive support are critical to honoring the workers and communities that have sacrificed so much to build this country.”

Specifically, the report calls for a minimum level of support for workers of five years of wage replacement, health coverage, continued employer contributions to retirement funds or pension plans, and tuition and job placement assistance. The cost estimates of such supports are pegged at \$33 billion over 25 years and \$83 billion over 15 years —and do not factor in additional costs such as health benefits for workers suffering black lung disease, or mine clean-up costs. The report states: “we must ensure that coal companies and utilities are held liable for the costs to the greatest extent possible before saddling taxpayers with the bill.” Neither do the cost estimates include the recognized needs for community supports such as programs to diversify the economies, or support to ensure that essential services such as fire, police and education are supported, despite the diminished tax base.

The report points to the precedents set by **Canada's Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities** (2018), the **German Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment** (2019), as well as the **New Mexico Energy Transition Act 2019** and the **Colorado Just Transition Action Plan** in 2020. The 12-page report, ***Supporting the Nation's Coal Workers and Communities in a Changing Energy Landscape*** was accompanied by a **Technical Report**, and summarized in **a UCS Blog** which highlights the situation in Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota. A 2018 report from UCS ***Soot to Solar*** also examined Illinois.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **coal phase-out, coal transition, coal-fired electricity, Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

Job creation potential of nature-based solutions to climate change

Posted on **May 10, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

U.K. think tank **Green Alliance** commissioned research to measure the economic impact of nature-based investments for a green recovery, and released the results on May 4. The full report, **Green Renewal – The Economics of Enhancing the Natural Environment**, was written by WPI Economics, and states: “Looking at just three types of enhancement (woodland creation, peatland restoration and urban green infrastructure) we find that an expanded programme of nature restoration could create at least 16,050 jobs in the 20% of constituencies likely to face the most significant employment challenges. We present place-based analysis of the labour market and nature based solutions, which can also be found on an interactive webpage [here](#).” The report emphasizes that nature-based interventions can create jobs in areas that need them the most – stating that two thirds of the most suitable land for planting trees is in constituencies with worse than average labour market challenges.

Jobs for a Green Recovery is a summary report written by Green Alliance, based on the economic WPI report. It emphasizes the impact of Covid on youth employment, stating that 63% of those newly unemployed in 2020-21 are under 25, argues that nature-based jobs are long-term, skilled and productive, and makes specific recommendations for the British government so that such jobs can become part of the U.K. green recovery. Green Alliance estimates that investments in nature-related jobs have a high cost-benefit ratio, with £4.60 back for every £1 invested in peatland, £2.80 back in woodland, and £1.30 back for salt marsh creation.

Jobs for a Green Recovery includes brief U.K. case studies. An interesting related Canadian example can be found in the new **Seed the North** initiative, described in *The Tye* [here](#). **Seed the North** is a small start-up company in Northern B.C., with big ambition to scale up. Currently, the project collects wild seed from Canadian trees, uses innovative technology to encase the seed in bio-char, and then uses drone technology to plant seeds in remote forest areas. The result: increased regeneration of disturbed land, restored soil health, a statistically significant contribution to carbon sequestration, and economic benefits flowing through co-ownership to the local First Nations communities who participate.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Forestry Industry, Green Job Creation, local job creation, nature-based solutions, Sustainable Forestry, United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

Covid-19 causes decline in solar, clean energy jobs in the U.S.

Posted on **May 10, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The 11th annual **National Solar Jobs Census** was released by the U.S. Solar Energy Industries Association on May 6, reporting that 231,474 people worked across all sectors of the industry in 2020 – a 6.7% decrease from 2019. The decrease in jobs is attributed to the impacts of Covid-19, as well as an increase in labour productivity – up 19% in the residential sector, 2% in the non-residential sector and 32% in the utility-scale sector. Thus, despite employing fewer workers, the

solar industry installed record levels of solar capacity in 2020, with 73% of installations in “ Utility-scale installations”.

According to the [2020 Solar Jobs Census](#), 10.3% of solar workers in the U.S. are unionized, above the national average and compared to 12.7% of all construction trades. The report offers details about demographic, geographic, and labour market data – for example, showing an improvement in diversity in the workforce. Since 2015, it reports a 39% increase for women, 92% increase for Hispanic or Latino workers, 18% increase for Asian American and Pacific Islander workers, and a 73% increase for Black or African American workers. Wages for benchmark solar occupations are provided, showing levels similar to, and often higher than, wages for similar occupations in other industries.

The 2020 Solar Jobs Census defines a solar worker as anyone who spends more than 50% of their working time in solar-related activities. It is a joint publication of the Solar Energy Industries Association, the Solar Foundation, the Interstate Renewable Energy Council and BW Research Partnership. It uses publicly available data from the 2021 [U.S. Energy and Employment Report \(USEER\)](#), produced by BW Research Partnership, the Energy Futures Initiative (EFI), and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO). Solar is included in their reports, which cover the broader energy industry ([The U.S. 2020 Energy & Employment Report](#) and the supplementary report, [Wages Benefits and Change](#)).

The reported decrease in solar jobs is also consistent with the message in [Clean Jobs America 2021](#), published by E2 Consultants in April. That report found a decrease in total clean energy jobs from 3.36 million in 2019 to 3 million at the end of 2020, although despite the decline, the report states: “clean energy remains the biggest job creator across America’s energy sector, employing nearly three times as many workers as work in fossil fuel extraction and generation.”

The report includes renewable energy, energy efficiency, and electric vehicle manufacturing in their coverage.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Calls for sustainable and responsible mining for the clean energy transition

Posted on [May 6, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

An important Special Report by the International Energy Association was released in May: [The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions](#). Reflecting a mainstream view of the importance of the raw materials for clean technologies such as electric vehicles and energy storage, the IEA provides “ a wealth of detail on mineral demand prospects under different technology and policy assumptions” , and discusses the various countries which offer supply –

including Canada. The main discussion is of policies regarding supply chains, especially concerning responsible and sustainable mining, concluding with six key recommendations, including co-ordination of the many international frameworks and initiatives in the area. The report briefly recognizes the Mining Association of Canada's **Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM)** protocols as internationally significant, and as one of the first to require on-site verification of its standards. The **Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM)** initiative was established in 2004, requiring member companies to “demonstrate leadership by reporting and independently verifying their performance in key environmental and social areas such as aboriginal and community engagement, biodiversity conservation, climate change, tailings management.”

On May 5, the Mining Association of Canada updated one of its TSM protocols with the release a new **Climate Change Protocol**, a major update to its 2013 Energy Use and GHG Emissions Management Protocol. It is designed “to minimize the mining sector’s carbon footprint, while enhancing climate change disclosure and strengthening the sector’s ability to adapt to climate change.” The Protocol is accompanied by a new **Guide on Climate Change Adaptation for the Mining Sector**, intended for mine owners in Canada, but with global application. *The Guide* includes case studies of such mines as the Glencore Nickel mine in Sudbury, the notorious Giant Mine in the Northwest Territories, and the Suncor Millennium tailings pond remediation at its oil sands mine in Alberta. The **membership of MAC** is a who’s who of Canadian mining and oil sands companies / – including well-known companies such as ArcelorMittal, Barrick Gold, Glencore, Kinross, Rio Tinto, Suncor, and Syncrude. Other documentation, including other Frameworks and progress reports, are compiled at a dedicated **Climate Change Initiatives and Innovations in the Mining Industry website**.

The demand for lithium, cobalt, nickel, and the other rare earth minerals needed for technological innovation has been embraced, not only by the mining industry, but in policy discussions – recently, by Clean Energy Canada in its March 2021 report, **The Next Frontier**. The federal ministry of Natural Resources Canada is also supportive, maintaining a **Green Mining Innovation Initiative** through CanmetMINING , and the **government joined** the U.S.-led Energy Resource Governance Initiative (ERGI) in 2019 to promote “secure and resilient supply chains for critical energy minerals.”

Alternative points of view have been pointing out the dangers inherent in the new “gold rush” mentality, since at least 2016 when Amnesty International released its **2016 expose of the use of child labour** in the cobalt mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Most recently, in February 2021, Amnesty released **Powering Change: Principles for Businesses and Governments in the Battery Value Chain**, which sets out specific principles that governments and businesses should follow to avoid human rights abuses and environmental harm. Other examples: MiningWatch Canada has posted their April 2021 webinar **Green Energy, Green Mining, Green New Deal?**, which states: “The mining sector is working hard to take advantage of the climate crisis, painting mining as “green” because it supplies materials needed to support the “green” energy transition. But unless demand for both energy and materials are curtailed, environmental destruction and social conflicts will also continue to grow.” MiningWatch Canada published **Turning Down the Heat: Can We Mine Our Way Out of the Climate Crisis?** in 2020, reporting on a 2019 international conference which focused on the experience of frontline communities.

Internationally, the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre maintains a [Transition Minerals tracker](#), with ongoing data and reports concerning human and labour rights in the mining of “transition minerals”, and also compiles [links to recent reports and articles](#). Two recent reports in 2021: [Recharge Responsibly: The Environmental and Social Footprint of Mining Cobalt, Lithium, and Nickel for Electric Vehicle Batteries](#) (March 2021, Earthworks) and [A Material Transition: Exploring supply and demand solutions for renewable energy minerals](#) from the U.K. organization War on Want.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean Technology](#), [cobalt](#), [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [lithium](#), [mining industry](#), [nickel mining](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Jim Stanford lauds Canadian unions for their climate activism

Posted on **May 6, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Well-known Canadian unionist Jim Stanford gave a shout-out to Canadian labour unions in [“Canada’s Secret Weapon in Fighting Climate Change: Great Trade Unions”](#), posted in the *Progressive Economics Forum* on May 3. Stanford is well-placed to make the observations and analysis, after a long career and wealth of experience at Unifor – for example, he correctly recalls the genesis of “Just Transition” here : “For example, it is significant that one of the [first uses of the phrase ‘just transition’](#) was by a Canadian union activist, Brian Kohler: a member of the former CEP who coined the phrase in 1998 to refer to the needed combination of planned energy transition, alternative job-creation, and income supports and transition assistance.”

In this brief [Great Trade Unions](#) article, he specifically cites the work of Unifor, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the Alberta Federation of Labour, and supports his assessment of “greatness” partly by citing the work of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change research project – specifically, the Green Agreements database. He states:

“...Many other unions in Canada have used their voices, their bargaining clout, and their political influence to advance progressive climate and jobs policies in their workplaces and industries. [This database](#), compiled by the York University-based ACW research project, catalogues many innovative contract provisions negotiated by Canadian unions to improve environmental practices at workplaces, educate union members and employers about climate policy, and implement concrete provisions and supports (like job security and notice, retraining, and adjustment assistance) as energy transitions occur. It confirms that Canadian unions are very much ahead of the curve on these issues: playing a vital role in both winning the broader political debate over climate change, but then demanding and winning concrete measures (not token statements) to ensure that the energy transition is fair and inclusive.”

Stanford concludes with high praise for Canada’s unions

“Of course, the approach of Canadian unions to climate issues has not been perfect or uniform: there have been tensions and debates, and at times some unions have supported further fossil fuel developments on the faint hope that the insecurity facing their members could be solved by approval of just one more mega-project. But in general the Canadian union movement has been a consistent and progressive force in climate debates. The idea of a Canadian union endorsing a pro-jobs climate plan (like Biden’s) wouldn’t be news at all here. And that has undoubtedly helped us move the policy needle forward in Canada.

I have worked with unions in several countries around climate, employment and transition planning issues. In my experience, Canada’s trade union movement sets a very high standard with its positive and pro-active approach to these issues. Our campaigns for both sustainability and workers’ rights are stronger, thanks to our union movement’s activism, vision, and courage.”

Stanford now focuses on both the Canadian and Australian scenes, and posts his thoughts at the [Centre for Future Work](#), where he is Director.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [green bargaining](#), [green collective bargaining](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental groups and Unifor agree: 60% emissions reduction goal is Canada’s Fair Share

Posted on **May 5, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Towards Canada’s Fair Share is a new report endorsed by seven of Canada’s leading environmental advocacy groups. It was released just before Prime Minister Trudeau’s announcement at the international Climate Summit on April 22-23 that **Canada will increase its emissions reduction target to 40 – 45% of 2005 levels by 2030**. Although this is an improvement on the target mentioned in Canada’s April 19th federal budget (36% below 2005 levels, it fails to match U.S. President Biden’s announcement of a 50% target, and is far below the more ambitious target proposed in ***Towards Canada’s Fair Share*** – a 60% emissions reduction by 2030. The report was based on **modelling by EnviroEconomics and Navius**, and endorsed by Climate Action Network Canada, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, Ecology Action Centre, Environmental Defence, Equiterre, Stand, and West Coast Environmental Law.

A recent CBC report, **“Union representing energy workers backs stronger emissions cuts — as long as there’s a transition plan”** (April 27), states that Unifor agrees with the Fair Share target of 60% by 2030 – “provided the right framework is in place to help its 12,000 members

move out of the oil and gas sector.” The CBC quotes Unifor representative Joie Warnock: “Our members in the energy sector have a lot to say about the path to decarbonization. The pathway to a lower carbon economy goes directly through their livelihoods, through their lives, through their communities,.....We’re very concerned that the government hasn’t done the work to plan for a just transition.” The union accepts that an energy transition is underway, and is working to “get in front of it” – and not only for its members in the oil fields, but also for **members in the auto industry, facing the transformation to electric vehicles.**

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#), [labour union policies](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trudeau pledges 40 to 45% GHG emissions reductions at Climate Summit

Posted on **April 22, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Expectations are high for the U.S.-led **Climate Summit** on April 22-23, which President Joe Biden opened by announcing a new U.S. target for GHG emissions reductions – 50% to 52% by 2030, based on 2005 levels. The Summit is described by the U.S. State Department as “a key milestone on the road to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) this November in Glasgow and is designed to increase the chances for meaningful outcomes on global climate action at COP26.” The **world’s leaders (and major emitters) are present** at the virtual meeting — including Chinese President Xi Jinping – and even in advance of the Summit, other nations announced new Nationally Determined Contributions : for example, **the U.K., which has pledged to cut carbon emissions by 78%** from 1990 levels by 2035.

Prime Minister Trudeau took his turn at announcing an even higher goal at the Summit to a 40% to 45% reduction in emissions by 2030, based on 2005 levels. **“Trudeau pledges to slash greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030”** from the CBC summarizes the statement and includes a video of Trudeau’s announcement; the **PMO press release is here** . CBC also offers a lengthy analysis in **Canada’s past climate promises have been a flop. Could that change at this summit?** .

Canada’s new target of 40 to 45% – although an improvement from the 36% below 2005 levels mentioned in the April 19th federal budget – will disappoint many, and still falls short of the 60% emissions reduction called for in **Towards Canada’s Fair Share**, a new report endorsed by seven of Canada’s leading environmental advocacy groups. The report forecasts the path forward, based on modelling by EnviroEconomics and Navius, and was endorsed by Climate Action Network Canada, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, Ecology Action Centre, Environmental Defence, Equiterre, Stand, and West Coast Environmental Law.

The Summit continues for two days. The U.S. State Department offers [live coverage of the event here](#), and there will be plenty of global media attention to this high-profile event. The Guardian is reporting closely – for example, with an overview in [“US 2030 goals will take world closer to holding global heating below 2C”](#). In Canada, in addition to the CBC coverage, Canada’s [National Observer](#) is a member of the global [Climate Desk collaborative](#) and will no doubt be reporting and analysing Canadian developments.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#), [International Climate Summit](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Status quo B.C. Budget 2021 neglects old growth forests

Posted on [April 21, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The government of British Columbia tabled its [2021 Budget](#) on April 20, including topical Backgrounders such as [Preparing B.C. for a Greener Recovery](#), which states that “Budget 2021 investments brings the total funding for CleanBC to nearly \$2.2 billion over five years.” Also highly relevant, [“Investing in B.C. Now for a Stronger Economic Recovery”](#), which summarizes skills training, infrastructure, and youth employment investments. Reaction to the Budget from climate advocates could be described as general disappointment- for example, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. Office reacting with [“BC Budget 2021: Stay-the-course budget misses the mark on key areas of urgency outside health”](#); The Pembina Institute with [“B.C. budget takes small steps toward clean economy goals”](#), and Clean Energy Canada with [“B.C. budget builds on its climate and economic plan, but could do more to seize net-zero opportunity”](#). [The Tyee](#) provides a good summary and compiles reactions from environmental groups and labour unions [here](#).

The greatest disappointment of all in the B.C. Budget relates to lack of action to protect Old Growth Forests, summarized by [The Tyee](#) in [“No New Money for Old Growth Protection in BC’s Budget”](#). The spokesperson from the Wilderness Committee is quoted as saying that the Budget “absolutely shatters” any hopes that province is taking changes to forest industry seriously. (Budget allocation to the Ministry of Forests is actually cut). This, despite the active blockade on at Fairy Creek, Vancouver Island, [recent expert reports](#), and a [Vancouver Sun Opinion piece](#) by co-authors Andrea Inness (a campaigner at the Ancient Forest Alliance) and Gary Fiege (president of the Public and Private Workers of Canada, formerly the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada) who wrote, “We can protect old growth forests and forestry jobs at the same time”. They call for the government to live up to their promise to implement [the recommendations of their own Strategic Review](#) .

Forest management has a long history of conflict in British Columbia – with the CCPA’s [Ben Parfitt](#) a long-standing expert voice who continues to document the issues – most recently in [“Burning](#)

our Way to a new Climate”. Another good overview appears in a 2018 article in The Narwhal, “[25 Years after the War in the Woods: Why B.C.’s forests are still in crisis](#)”. The *WCR* [summarized](#) the recent situation in March. For more on the current Old Growth protests: [An Explainer](#) by Capital Daily in Victoria details the Fairy Creek Blockade, underway since the Summer of 2020 and continuing despite an injunction against the protestors upheld by the B.C. Supreme Court on April 1. *The Tyee* also produced a special report, [The Blockaders](#) on March 25, which compares the current Fairy Creek Blockade to the 1993 protests in the Clayoquot Sound, where 900 people were arrested in one of Canada’s largest acts of civil disobedience—known as the “War in the Woods”. (This updates an September 2020 3-part series about that history, [Part 1](#) ; [Part 2](#); and [Part 3](#)).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Climate Activism](#), [Forest Management](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [Green Recovery](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Don’t call it a Just Transition – United Mineworkers announce Principles for Preserving Coal Country

Posted on [April 20, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

United Mine Workers of America president Cecil Roberts was accompanied by West Virginia’s senior Senator Joe Manchin on April 19 when he announced the UMWA’s new principles for addressing climate change and the energy transition. [Preserving Coal Country: Keeping America’s coal miners, families and communities whole in an era of global energy transition](#) is built on three goals: “preserve coal jobs, create new jobs, and preserve coalfield families and communities.” The UMWA statement calls for specific steps to achieve those goals, including enhanced incentives for carbon capture and storage research, with a goal of commercial demonstration of utility-scale coal-fired CCS by 2030; tax incentives for build-out of renewable supply-chain manufacturing in coalfield areas, with hiring preference for dislocated miners and families; and provision of wage replacement, family health care coverage, and pension credit/401(k) contribution, as well as tuition aid. For the community, the principles call for direct grants to coalfield counties/ communities/school districts to replace lost tax revenues for 20-year period, as well as targeted investment in infrastructure rehabilitation and development – roads, bridges, broadband, schools, health care facilities.

The document concludes with a statement of willingness to work with Congress, President Biden, and other unions, and with this: “This cannot be the sort of “just transition” wishful thinking so common in the environmental community. There must be a set of specific, concrete actions that are fully-funded and long-term. The easiest and most efficient way to fund this would be through a “wires” charge on retail electric power sales, paid by utility customers, which would add about two-

tenths of one cent per kilowatt hour to the average electric bill. This would amount to less than \$3.00 per month for the average residential ratepayer.”

Summaries appeared in: “**Miners’ union backs shift from coal in exchange for jobs**” from Associated Press, published in the *Toronto Star*; “**Surprise news from the miners union gives Democrats an opening against Trumpism**” in the *Washington Post*; “**A coal miners union indicates it will accept a switch to renewable energy in exchange for jobs**” in the *New York Times*, and “**America’s largest coal mining union supports clean energy (with conditions)**” in *Grist*.

At the same press conference on April 19, West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin announced that he will co-sponsor the **Protecting the Right to Organize Act, or PRO Act**, as reported by Reuters [here](#). Passage of the PRO Act is also one of the action items in the Mine Workers **Preserving Coal Country** statement, and a key goal for American unions.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [United Mine Workers of America](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

\$17.6 Billion announced for Green Recovery in Canada’s new Budget- but still not enough to meet the Climate Emergency – updated

Posted on [April 20, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On April 19, the federal government tabled its much-anticipated 2021 Budget, titled **A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience**, announcing \$30 billion over five years and \$8.3 billion a year afterward to create and maintain early learning and child-care programs – stating: “It is the care work that is the backbone of our economy. Just as roads and transit support our economic growth, so too does child care”. COVID-19 wage subsidy, rent subsidy and lockdown support programs will be extended until September, depending on how long the crisis continues, the maximum sickness benefit period for Employment Insurance will be extended from 12 to 26 weeks, and a new Canada Recovery Hiring Program will provide employers with funding to hire new workers between June 6, 2021 and November 20, 2021. A new \$15 federal minimum wage will apply in federally regulated private businesses.

Green Recovery and the Climate Emergency: The Budget still falls short

In an article in *Policy Options* in March, Mitchell Beer laid out the challenge: **Chrystia Freeland must pick a lane with next budget – climate change or oil and gas?** Climate activists laid out what they were looking for in **Investing for Tomorrow, Today: How Canada’s Budget 2021 can**

enable critical climate action and a green recovery, published on March 29 and endorsed by nine of Canada's leading environmental organizations: Pembina Institute, Nature Canada, Climate Action Network Canada, Environmental Defence, Équiterre, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, Ecology Action Centre, Leadnow, and Wilderness Committee.

Yet it appears that the federal Budget is still trying to maintain one foot on the oil and gas pedal, while talking about GHG emissions and clean technologies. The reactions below indicate such concerning elements – incentives on the unproven technologies of carbon capture and storage and hydrogen, no signs of an end to fossil fuel subsidies, no mention of a Just Transition Act, and, despite hopes that the Prime Minister would announce an ambitious target at the U.S. **Climate Summit convened by President Biden**, a weak new GHG reduction target increasing to only 36 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The Budget summary announces “\$17.6 billion in a green recovery that will help Canada to reach its target to conserve 25 per cent of Canada's lands and oceans by 2025, exceed its Paris climate targets and reduce emissions by 36 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and move forward on a path to reach net-zero emission by 2050.” ***This Backgrounder*** summarizes some of the Green Recovery highlights, which include :

- \$4.4 billion to support retrofitting through interest-free loans to homeowners, up to \$40,000
- \$14.9 billion over eight years for a new, permanent public transit fund
- \$5 billion over seven years, to support business ventures through the Net Zero Accelerator program – which aims to decarbonize large emitters in key sectors, including steel, aluminum, cement—and to accelerate the adoption of clean technology. Examples given are aerospace and automobile manufacture industry.
- \$319 million over seven years “to support research and development that would improve the commercial viability of carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies.” This would be in the form of an investment tax credit, with the goal of reducing emissions by at least 15 megatonnes of CO2 annually.
- a temporary **reduction by half in corporate income tax rates** for qualifying zero-emission technology manufacturers, such as solar and wind energy equipment, electric vehicle charging systems, hydrogen refuelling stations for vehicles, manufacturing of equipment used for the production of hydrogen by electrolysis of water, production of hydrogen by electrolysis of water and others
- \$63.8 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Public Safety Canada to work with provinces and territories to complete flood maps for higher-risk areas.
- \$2.3 billion over five years to conserve up to 1 million square kilometers more land and inland waters, and an additional \$200 million to build natural infrastructure like parks, green spaces, ravines, waterfronts, and wetlands.

Reactions

“Watershed moment for child care, long-term care: Budget 2021: But pharmacare, tax reform and climate change remain in limbo”, from CCPA states: “Budget 2021 delivers on a

number of previously-announced emission reduction initiatives and green infrastructure projects, including \$14.9 billion over eight years for a new, permanent public transit fund.....Unfortunately, while the budget makes big strides toward a greener economy, it fails once again to tackle Canada's dependence on fossil fuel production. Without a clear plan and timeline for winding down oil and gas extraction we simply cannot meet our net zero emission target."

"Federal Budget React: Canadian Civil Society Responds" compiles reactions from Canada's major climate advocacy groups, including Climate Action Network's own statement: "... Some investments made by budget 2021 are extremely helpful – particularly investments in clean transportation, energy efficient homes, resilient agriculture, and Canada's first green bonds. Some investments made by budget 2021 are extremely worrisome – investments in carbon capture and storage risk perpetuating our dangerous addiction to fossil fuels, and some of the forestry investments perpetuate a transactional relationship with nature that treats it like a commodity we can trade. Yet the big take away is this: we are in a time of changing norms, and Budget 2021 does not present a vision for climate-safe transformational change"

"Budget 2021 is a healthy dose for the clean economy, but climate measures lack potency" from the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, which points out "There is no way to reach our near-term or net zero targets without retrofitting practically all of Canada's homes and buildings. That's why the lack of mention of energy efficiency and deep retrofits for buildings beyond single-family homes is surprising ... There is no mention in the budget of strategic incentives or financing for municipalities or developers to ensure new construction is near-zero construction."

The Canadian Labour Congress press release, **Canada's unions welcome 'crucial' funding for child care, skills training and \$15 federal minimum wage** doesn't mention any of the green recovery elements. The CLC later released a Summary and Analysis of the Budget, [here](#).

From NUPGE: **Federal Budget 2021: Lofty ambitions need details** , which follows NUPGE President Larry Brown's letter to Environment and Climate Change Minister Wilkinson, titled **No more delays on climate action, justice**.

"Federal Budget Leaves Out Transit Workers and Riders as Operational Transit Funding Completely Left Out, Says ATU Canada" from the Amalgamated Transit Union

"If not now, when?" Liberals waste another shot at equitable recovery with Budget 2021 from Canadian Union of Public Employees

And from the *National Observer*: **"Critics throw shade at federal budget cash for home retrofits"** and **"Will Trudeau's wager on carbon capture help or hurt the environment?"** .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [carbon capture and storage](#), [clean technology industry](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Green Recovery](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Two new reports call for end to subsidies and phase-out of Canada's oil and gas industry

Posted on **April 19, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Two new reports expose Canada's continuing financial support of the fossil fuel industry and call for a phase-out. These appeared in the same week as the federal government reported Canada's latest ***National Inventory of Emissions*** to the United Nations' UNFCCC, showing that the oil and gas industry is the top source of carbon emissions in Canada.

The first report, by Environmental Defence, is ***Paying Polluters: Federal Financial Support to Oil and Gas in 2020***, released on April 15. It estimates that the government has provided or promised at least \$18 billion to the oil and gas sector in 2020 alone, including \$3.28 billion in direct subsidy programs and \$13.47 billion in public financing. ***Paying Polluters*** decries the lack of transparency – especially for funding through Export Development Canada – but nevertheless attempts to list the tax subsidies and direct spending programs, in an Appendix at the end of the report. In addition to obvious subsidies, the tally includes loans for pipeline construction, research into new technologies for cleaner processes, job subsidies for reclamation of oil wells, and even policing costs for pipeline construction – think \$13 million taxpayer dollars paid to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to protect the construction site of the Coastal GasLink pipeline.

Environmental Defence concludes with five recommendations, including a call for greater transparency, and for “a roadmap to achieve Canada's commitment to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies before 2025, and shift these investments and public finance towards supporting a path to resilient, equitable zero-carbon societies.” It should be noted that the government first pledged to phase out these subsidies in 2009. The report is summarized, with reactions, **by Sarah Cox in *The Narwhal***, on April 16.

A second report, ***Correcting Canada's “One-eye shut” Climate Policy***, was released on April 16 by the **Cascade Institute**. It summarizes Canada's history of fossil fuel production, and refutes those who argue that we are a small country whose emissions don't compare to those of China or the U.S. Calling on Canada to accept its global responsibility, the authors state that “Canada's 2021-2050 oil and gas production would exhaust about 16 percent of the world's remaining carbon budget. Canada is indeed a “carbon bomb” of global significance.” This is the first of many hard-hitting, frank statements in the report, including a highly critical discussion of the “fool's gambit” of hydrogen production, and an assessment that “A highly resourced and well-organized “regime of obstruction” has developed in Canada to block effective climate action and ensure increased fossil fuel extraction.”

Correcting Canada's “One-eye shut” Climate Policy references the Environmental Defence ***Paying Polluters report***, agreeing with the call for a phase-out of government support and

subsidies. It also offers more information about subsidies – for example, an estimate that the provincial supports, including royalty credits, constitute an additional estimated \$4.2 billion a year. Other less-than-obvious examples of support for oil and gas: subsidies that encourage fossil fuel consumption, like aviation or mobility investments, and over \$250 million directed to four oil sands major companies under Canada’s Emergency Wage Subsidy during Covid-19. The report states that Imperial Oil alone received \$120 million in wage support while concurrently issuing \$320 million in dividends. Yet on the issue of oil and gas jobs, the authors state that in 2019, the oil and gas sector represented just 1 percent of direct employment in Canada, and 5.5 percent in Alberta. “To save costs, the industry has aggressively cut jobs, by 23 percent over the 2014 to 2019 period, even as oil and gas production increased by 24 percent, reaching record highs, over that same period.”

The One-Eye Shut report goes further, offering specific policy options within the federal jurisdiction to phase out the industry, including: “prohibiting the leasing of federal lands and waters for fossil fuel production and infrastructure; implementing a “climate test” on all new fossil fuel projects and removing federal impact review exemptions; canceling the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline; divesting federal public investment funds from fossil fuel production; and removing federal subsidies and public financing that supports fossil fuel exploration, production, or transportation, including federal funding for technologies that delay a transition away from oil and gas.”

Correcting Canada’s “One-eye shut” Climate Policy: Meeting Canada’s climate commitments requires ending supports for, and beginning a gradual phase out of, oil and gas production is a Technical Paper written by University of Waterloo professor Angela Carter and PhD. Student Truzaar Dordi, and published by the **Cascade Institute**. Participating Institutions include the Corporate Mapping Project, University of Waterloo, Royal Roads University, and the McConnell Foundation.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **climate change policies, energy policies, Fossil Fuel Subsidies, green hydrogen, Oil and gas industry, Oil and Gas Lobby** | [Leave a reply](#)

Sierra Club green recovery plan calls for “ironclad labor and equity standards”

Posted on **April 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Sierra Club U.S. report ***How to Build Back Better: A 10-year Plan for Economic Renewal*** is a blueprint for economic renewal – in which the environmental advocacy group continues to demonstrate clear support for the needs of workers. Released in March, **this report** includes a call for public investments which “must come with ironclad labor and equity standards to curb racial, economic, and gender inequity instead of reinforcing the unjust status quo.” To support the

job quality theme, the Sierra Club also released a 1-pager titled ***Cross-cutting environmental, labor and equity standards*** and a 3-page summary titled ***Why Standards Matter, an overview of job quality issues*** .

Briefly, the Sierra Club recommends a pandemic recovery plan which would create over 15 million good jobs, based on public investment of \$1 trillion per year for ten years. Investments would go to many sectors including infrastructure and clean manufacturing, but also the care sector and the public sector. In addition to job creation, the plan addresses systemic racism, supports public health, and cuts climate pollution nearly in half by 2030. The economic renewal plan is based on the **THRIVE Agenda**, which is itself based on job projections and modelling by academics at the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), led by Robert Pollin. Their latest analysis was published by PERI as ***Employment Impacts of Proposed U.S. Economic Stimulus Programs*** (March 2021). Sierra Club released a **3-page summary of job projections**; an **interactive Jobs Calculator** ; and Fact Sheets for each of the sectors considered: regenerative agriculture, clean energy, care and public sector, transportation, manufacturing, buildings, and clean water for all, and pollution-free communities. All these accompanying documents, along with the full report, are available **here**.

THRIVE stands for “Transform, Heal, and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy” and is summarized in the **Sierra Club press release** of March 25. The coalition has grown out of the **Green New Deal Network**, itself a coalition of 15 U.S. organizations that are focused on combating social inequity and environmental destruction through political action.

Posted in **Green Economy, United States** | Tagged **employment impacts, Green New Deal - U.S., Green Recovery, Job Creation, Job Quality, Labour and Greens, United States** | **Leave a reply**

Government committee recommends further study for support for workers amid transition to electric vehicle production

Posted on **April 16, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development presented their report, ***The Road Ahead: Encouraging the Production and Purchase Of Zero-Emission Vehicles In Canada*** to the House of Commons on April 13. The Committee had received eighteen briefs and heard from twenty-one witnesses since the Fall of 2020 – available **here**. The importance of reducing transportation emissions was accepted, and the topics of discussion included purchase incentives, expanding ev charging infrastructure and the impact on the electricity sector, the

potential of hydrogen-powered vehicles, and more. The resulting report makes thirteen recommendations, to which the government is requested to respond. Amongst the recommendations: the existing federal incentive program for EV purchase be continued and expanded to include used EV's, that the price cap be eliminated, with eligibility geared to income; that the Government of Canada build on existing initiatives, like the Green Mining Innovation program, to improve the environmental performance of Canadian minerals used in battery and hydrogen fuel cell production; and that the federal government work with provincial and territorial governments to develop recycling and end of life management strategies for ZEV batteries.

Recommendation #6 addresses the concerns of workers: *“The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada study opportunities to support automotive sector workers while facilities are transitioning to produce ZEVs, and consider dedicated funding to retrain automotive sector workers for ZEV production.”*

Most of the input to the Standing Committee was from industry representatives, but the report attributes Recommendation #6 largely to the testimony of Angelo DiCaro, Research Director of Unifor on November 23, 2020. From the report: “Witnesses cautioned that it will be challenging to reorient Canada’s automotive sector to produce ZEVs. It takes time for producers to bring vehicles to market, and to retool facilities and retrain workers to produce ZEVs. Angelo DiCaro suggested that the Government of Canada should ensure that the employment insurance system will support workers during plant retooling. He also noted that the transition to ZEVs could threaten jobs in Canada’s automotive parts sector, especially among businesses that produce parts for the powertrains that propel ICEVs. To compensate, Mr. DiCaro said that Canadian governments should set rules about the afterlife of vehicles that could create jobs in vehicle disassembly and recycling.”

Specifically, when asked later by NDP MP Laurel Collins, “what kind of retraining and income supports do Canadian auto workers need to support a just transition to a zero-emissions future?” DiCaro identified the powertrain segment of the auto parts industry as the most vulnerable, and continued.... “as plants transition, as will happen with Oakville, we have to see how long these transition times will take in our next round of bargaining. I can assure you that, if this is going to be

a two-year or a 16-month transition to get that plant retooled, there are going to be questions about income supports for those workers as they retrain and wait for these cars to come online..... This is front and centre. I think the act of collective bargaining gives us an opportunity to explore that. Certainly our employment insurance system and our training systems are going to have to be looked at more carefully.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Auto Industry](#), [auto manufacturing industry](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Just Transition](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Right to a healthy environment recognized in new amendments to Canadian Environmental Protection Act

Posted on **April 14, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On April 13 the Government of Canada announced proposed amendments to the **Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA)**, the cornerstone of federal environmental laws. **Bill C-28 Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act** promises to fast-track the regulatory process for particularly harmful chemicals; encourage companies to avoid toxic chemicals entirely and to phase-in mandatory product labelling, beginning with cosmetics, household cleaning products and flame retardants in upholstery. The Act also recognizes and protects the right of Canadians to a healthy environment.

The government press release is [here](#); and a **Backgrounder** and **Plain language summary of key amendments** is provided. In addition, the government’s talking points about the CEPA amendments are highlighted in an **Opinion piece by John Wilkinson**, Canada’s Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, in *The National Observer*. The amendments are the culmination of a long process, including **hearings by the House Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development**, which received 66 submissions. The Standing Committee report, **Healthy Environment, Healthy Canadians, Healthy Economy: Strengthening the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999** made 89 recommendations when it was released in 2017. A summary appeared in the WCR [here](#).

Right to Healthy Environment proposals

“**Is a healthy environment a right? New CEPA bill says so**”, in *The National Observer* (April 14, re-posted in *The Toronto Star*) quotes Joe Castrilli, legal counsel for the Canadian Environmental Law Association. He states: “This bill does not create a right to a healthy environment”

“There’s a preamble provision which says the government recognizes that ... it has the duty to

protect the right to a healthy environment. But it doesn't actually create a remedy for any individual seeking to protect the environment."

A **Joint statement** released by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) Breast Cancer Action Quebec, EcoJustice, the David Suzuki Foundation, and Environmental Defence acknowledges the importance of Bill C-28, points out some weaknesses, and alludes to the debates which clearly lies ahead. From the Joint Statement :

"Bill C-28 includes amendments to CEPA recognizing – for the first time in federal law – the right to a healthy environment . 156 UN member states already recognize this right in law, treaties and constitutions. The recognition of a right to a healthy environment in CEPA is an important step forward. However, the bill should ensure that this right has a positive impact on the lives of everyone in Canada, especially vulnerable populations who have long been denied environmental justice and disproportionately experience cumulative impacts of multiple interacting hazards.Bill C-28 is important as we continue to face the COVID-19 pandemic. A strengthened CEPA will be the backbone of a green and just recovery.All political parties must now make Bill C-28 a political priority."

The Right to a Healthy Environment: even more is required to address environmental racism

The environmental rights and protections in **Bill C-28** on April 13 come on the heels of private member's Bill C-230, **A National Strategy to Redress Environmental Racism (Bill C-230)**, which was debated and passed 2nd Reading on March 24. C-230 will now come before the House Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, with **the first meeting scheduled for April 14**. C-230 goes further than the CEPA amendments regarding on environmental justice, and calls for the the government to

- Examine the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk
- Collect information and statistics relating to the location of environmental hazards
- Collect information and statistics relating to negative health outcomes in communities that have been affected by environmental racism
- Assess the administration and enforcement of environmental laws in each province

In addition, it calls for possible amendments to federal laws, policies, and programs, with the involvement of community groups, and with compensation for individuals or communities. A new article (published before the House of Commons vote) appears in *Our Times* in "**Here for all Seasons: A Coalition to Confront Environmental Racism**" (Feb. 21 2021). It describes some of those community and advocacy groups fighting on this issue, including the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). The Labour Day 2020 issue of *Our Times*, summarized **here**, describes the role of labour unions in the struggle against environmental racism – in which CBTU has been prominent.

72% of surveyed oil and gas workers in Canada want career transition – with many willing to accept wage reduction

Posted on **April 12, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

A survey of over 2,000 respondents from across Canada who had previously worked in the oil and gas industry found that 72% indicated that their career priority was to make a career transition. Of that 72%, “35% indicated their desired employment situation was in a different role or industry; 14% were seeking a different work arrangement such as self-employment; and 12% planned to seek employment after additional training.” The survey results are summarized in two blogs on March 30, ***Untapped Talent: Opportunity to Transition***, and ***Untapped Talent, Transitioning Opportunity***, from Canada’s oil and gas labour market organization, **PetroLMI**. The survey was conducted from October 2019 to December 2020.

While a resistance to lower wages is frequently cited as a barrier to Just Transition, the PetroLMI survey showed that: “the wage expectations of respondents were not out of line given their education, experience and skills. When asked about their salary expectations, 61% indicated a salary of less than \$100,000, and 28% were willing to take a reduction in their salary for stable employment. In Alberta more than 35% of respondents said they were willing to take a salary reduction.” 42% of respondents were over the age of 55; 77% had over 15 years of experience; 86% had post-secondary education – in Alberta, most held a university, while in the rest of Canada, trade certification was most cited.

From the industry point of view: “While layoffs rarely have a silver lining, these workforce reductions mean there is a robust pool of talent available for hire.” “The layoffs that occurred among respondents were broad and impacted a wide range of job families and occupations from trades, truck drivers, technologists and technicians to geoscientists, engineers and information technologists. The talent pool also included occupations that tended to be transferable across industries including finance, accounting, human resources, health and safety, sales, marketing and business development. They also included field operations and drilling workers with transferable skills such as working in safety-sensitive workplaces, critical thinking and problem-solving. As a result, construction and renewable energy companies have begun hiring from this talent pool.”

Canada’s **Petroleum Labour Market Institute** (PetroLMI- formerly the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada) produces ongoing labour market analysis, recently stating: “The cumulative impacts of a six-year economic downturn, lower demand due to COVID-19 health

restrictions, and structural shifts in the oil and gas industry, mean there is a smaller oil and gas workforce in Canada – down 26%, or 58,700 jobs from its peak in 2014.” Their latest detailed labour market data, sourced from Statistics Canada, [is here](#). Analytical reports are [compiled here](#), including a four-part series titled “*The Impact of COVID-19 on Canada’s Energy Workforce: A four-part series on work practices, productivity and opportunities*”. On that topic, Norwegian consultancy Rystad Energy ranks Canada, U.S. and Australia as hardest hit in “*Covid-19 job toll: Top O&G employer China resilient, US takes larger hit than European peers*”, a March 9 newsletter. (The Canadian Energy Research Institute also published *Economic Recovery Pathways for Canada’s Energy Industry: Part 2 – Canadian Crude Oil and Natural Gas* in September 2020, modelling employment and economic impacts) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [attitudes of workers](#), [Covid-19](#), [Job displacement](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Can Biden unite Labour and climate activists with his American Jobs Plan ?

Posted on [April 8, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 31, U.S. President Biden announced his “American Jobs Plan,” which outlines over \$2 trillion in spending proposals, including \$213 billion to build, modernize and weatherize affordable housing, \$174 billion for incentives and infrastructure for electric vehicles; \$100 billion for power grid modernization and resilience; \$85 billion investment in modernizing public transit and bringing it to underserved areas; \$35 billion investment in clean technology research and development, including incubators and demonstration projects; \$16 billion employing union oil and gas workers to cap abandoned oil and gas wells and clean up mines, and \$10 billion to launch a Civilian Climate Corps to work on conservation and environmental justice projects. All of these are proposals, to be subject to the political winds of Washington, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi suggesting a date of July 4 for a vote on legislation.

The [White House Fact Sheet](#) outlines the specifics . Robert Reich calls the plan “smart politics” in “[Joe Biden as Mr. Fix-it](#)” in *Commons Dreams*, and according to “[Nine Ways Biden’s \\$2 Trillion Plan Will Tackle Climate Change](#)” in *Inside Climate News*, “President Joe Biden aims to achieve unprecedented investment in action to address climate change by wrapping it in the kind of federal spending package that has allure for members of Congress of both parties.” [David Roberts offers a summary and smart, informed commentary](#) in his Volt blog, stating: “Within this expansive infrastructure package is a mini-Green New Deal, with large-scale spending targeted at just the areas energy wonks say could accelerate the transition to clean energy — all with a focus on equity and justice for vulnerable communities on the front lines of that transition. If

it passes in anything like its current form, it will be the most significant climate and energy legislation of my lifetime, by a wide margin.”

Julian Brave NoiseCat writes in the National Observer on April 6, summing up the dilemma: ...” Each policy has the potential to unite or divide the Democrat’s coalition of labour unions, people of colour, environmentalists and youth activists. Some policies, like the creation of a new Civilian Climate Corps are directly adopted from demands pushed by activists like the youth-led *Sunrise Movement*. Others, like investments in existing nuclear power plants and carbon capture retrofits for gas-fired power plants, will pit labour unions against environmental justice activists from the communities those industries often imperil. Uniting the environmental activists who oppose the development of fossil fuel pipelines with the workers who build them will be among the Democrats’ greatest challenges.”

Some Specific U.S. statements:

Generally favourable reaction comes in a **brief statement from the AFL-CIO**. The **BlueGreen Alliance** states: “This is a historic first step, and yet we know this and more will be needed to deliver the scale of investment needed, particularly in disadvantaged communities and for workers and communities impacted by energy transition.” Similarly, Kate Aronoff writes “**Biden’s Infrastructure Plan Needs More Climate Spending**” in *The New Republic*; and the Climate Justice Alliance response is titled “**Grassroots, Environmental Justice Communities call on Biden To Go Bigger, Bolder And Faster For A Climate, Care And Infrastructure Recovery Package That Meets The Moment**”.

The **Sunrise Movement press release** commends Biden for calling for passage of the PRO Act, for clean energy initiatives, and environmental justice aspects, and has a mixed reaction to Biden’s version of the Civilian Climate Corps: “This gives our movement a starting place, and with a foot in the door we can fight to expand and strengthen the CCC over the coming years.” “The plan Biden rolled out today would create about 10,000-20,00 jobs in a Civilian Climate Corps, which would train and employ young people to build clean energy and decarbonize the economy. When FDR rolled out a similar Civilian Conservation Corps, it employed around 300,000 people per year, and that was back when the US population was ~40% of its current size .”

Will Biden’s Plan push Canada’s climate ambitions?

The CBC published “**Here are four ways Biden’s big climate bill touches Canada**” . Mitchell Beer compiles reactions in “**Biden Jobs, Infrastructure Plan Aims to ‘Turbocharge the transition’ off Fossil Fuels**” in *The Energy Mix*, including Adam Radwanski’s response in the *Globe and Mail*, “**Joe Biden’s new climate plans should jolt Ottawa**” (restricted access). And the Canadian United Steelworkers alludes to the “Buy American” elephant in the room for Canadians, in its press release titled, **Build Back Better Through Infrastructure Spending on Both Sides of the Border** (April 1) “the United Steelworkers union (USW) sees U.S. President Joe Biden’s American Jobs Plan as an opportunity to maintain and create jobs, bolster manufacturing and make our communities safer.A decade ago, the USW worked with the

Obama administration and the Canadian government to create a North American strategy that benefited workers in the United States and Canada.... Canada is not the problem facing U.S. manufacturing and workers. Co-operation between Canada and U.S. will build on our longstanding and productive trading relationship.”

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Civilian Climate Corps](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [Joe Biden](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition policies in Canada, EU and OECD countries – including unique case studies

Posted on **April 8, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

How Can we Manage a Just Transition? A comparative review of policies to support a just transition from carbon intensive industries was released by the University of Victoria , Institute for Integrated Energy Systems in late March 2021. The researchers examined national Just Transition policies in Canada and in twenty-five European Union and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, along with EU-level and regional entities.

Seven main thematic areas were identified: i) governance mechanisms; ii) climate and sustainability planning; iii) workforce development; iv) economic development; v) regional and rural development; vi) innovation and research; vii) social security. Amongst the key findings: Jobs and environment-focussed initiatives are the most common, with well-developed workforce and skills strategies evident. However, the researchers highlight many deficiencies, including a lack of social justice language in policies; a lack of targeted strategies, excepting for the coal industry; a lack of proactive planning – with the exception of workforce development measures; and a lack of integrated planning at the industrial/economic planning level. The report points to best practice examples – in New Zealand for its proactive approach, and in Scotland and Ireland, for accountability through Just Transitions Commissions.

The report provides a thorough literature review, international analysis, and identifies areas where further research is needed. It also provides ten brief, unique case studies which include, but go beyond fossil-fuel related transitions, consisting of: Ontario, Canada; Grand-Est, France; Saarland, Germany; Western Macedonia, Greece; Piedmont, Italy; Incheon, Capital Region, Korea; Bay of Plenty, New Zealand; Basque Country, Spain; Kalmar, Småland with Islands, Sweden; and Wales, United Kingdom.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [case studies](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trans Mountain pipeline protests continue as a new report estimates costs up to \$13 billion for Canadian taxpayers

Posted on **April 5, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As construction of the Trans Mountain expansion continues and the British Columbia government **weighs the risks of potential oil spills**, protests against the project continue. “***Tiny House Warriors And Braided Warriors Accomplices Lock Down On Trans Mountain Site***” (Sparrow Project, April 3) describes the protest by those supporting the resistance of the Secwepemc First Nations – also as described in “***‘We Will Not Stop’: First Nations Land Defenders Take Direct Action Against Trans Mountain Pipeline***” in *Common Dreams* (April 3) . In what they call a “deep dive”, *The Tyee* and Investigate West co-published “***For BC’s Two Pipeline Fights, It’s Spring Forward***”, which delves into the many actors in the continuing opposition to Trans Mountain and the Coastal Gas Link pipelines. Also in *The Tyee*, “***Youth Climate Activists Aim to Rally Support for Indigenous Land Defenders***” describes the March 19 Global Climate March protest by Sustainabilityteens in Vancouver. *The National Observer* maintains an archive of articles documenting Trans Mountain developments, [here](#). Amidst it all, the provincial government weighs granting an environmental certificate re protections for oil spills, as explained in “***B.C. relying on the federal shoreline protections for Trans Mountain pipeline it previously called inadequate***” in *The Narwhal* .

An academic report, released on March 31, supports the protests with financial and cost benefit analysis, as summarized by the [CBC here](#). ***Evaluation of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project*** is written by lead author Thomas Gunton, Director of Simon Fraser University’s **School of Resource and Environmental Management**. The report concludes that continuing the construction of the Trans Mountain Expansion project will bring a net cost to Canada of \$6.8 billion under base case assumptions – with the possibility of costs running as high as \$13.3 billion “...because the TMEP capacity is not required and therefore does not generate a benefit. Oil transported on TMEP could have been transported on other pipelines without expending funds building TMEP. Therefore, **continuing to build TMEP as currently proposed is not in Canada’s public interest and the project should not proceed further.**”

Much has changed since Professor Gunton’s previous [evaluation in 2017](#) of the Trans Mountain expansion project, including the federal government’s purchase of Trans Mountain in 2018. The 2021 report, ***Evaluation of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project*** is highly critical of the previous assessments by the National Energy Board, used to justify the purchase – and makes specific note of how the NEB distorted job projections provided by the Conference Board of Canada to overestimate the job benefits. The ***December 2020 report of the Parliamentary Budget Office*** found that the Trans Mountain Expansion profitability was dependent on climate

change policies – so the Gunton report updates the PBO analysis by taking into account the climate change policies announced in the December 2020 **Healthy Environment Healthy Economy** climate plan. Finally, it provides detailed cost benefit analysis both for completion and for termination of the TMX project – incorporating environmental costs, including the risks of pipeline spills. Regarding employment benefits, the analysis finds modest positive benefits, given the existing recession in the oil and gas sector.

“A potential benefit of TMEP is providing employment to workers. As discussed in Section 3.2.6 of this report, the measure of employment benefits is not the gross number of jobs generated by TMEP but is instead the net employment and income gain of employees of TMEP relative to what they would have made if TMEP did not proceed. Historically, the economy of Western Canada has been characterized by tight labour markets in which most employees are employed. Under full employment, projects like TMEP would simply draw employees from other jobs with little to no net employment benefit. However, given the current recession and recent slowdowns in the energy sector and the potential of TM training and hiring employees through impact benefit agreements, there will likely be an employment benefit, with some hiring of persons who would otherwise be unemployed or employed at a lower wage.” (p.45).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change activism](#), [employment impacts](#), [First Nations](#), [Job Creation](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Finally, a roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act

Posted on **April 1, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In 2019 at COP25, Canada’s federal politicians **pledged to enact a Just Transition Act**, and even **included the promise in the Liberal election platform**. Yet the December 2020 federal climate plan, **A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy**, makes little mention of Just Transition, and the absence of follow-through has not gone unnoticed – for example, in a January 2021 article in the *Toronto Star* which asks: **“The Liberals promised help for oil workers as their jobs disappear. So where is it?”**

On April 1, a new report, **Roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act: A path to a clean and inclusive economy** advances the issue by offering a framework and costed proposals for essential provisions. *The Roadmap* is built on an overview of the international research and best practices, and makes proposals which are meant to be comprehensive and ambitious, and commensurate with the scale of the problem- costed as “in the order of \$16.5 billion per year (declining over the lifetime of the transition).”

The Roadmap proposes the following components for a Just Transition Act for Canada:

- *Enshrine fundamental just transition principles, rights and definitions;*
 - *Establish a Just Transition Commission to oversee and guide the government's transition agenda;*
 - *Establish a Just Transition Benefit to support workers in affected communities;*
 - *Establish an Economic Diversification Crown Corporation to invest in job-creating projects in affected communities;*
 - *Establish a Just Transition Training Fund that ensures access for historically marginalized groups to employment in the lower-carbon economy; and,*
 - *Establish a new federal-provincial/territorial Just Transition Transfer to deliver funding for these new social programs.*
-

The role of the **Just Transition Commission** is central, coordinating the activities that will be administered through federal departments, encompassing the entire Canadian economy and workforce. The commission should represent and engage with “a wide variety of stakeholders, including labour unions, civil society groups, Indigenous peoples, business associations, independent experts, and public servants from governments of all levels.It should lead the development of regionally specific roadmaps for Canada’s transition away from fossil fuels—plans that map out a timeline for the wind down of fossil fuel production and the scaling up of alternative industries for affected provinces and communities. It should propose and monitor policies related to decarbonization and workforce transition to ensure the principles of a just transition are respected at all stages of implementation. The commission should play a role in developing skills inventories and recommending investments in training for affected regions and workers. It should also work with employers and workers to facilitate job shifting and job bridging to avoid layoffs wherever possible.”

Regarding a Just Transition Benefit for individuals, the authors state: “Unlike some existing transition supports, eligibility for this benefit should not be conditional on direct employment in an emissions-intensive industry. Instead, anyone suffering a significant drop in income due to the wind down of fossil fuel production in a qualifying region should be able to claim it. The benefit should be available, for as long as necessary, to help displaced workers to seek re-training and/or re-employment.”

Regarding **proactive economic diversification**, the report notes that “the amount spent by Canadian governments on economic diversification in the context of decarbonization is woefully inadequate” and calls for the creation of a new federal Economic Diversification Crown Corporation, distinct from the existing Western Economic Diversification Fund or the Canada Infrastructure Bank. It would play “a crucial and distinct role in accelerating economic diversification away from fossil fuels through direct public ownership of new infrastructure ... At least initially, new public investments in economic diversification must be on the scale of the industries being phased out—in the order of \$15 billion per year at first and declining as the transition unfolds.”

Regarding training, the report calls for the legislation to “create a Just Transition Training Fund that has the explicit purpose of training new workers from historically marginalized groups for good, green jobs in a lower-carbon economy. Offering preferential support to certain groups, including women, Indigenous peoples, disabled people and people from racialized communities, is consistent with the principle of employment equity and protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.” The report calls for “a significant portion of the Just Transition Training Fund should be allocated directly to expand training infrastructure, including through public colleges, labour union training centres and on job sites across the country.”

Roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act: A path to a clean and inclusive economy was written by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood and Clay Duncliffe, and co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) Research program . Mertins Kirkwood summarizes the contents in an **Opinion piece in the *National Observer*** .

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Climate change policy, Just Transition, Just Transition Act** | [Leave a reply](#)

Massachusetts climate legislation almost derailed by opposition to greener building code provisions

Posted on **March 31, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An Act creating a next-generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy was signed into law on March 26, summarized in Governor Charlie Baker’s press release, [here](#) . It is a sweeping and ambitious bill which sets emissions reduction targets, including six sectoral goals, culminating in net-zero emissions for the state by 2050; sets appliance efficiency standards; incentivizes electric vehicles; includes environmental justice protections; and orders funding for a clean energy equity workforce and market development program to support employment opportunities for

certified minority- and women-owned small business and individuals living in environmental justice communities.

And as described in “[What You Need To Know About The New Mass. Climate Law](#)” (NPR, WBUR, March 26), the Roadmap legislation also authorizes the development of stretch energy codes for net-zero energy buildings. The Department of Energy Resources will announce the final version after public consultations for the next 18 months, after which municipalities can choose to adopt the model codes. The building code provisions were the major sticking point in the political battle over this legislation, and triggered a Governor’s veto in 2020, thanks to organized opposition from the natural gas industry and real estate industry, both of whom see a potential threat of natural gas bans.

This Massachusetts example is explained in “[Sweeping Mass. climate law revives gas ban battle](#)” (Mar. 29). The broader battle which is forming across the U.S. is described in “[Developers clash with U.S. Cities on vote for greener building codes](#)” in *The Energy Mix*, and in “[A Texas city had a bold new climate plan – until a gas company got involved](#)” in *The Guardian* (March 1). The [American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy \(ACEEE\) describes](#) how this conflict is playing out at the International Code Council (ICC), which sets model building code standards, and which “just threw out the elections process by which state and local government officials recently overcame powerful commercial interests to secure large energy savings.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Building Codes](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Natural Gas](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Historic court decision in Mathur v. Ontario government – Youth Charter challenge for stronger GHG emissions reductions can proceed

Posted on **March 31, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Although the Supreme Court decision about Canada’s carbon pricing system on March 25 was undoubtedly historic, it overshadowed the news of another historic legal decision on that date, when an Ontario Divisional Court dismissed the provincial government’s second attempt to stop the youth-led challenge to its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. In “[Youth climate case forges ahead after court affirms historic decision](#)”, EcoJustice describes that the case of [Mathur et. al. v. Her Majesty in Right of Ontario](#), which has now become the constitutional challenge to climate change that has advanced the furthest in Canada.

Some background: The case of *Mathur et. al. v. Her Majesty in Right of Ontario* was first brought by seven youth in November 2019, following the Conservative government's passage of the *Cap and Trade Cancellation Act*. The plaintiffs, represented by Ecojustice and Stockwoods LLP, claimed that Ontario's GHG emissions reduction target is insufficiently ambitious, and that the province's failure to set a more stringent target infringes the constitutional rights of youth and future generations, under Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In November 2020, the Superior Court of Ontario **upheld the claims**, in the decision which the provincial government sought to overturn. As of March 25, the case can now proceed to a full hearing, though no date has been set.

Climate Change and the Right to a Healthy Environment in the Canadian Constitution is a legal article which appeared in the *Alberta Law Review* in 2020. The authors describe and contrast the legal approaches used in the Mathur case and in the ***LaRose case***, which was **dismissed by Canada's Supreme Court** in October 2020. **Ecojustice has posted** frequently on the case, and Alberta's Environmental Law Centre also featured the Mathur case in a **detailed blog in November 2020**.

The first and most high-profile youth climate case in the world, is ***Juliana v. U.S. Government***. A timeline is **here**, reflecting the progress from the initial filing in 2015 till March 9 2021, when Our Children's Trust **filed a motion to amend** the complaint and adjust the remedy sought, after repeated roadblocks in the case.

Posted in **Climate Change Law and Litigation** | Tagged **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, climate change and youth, Climate litigation, Juliana v. United States, Mathur case, youth litigation** | **Leave a reply**

Canada's Supreme Court affirms federal government's constitutional right to enact carbon pricing legislation

Posted on **March 29, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

On March 25, the **Supreme Court of Canada released a majority decision** stating that the federal government of Canada was within its constitutional rights when it enacted the *2018 Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* — which required the provinces to meet minimum national standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The decision enables the federal government to move on to more ambitious climate action plans, since it ends a two-year battle with the provinces, and affirms the importance of the climate change issue. The **majority decision** states that national climate action “is critical to our response to an existential threat to human life in Canada and around the world.” Summaries and reaction to this hugely important decision include an

Explainer in *The Narwhal* , and **“Supreme Court rules federal carbon pricing law constitutional”** (National Observer) . Mainstream media also covered the decision, including a **brief article** in the *New York Times* which relates it to U.S. policy climate.

The Canadian Labour Congress issued a press release **“Canada’s unions applaud Supreme Court decision upholding federal carbon pricing”** – pointing out that the carbon tax is only one piece of the puzzle in reducing GHG emissions. **Unifor** emphasized next steps, calling on the provincial premiers of Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and the federal Conservative leader, to “stop complaining” and devise their own climate action plans. Similar sentiments appeared in the reactions of other advocacy groups: for example, **Council of Canadians**; the **Pembina Institute** ; **Clean Energy Canada**, and the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment** (CAPE) .

Political reactions

The reaction and explanation of the case from the federal government is **here**. The CBC provides a survey of political reaction **here**. Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta were the three provinces who lost their Supreme Court case: in **a press release**, Alberta’s Premier Jason Kenney pledged that his government will continue to “fight on”, and will now begin to consult with Albertans on how to respond to the court’s decision – as reported in the *National Observer*, **“Alberta has no carbon tax Plan B, was hoping to win in court: Kenney”** (March 26) . Kenney further stated, “We will continue **to press our case challenging Bill C-69**, the federal ‘No More Pipelines Law,’ which is currently before the Alberta Court of Appeal.” [Note Bill C-69 is actually titled **An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act**... and was enacted in June 2019]. Ontario’s “disappointment” is described in **this article** in the *Toronto Star* and Saskatchewan’s government reaction is described **here by the CBC** . A sum-up Opinion piece appears in The Tyee: **“Sorry Cranky Conservatives! Carbon Pricing Wins the Day”** (March 29).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing, Carbon Tax, Climate change policy, Greenhouse gas pollution pricing act, provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

A vision and action plan to make Canada’s heavy industries our low-carbon “Next Frontier”

Posted on **March 24, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Clean Energy Canada’s new report, **The Next Frontier**, sees Canada’s heavy industries—including steel, mining, cement, and wood—as the “Next Frontier” – already employing more Canadians than the oil and gas industry (300,000 in heavy industry compared to 237,000 in oil and gas), and poised to increase exports to the rest of the world. The report contends that Canadian

heavy industries have a competitive advantage over their global peers, largely because our electricity sector is now 83% emissions-free. And according to the introduction, the time is now: “The production of certain metals and minerals could increase by up to nearly 500% over the next three decades to meet growing demand for clean technologies, according to the World Bank Group. Global steel demand, meanwhile, is projected to increase by up to 55%; Canadian steel and aluminum are among the world’s cleanest and could be even cleaner. Mining companies such as Vancouver based Teck are also global leaders in copper production, while Canada is the world’s fifth-largest nickel producer—both key metals for electrifying transportation. And Albertan companies like E3 Metals and Summit Nanotech are finding ways to recover lithium from oilsands wastewater.”

The Next Frontier, released on March 24, calls for an action plan to allow Canada to capitalize on the convergence of global market trends and climate imperatives. The report Canadian strengths and provides more examples of existing companies. It concludes with an action plan to move towards this lower-carbon economy, including recommendations: to expand domestic markets through clean procurement policies for government infrastructure materials; to identify strategic directions such as “establishing a self-sufficient battery and critical minerals supply chain to build and grow domestic battery and clean technology manufacturing”; investment and research and development in well-positioned industries; and establishing standards which will support a “Clean Canada” brand to the world.

And regarding our largest and most important trading partner, the U.S., the bottom line message is: “If we want Biden’s “Buy American” approach to include an asterisk beside Canada, we must adapt to what this new administration wants more of (clean energy and low-carbon goods) and what it wants less of (fossil fuels and emissions-intensive products).”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [cement industry](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Decarbonization](#), [Green Economy](#), [industrial policy](#), [mining industry](#), [steel industry](#), [wood products industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: Supreme Court upholds legislation underpinning Canada’s carbon pricing system

Posted on **March 24, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 25, majority of **Canada’s Supreme Court** ruled in what EcoJustice **calls a “monumental” decision**, that the federal ***Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*** does not violate the Canadian constitution. The Summary decision is available at the Supreme Court website as of March 25, [here](#). The Justices noted that global warming causes harm beyond provincial boundaries and that it is a matter of national concern under the “*peace, order and good*

government” clause of the Constitution. The Justices further noted that the term “carbon tax” is a misnomer, and the fuel and excess emission charges imposed by the Act were constitutionally valid regulatory charges and not taxes.

The federal government’s constitutional right to set the framework for pollution pricing lies at the heart of our national policies to fight climate change – originally, through the **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** (2016) and now, through the **Healthy Environment Healthy Economy** Plan released in December 2020, which proposes to raise the existing carbon tax to \$170 per tonne by 2050.

The **Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act** allows the federal government to impose a carbon price, a “backstop”, in any province or territory which fails to design their own policies to meet the federal emission reduction targets. The provinces of Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Alberta all filed separate challenges to the federal jurisdiction – with the provincial appeals courts in **Saskatchewan** and **Ontario** both upholding the federal government’s constitutional right to enact the law. In February 2020, the **Alberta Court of Appeal** upheld the provincial challenge, and appeals to the Supreme Court from all three provinces were heard in Fall 2020. A more complete chronology of the legal cases is [here](#) .

The Supreme Court decision [is summarized here](#) – with a link to the full Decision (the Court notes that the Full Decision is so lengthy that it may cause an error message when trying to download it).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Greenhouse gas pollution pricing act](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Protests continue over old growth forests in British Columbia

Posted on **March 23, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

British Columbia has no shortage of environmental flashpoints: the **Trans Mountain and Coastal Gas Link pipelines**, the **Site C dam**, **LNG terminals** – and protection of old growth forests. Before the 2020 provincial election, *The Tyee* published [a substantive overview](#) of the political policies and issues, now updated with [“BC Promised to Protect Old Growth. How Is It Doing?”](#) (March 11) .

B.C. environmentalists have actively called for protections, based on the recommendations of [A New Future for Old Forests: A Strategic Review of How British Columbia Manages for Old Forests Within its Ancient Ecosystems](#) , an independent report submitted to the government in fall 2020 and summarized [here](#). The Sierra Club B.C. published a report card on the government’s progress in implementing the Strategy Report recommendations, [here](#) , and conducted its own

research, published as ***Intact Forests, Safe Communities: Reducing community climate risks through forest protection and a paradigm shift in forest management***, written by Dr. Peter Wood and released in February. The *Intact Forests* report documents the relationship of forestry practices and climate related disasters like flooding, droughts, fires and heatwaves, and makes a series of recommendations to reform B.C.'s forestry practices, and apply Indigenous knowledge before the climate crisis worsens.

Protests over the government's inaction continue, with a high-profile hunger strike and blockade at Fairy Creek on Vancouver Island, summarized [here](#). The third annual **Forest March B.C.** was held on March 19, organized by a **grassroots coalition** of community groups, and described in "***In B.C., communities march to protect old growth forests***" in *The National Observer* (March 19).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, Forestry Management, old growth forests** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's youth return to the streets to support global climate protests on March 19

Posted on **March 23, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Fridays for Future, the youth-led climate movement inspired by Greta Thunberg, has survived and adapted to Covid **with creative online activism**. On March 19, 2021, with the theme "#NoMoreEmptyPromises", some youth returned to the streets in modest, socially-distanced demonstrations – 48 strikes across Canada, according to **the official FFF statistics**. Media coverage included: *The National Observer*, "***Youth activists shut down Bay Street, demanding climate promises be kept***" (March 19), which summarizes actions in Toronto, focused on banking; "***Youth Climate Activists Aim to Rally Support for Indigenous Land Defenders***" in *The Tyee* described the Sustainabilityteens protest in Vancouver, focused on the Trans Mountain Pipeline; and "***Fridays for Future Sudbury to take part in Global Climate Strike***" in the *Sudbury Star*.

Follow Canada's FFF movement on Twitter [here](#), on Facebook [here](#). A Fridays for Future Newsletter (subscribe [here](#)) is a new addition to the ongoing global social media presence.

"***#Fridaysforfuture: When youth push the environmental movement towards climate justice***" appeared in *The Conversation Canada* in September 2019, describing Canada's movement before Covid hit. Since then, some notable articles have appeared, including:

“The Future Is in Our Hands— Not Theirs” on pages 22-23 in the *CCPA Monitor*, (February 2020), describing the youth-led Our Time movement.

The ***Starfish list of the Top 25 Environmentalists under 25***, which profiles young climate leaders across Canada. The youth-led Starfish organization also publishes its own **online journal**, which provides an insight into the issues which are top of mind for youth.

The National Observer maintains a series titled ***Youth Climate Voices***. It includes a profile of the Indigenous-led project **Let’s Sprout** in ***“How to grow a young climate leader”*** (March 8). ***“A simple life will make you happy, says young Albertan who traded oil for solar”*** (March 1) profiles the career transition of a 31-year old former oil and gas worker, and highlights his solar training at the **Northern Alberta Institute of Technology** in Edmonton.

The IISD (International Institute for Sustainable Development) maintains a research theme called Youth voices, which published ***“What the Next Generation Needs From a Green Recovery”*** (Feb. 25), an interview with Aliénor Rougeot, leader of Fridays for Future Toronto. She states that “youth would like to be a part of a constant feedback process—instead of us needing to give unsolicited feedback in the streets.” Her thoughts on Canada’s current climate change policies: “...I’m a little bit afraid of the government seeing youth councils as junior partner councils. They shouldn’t treat it as a separate consultation, but more as “these are the main people we need to get to.” “If you do want a Youth Advisory Board or something similar, simplify the process by making sure to give us a time commitment that is clear Try to compensate when you can—it makes a big difference for students or people that do a lot of this work unpaid.”

Another IISD interview appears in ***“Solving the Injustices Caused by Climate Change”*** (Feb. 25), in which Jhannel C. Tomlinson focuses on the concerns of rural Jamaicans, particularly women. Ms. Tomlinson is an active participant in at least four youth-led activist groups in Jamaica while she pursues her PhD.

And a report commissioned by the Alberta Council for Environmental Education was released by Climate Outreach in February, reporting on the climate literacy and attitudes of 170 Alberta students in grades 4 – 12 (ages approx. 8 to 16). The report, titled ***Youth Narrative and Voice*** offers 10 principles and suggested climate narratives to address the eco-anxiety of students which was identified in workshops across the province. The recommendations have been forwarded to the provincial Minister of Education, in the hopes they will be considered in the curriculum review currently underway.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and youth, fridays for future, Greta Thunberg, Youth and climate** | **Leave a reply**

Nordic and German unions collaborate, aim to be Just Transition “frontrunners”

Posted on **March 18, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**



The Council of Nordic Trade Unions, the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung and the German Trade Union Confederation have collaborated to publish six country reports under the project banner, **The Road to a Carbon-Free Europe**. Each country report, about 25 pages, summarizes the national climate goals and policies, especially as related to Just Transition, for **Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden**. A **Synthesis Report** brings together the main findings, and presents the resulting policy recommendations, jointly adopted by the Council of Nordic Trade Unions (NFS) and the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) in November and December 2020.

The **Synthesis Report** calls for holistic climate change policies to navigate the broad-based transformation of society that will result from climate change, incorporating Just Transition principles as outlined by the ILO Decent Work Agenda and its four pillars: social dialogue, social protection, rights at work and job creation. Because Germany and the Nordic countries are export-oriented economies dependent on trade, and facing similar challenges in the emissions-heavy sectors of their economies, the report sees many common opportunities for zero-emission innovations and technology.

“This report suggests that a collaboration between the Nordic countries and Germany on Just Transition can help the countries to reach the climate targets, and that they should aim to become Just Transition

frontrunners. Because of their social models, their technological expertise and their ambition to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, they have the right conditions to do so.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Europe](#), [International cooperation](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. guide to pension fund divestment includes a role for unions

Posted on **March 18, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Divesting to protect our pensions and the planet: An analysis of local government investments in coal, oil and gas was released in February by Platform, Friends of the Earth Scotland and Friends of the Earth England Wales and Northern Ireland.

The report details the extent of fossil fuel investment by local governments in the U.K., and their progress in divestment. However, of broader interest, it summarizes the financial status of the declining fossil fuel industry, explains the process which lead to stranded assets, and describes the financial dangers for all pension funds in quite understandable terms: “pension funds exposed to the fossil fuel system in the coming decade will face a rollercoaster ride of disruption, write-downs, financial instability and share price deratings as markets adjust.” In an explanation very relevant to Canadians, whose own **Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board still clings to the “staying invested and ‘engaging’” approach** – the report uses the example of investing in Blockbuster videos vs. Netflix, to debunk the “engagement” approach: “The argument for ‘engagement’ tends to be one made by asset owners who employ investment managers who won’t or can’t accept that there is a technology-driven transition occurring. this approach of ‘we’ll decarbonise when markets decide to decarbonise’ is clearly not a risk management strategy. It is a ‘do nothing, and hope a few meetings will help’ strategy.”

Divesting to protect our pensions and the planet offers practical steps for local councillors, community members, and labour unionists. For unions, it points to the leadership of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which passed **a climate action motion in 2017 which included support for divestment**, based on a motion by their constituent unions representing food workers, communication workers, fire brigades, train drivers, and other transport workers. Unison, the

primary union representing U.K. government workers, also passed a **strong divestment motion** in 2017 – meaningful because in the U.K., union members in government workplaces are usually entitled to some form of representation on their pension fund committee and board. The report urges union members to become knowledgeable about financial issues and to speak up in committee meetings – advocating for divestment and re-investment in lower-carbon, socially just funds which benefit their local communities and economies, especially after Covid. The report cites inspiring examples, such as investment in wind farms by Manchester and London Councils, the U.K.'s first community-owned solar power cooperative by Lancashire County Council, and social housing in the Forth Valley and in London Councils.

An earlier guide for unions was ***Our Pensions, Our Communities, Our Planet: How to reinvest our pensions for our good?*** published by the Trade Union Group within **Campaign against Climate Change**. The 6-page, action-oriented fact sheet lacks all the up-to-date statistical detail in *Divesting to protect our pensions and the planet* but makes many of the same arguments for divestment, and includes links to U.K. resources, as well as a model motion for local unions.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Divestment, Pension Fund management, pension plans, United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

Wales TUC releases a Just Transition toolkit

Posted on **March 17, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Greener workplaces for a Just Transition is a toolkit published in March by the Wales Trades Union Congress, aiming to provide information, tools and ideas for union representatives working towards climate solutions. Intended as a training resource, the 202-page manual includes case studies, bargaining checklists, action plans, and sample documents which workplace reps can adapt to use for their own workplaces. Workplace issues addressed include homeworking, procurement and ethical supply chains, waste and conservation measures, financial disclosure and pension management, among others. The sample documents include a workplace survey, and a joint environment and climate change agreement, which includes language for workplace Joint Environment Committees and Green Workplace Representatives. The toolkit is quite specific to Wales, although the topics are relevant to any jurisdiction. It follows the 2020 policy publication by the Wales TUC, ***A Green Recovery and a Just Transition***.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Just Transition, Labour Training, training materials, Wales, Workplace greening** | [Leave a reply](#)

Lessons learned from unjust transitions – and a call for cooperation amongst unions and climate activists

Posted on **March 17, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

On March 17, Labor Network for Sustainability released an important new report: ***Workers and Communities in Transition***, which summarizes the results of their Just Transition Listening Project across the U.S. in 2020 . The Listening Project comprised over 100 in-depth interviews with workers and Indigenous and community leaders – 65% of whom were union members, 12% of whom were environmental justice and climate justice activists, and 23% of whom were members of other community groups. Their demographic characteristics were diverse, but all had first-hand experience of economic transition, not only from the current transition in the fossil fuel industry, but also from automation, globalization, and other causes, as well as a variety of industries. Their thoughts and experiences are summarized, along with seven case studies, to describe the problems of unjust transitions and to arrive at the lessons learned. The report concludes with specific recommendations for action by policy-makers, recommendations for future research, and uniquely, recommendations for labour and movement organizations.

In general, the recommendations are summarized as: “Go Big, Go Wide, Go Far.” Under the category of “Go Big”, the authors state: “We will need a comprehensive approach that addresses the impacts on workers and communities across geographies, demographics and industries. The federal government will need to play a lead role. There are promising state and local just transition models, but none have access to the resources to fully fund their efforts. Strengthening the social safety net, workers’ rights, and labor standards will also be critical to supporting workers and communities equitably.” About “Go Wide”: “...A common theme throughout the interviews ... was the trauma individuals and families experienced as their economies were devastated. Several people referenced suicides, drug addiction, and depression among friends and co-workers who struggled with a loss of identity and relationships”. And about “Go Far”: “Just transitions require a longer-term commitment of support and investment in workers and communities. Just transitions also require attention to generational differences: a younger, more diverse workforce has been growing into energy industries that will likely not offer long-term careers. It is essential to create good career alternatives for this generation.”

The specific recommendations for Labour and Movement Organizations are:

- “Labor unions, workers’ rights organizations, and advocacy organizations should build cross-movement relationships by forming labor-climate-community roundtables, networks and/or committees at the state and/or local levels to build and sustain genuine personal and political relationships over time.

- Labor unions should establish or expand any pre-existing environmental and climate committees, task forces, or other entities that can develop and deploy educational programs for members on issues of climate change; social, economic, and environmental justice; and just transition.
- Environmental and other advocacy organizations should create labor committees to develop and deploy educational programs on issues of labor, job quality standards, and just transition.
- Labor unions should adopt environmental and climate policy concerns as part of their advocacy agendas, and community organizations should adopt the right to organize and the promotion of strong labor standards as part of their advocacy agendas.
- All organizations should create more mentorship and leadership development opportunities, especially for women, people of color, Indigenous people, and immigrants.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [attitudes of union members](#), [attitudes of workers](#), [Just Transition](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Corporate net zero goals: solution or deception?

Posted on [March 16, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Climate change superstar Mark Carney set off a media flurry in a [video interview](#) with *Bloomberg Live* on February 10, in which he claimed that Brookfield Asset Management is a “net zero” company because its renewables investments offset emissions from its other holdings. Carney reflects a new trend of corporate aspirational statements, for example: Jeff Bezos’ corporate network [The Climate Pledge](#) claimed in February that 53 companies across 18 industries have committed to working toward net-zero carbon in their worldwide businesses, most by 2050. Recent high profile examples include [Royal Dutch Shell](#), Canada’s [TD Bank](#) and [Bank of Montreal](#), and [FedEx](#), which on March 5 announced its goal to be carbon-neutral by 2040 as well as an initial investment of \$2 billion to start electrifying its delivery fleet and \$100 million to fund a new research centre for carbon capture at Yale University.

Will these corporate goals help to reach the Paris Agreement target? Many recent articles are skeptical, labelling them “sham”, “greenwash”, and “deception” which seeks to protect the status quo. Some examples:

“[The climate crisis can’t be solved by carbon accounting tricks](#)” (*The Guardian*, March 3) which offers a concise explanation of why “Disaster looms if big finance is allowed to game the carbon offsetting markets to achieve ‘net zero’ emissions.”

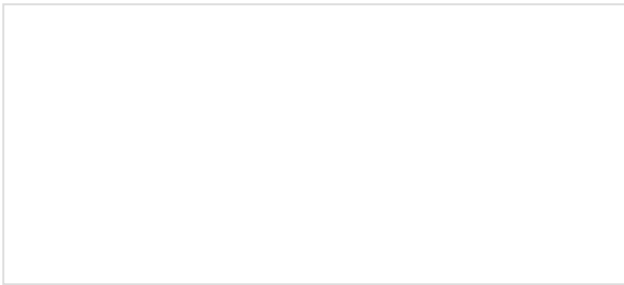
“[Global oil companies have committed to ‘net zero’ emissions. It’s a sham](#)” by Tzeporah Berman and Nathan Taft (*The Guardian*, March 3) – which instead advocates for an international

Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

“***Call the Fossil Fuel Industry’s Net-Zero Bluff***” by Kate Aronoff in *New Republic*. She writes: “This isn’t the old denialism oil companies funded decades ago. ... Instead of casting doubt on whether the climate is changing, this new messaging strategy casts doubt on the obvious answer to what should be done about it: i.e., rapidly scaling down production..... For now, it’s one part creative accounting and many parts a P.R. strategy of waving around shiny objects like biofuels, hydrogen, and carbon capture and storage.”

“***Can the market save the planet? FedEx is the latest brand-name firm to say it’s trying***” in the *Washington Post*, which quotes Yale Professor Paul Sabin, warning that “carbon capture research also should not become an excuse for doubling down on fossil fuel consumption, or delaying urgently needed policies to move away from fossil fuel consumption, including the electrification of transportation.”

Chasing Carbon Unicorns: The Deception of Carbon Markets and Net Zero –



a hard-hitting report by Friends of the Earth International which argues that net zero pledges are “a new addition to the strategy basket of these actors who are fighting hard to maintain the status quo.” The report names these actors, led by the financial community’s new **Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets** (TSVCM) – established by Mark Carney and the led by the CEO of the Standard Chartered Bank, with a goal to develop standards for “credible offsets”. FOE International also names a group of Oxford academics which is supporting the TSVCM work by developing the **Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting**, and conservation agencies which have endorsed the work: Conservation International (CI), Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Chasing Carbon Unicorns concludes:

“Net zero” is a smokescreen, a conveniently invented concept that is both dangerous and problematic because of how effectively it hides inaction. We have to unpack “net zero” strategies and pledges to see which are real and which are fake. Fake zero strategies rely on offsets, rather than real emission reductions. Real zero strategies require emissions to really go to zero, or as close to zero as possible.”

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **accounting, Business positions on climate change, Carbon Markets, Carbon Offsets, net zero policies** | **Leave a reply**

International roadmap to guide the auto industry through disruptive times

Posted on **March 16, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted government, employer, and union representatives at a **Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Automotive Industry**, from February 15th to 19th. Canada's auto industry union, Unifor, participated in the meeting. As reported in a **press release from the union confederation IndustriALL**, the virtual meetings were at times "confrontational", but the resulting **final document** is called a roadmap for the industry to guide it through its current disruptive transformation.

The final document, which will proceed to the Governing Body of the ILO in November 2021, sketches out the challenge:

"The industry is at a turning point: technological advances, climate change, demographic shifts, new consumer preferences and mobility concepts, and a transformative era of globalization are rapidly changing the organization of production and work in the industry. The transition to a carbon neutral economy, new mobility patterns and changing consumer preferences are driving investments in new mobility solutions, electric and autonomous vehicles, cleaner production with alternative materials, and greater circularity."

The **Conclusions of the Technical Meeting**, agreed-upon by union, management and government, includes the concepts of Just Transition, decent work, gender equality and lifelong learning. Amongst the conclusions, this recommendation for future actions:

"Governments, employers' and workers' organizations should: (a) support the industry navigate through its transformation, accelerated by the COVID19 crisis, and mitigate the impact on enterprises and jobs; (b) advance decent and sustainable work in the automotive industry; (c) promote the acquisition of skills, competences and qualifications and access to quality education for all workers throughout their working lives to address skills mismatches now and in the future and encourage more women to study STEM; (d) jointly engage in formulating and implementing coherent and comprehensive economic, trade, fiscal, education and sustainable industrial policies, incentives and actions, in accordance with national law and practice, to: (i) create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, increased productivity and for sustainable enterprises of all sizes to grow and generate decent and productive work; (ii) improve working conditions and safety and health at work and extend social protection to all workers in order to promote decent work; and (iii) facilitate a just transition to a future of work that contributes to sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions."

Federal Advisory Committee on Net Zero policies appointed to augment existing research and recommendations

Posted on **March 15, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In late February, the federal government **appointed a Net Zero Advisory Committee** with fifteen expert members, including Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuf and Climate Action Network-Canada (CAN-Rac) Executive Director Catherine Abreu, as well as Linda Coady, Executive Director of the Pembina Institute, climate scientist Simon Donner from University of British Columbia, Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Kluane Adamek, and others from government and industry. As explained in **“Canada’s new Net Zero Advisory Body and Bill C-12”** (March 4) by the Climate Action Network Canada, this Advisory Committee was a platform promise made by the Liberals during the 2019 election, and is intended to provide ongoing expert advice until 2050 to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Its mandate, [here](#), is to provide advice on the next framework for Canada’s climate change policies, as currently before the House of Commons in Bill C-12, the **Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act**.

An [article](#) in *The Energy Mix* emphasizes the independent nature of the advisory body, and the fact that there are no current oil and gas industry representatives included. However, in **“Accountability Bill Lacks ‘Clear Path’ To Net-Zero Targets, Climate Scientist Warns Ottawa”**, Catherine Abreu is quoted as saying that despite the Advisory Committee, Canada still lacks clear accountability in climate policy, and that Bill C-12 is “not the robust piece of legislation we need to make sure Canada never misses another climate target. To make sure it’s set up to drive up ambition, especially in the near term, we need the 2025 goal and a stronger 2030 goal enshrined in law.”

Other policy voices on the Net Zero ambition are found in **Canada’s Net Zero Future: Finding our way in the global transition**, released on February 8 by the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices, and described by the Institute as “the first in-depth scenario report to explore how Canada can reach net zero emissions by 2050”. It advocates for two pathways: “safe bets” in the short term, and in the long term, “wild cards” which include negative emission technologies that are not yet commercially available.



On March 11, the Pembina Institute released [*How to Get Net-Zero Right*](#), which recommends top priority for “early, deep, sustained, and technologically feasible direct emissions reductions in every sector.Canada’s pathways must define an appropriate role for carbon removal and offsets. Achieving net-zero will require the use of carbon removal to address hard-to-decarbonize sectors or essential end uses that cannot yet be decarbonized. Carbon removal and offsets, however, cannot be approached as an alternative to mitigation, but rather in addition.”

[*How to Get Net-Zero Right*](#) is the first of a promised series of reports on the issue by Pembina, and will consider social justice and equity concerns.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change policies](#), [Decarbonization](#), [net zero policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Only 18% of global Recovery spending in 2020 was green

Posted on **March 10, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) released [*Are We Building Back Better? Evidence from 2020 and Pathways for Inclusive Green Recovery Spending*](#), on March 10. It estimates that in 2020, the world’s fifty largest economies announced USD14.6tn in fiscal measures to address the pandemic economic crisis, and states: “Excluding currently uncertain packages from the European Commission, 18.0% of recovery spending, and only 2.5% of total spending, is expected to enhance sustainability. The vast majority of green spending has come from a small set of high-income nations” with France, Germany and South Korea highlighted for their relatively high percentage of green recovery spending. Canada’s spending is small, with only brief references which state that we have focused on “cleaning dirty energy assets”, and have made fossil fuel investment. (no details or examples given). It is notable that the report covers 2020, so that U.S. spending is also low, though hope is expressed for the Biden/Harris administration. Notably, the report looks to the future: “..... the largest window for green spending is only now opening, as nations shift attention from short-term rescue measures to recovery. Using examples from 2020 spending, we highlight five major green investment opportunities to be prioritised in 2021: green energy, green transport, green building upgrades & energy efficiency, natural capital, and green research and development.”

Each of those topics is analyzed, with some exemplary policies highlighted. Some overarching issues: “Of particular note, despite continuing high global unemployment and widespread damage to human capital, spending on worker retraining in 2020 was small and almost exclusively non-green. Nations transitioning to a low-carbon economy must invest in human capital to enable and match future growth priorities. Structural changes in major sectors, including energy, agriculture, transport, and construction, require shifts in the structure and capabilities of the domestic labour force.”

Also, regarding “green strings”: “Although some dirty rescue-type expenditure may have been necessary to ensure that lives and livelihoods were saved, many of the largest of these policies could have included positive green attributes. For instance, airline bailouts in nations all over the world, including South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States could have included green conditions. Green conditions tied to liquidity support, like requirements to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 or mandates to increase sustainable fuel use, can ensure short term relief while also promoting investment in long-term technological development and acting as a strong guide in national efforts to meet climate targets.”

The report is supported by the United Nations UNEP, the [International Monetary Fund](#) and [GIZ](#) through the [Green Fiscal Policy Network \(GFPN\)](#). The data was collected by the [Oxford University Economic Recovery Project](#) and is now available through the [Global Recovery Observatory](#), a new database which will be updated regularly (most recently at the end of February).

The report cites many other studies and reports, notably: “[Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change?](#)” by Cameron Hepburn, Brian O’Callaghan, Nicholas Stern, Joseph Stiglitz, and Dimitri Zenghelis, which appeared in the *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* in May 2020.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Covid-19](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Sheet Metal Workers International Association](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green Recovery includes proposals for Green Apprenticeships, Opportunity Guarantees for youth

Posted on [March 5, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the midst of rampant youth unemployment in the U.K., [An Emergency Plan on Green Jobs for Young People](#) was released on March 1, commissioned by Friends of the Earth U.K. and prepared by Transition Economics consultants. The report puts flesh on the bones of a youth jobs guarantee – discussing the many issues, identifying green jobs and skills related to infrastructure, and estimating the level of funding required. That level of funding is compared to the cost of youth unemployment – the “wage scarring”. Individual scarring is estimated at a loss of £42,000 – £133,000 in future wages over the next 20 years for an 18-20 year old who experiences one year of unemployment. The economic loss to the U.K. as a whole, if all currently unemployed youth stayed unemployed for 1 year, is estimated at £32 – £39 billion.

The solution proposed in the [Emergency Plan](#) is the creation of 250,000 green apprenticeships in infrastructure-related jobs, rapidly rolled-out in England and Wales at an estimated cost of £6.2 –

£10.6 billion over 5 years – a “tiny” cost compared to the burden of wage scarring. The report calls for “a green opportunity guarantee” that commits to ensure that all young people are offered a job, an apprenticeship, or training, and estimates that “A government funded £40 billion-a-year green infrastructure programme would create over 1 million jobs, and deliver significant co-benefits.” The report further calls for apprentice pay rates above the minimum wage, negotiated nationally with U.K. trade unions.

The idea of a green opportunity guarantee has also been advanced in Canada – notably in July 2020 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in its [Alternative Federal Budget Green Recovery Plan](#). The CCPA proposed a National Decarbonization Strategy with public investments in electricity generation, public transit, forestry and building and home retrofitting; part of the Strategy included “a Green Jobs Corps at a cost of \$10 billion per year to create good green jobs that advance Canada’s decarbonization agenda. Among the corps’ priorities will be climate adaptation and environmental reclamation projects identified under the National Decarbonization Strategy. All youth under the age of 25 in Canada will be guaranteed either a job in the corps or access to subsidized training through the Strategic Training Fund.”

Similarly, a [Submission by the Canadian Labour Congress](#) in August stated: “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.” A similar proposal was made by the Smart Prosperity Institute, calling for the creation of a Conservation and Adaptation corps as part of its [Green Recovery proposals](#). Smart Prosperity stated that the federal government funded **900 green internships** in 2020 through the Science Horizons Youth Internship Program for STEM students, and calls on the government to go further with a youth Conservation and Adaptation corps which “would offer the workforce needed to meet a number of environmental targets, including planting 2 billion trees, and could build the infrastructure needed to improve community resilience to climate impacts from flooding, fires and sea level rise.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Apprenticeship](#), [Covid-19](#), [green apprenticeship](#), [Green Recovery](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Younger workers](#), [youth jobs guarantee](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How phasing out fossil fuel subsidies can contribute to Canada’s green recovery

Posted on **March 2, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Recovery Through Reform is a new series by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, assessing Canada's green recovery spending from COVID-19 with a focus on the issue of fossil fuel subsidy reform, and an eye on the upcoming federal Budget 2021 consultations. The first of three Briefs, ***Assessing the climate compatibility of Canada's COVID-19 response in 2020*** evaluates energy-related spending in Canada in 2020 – specifically federal government commitments for electric vehicles, public transit, building retrofits, hydrogen, and fossil fuels. Using data from the global **Energy Policy Tracker**, the Brief quantifies federal government recovery spending, noting that transparency is a problem – especially in the case of the financing provided by Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada. Spending trends in Canada are compared to flagship policies France, Germany, and the United Kingdom – including a discussion of the financial support for fossil fuels. The Brief concludes with recommendations – including a call “to apply the principles from the IISD report ***Green Strings: Principles and Conditions for a Green Recovery From COVID-19*** (2020), including transparency and inclusion of support for just transition for workers and communities. Other recommendations are to end fossil fuel subsidies, and to measure recovery ambition against international standards rather than “domestic precedence”.

The second Brief in the Recovery through Reform series is ***Advancing a Hydrogen Economy***. This report examines the question of promoting and incentivizing hydrogen, and calls for the government to ensure that any subsidies for hydrogen are in line with the government's commitments to phase out “inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2025” and meet net-zero by 2050. “Based on IISD's analysis, subsidies for hydrogen based on natural gas without significant levels of carbon capture and storage (CCS) should not be eligible for government assistance. Subsidies for blue hydrogen should only occur if blue hydrogen can meet the same level of environmental performance (including emission intensity) and is at or below the cost of green hydrogen.” (a more thorough discussion appears in a January 2021 blog from IISD: ***Should Governments Subsidize Hydrogen?***).

The third report in the Recovery through Reform series is ***Export Development Canada's role in fossil fuel subsidy reform***, which argues that despite EDC's well-known history as a supporter of the oil and gas industry, it could be an important actor in Canada's green recovery. The Brief documents the existing situation of poor transparency and dirty investments, stating: the EDC “provides an average of over CAD 13.2 billion in support for oil and gas every year, representing over 12% of finance committed by the institution.” It also notes: “So far, EDC has provided over CAD 10 billion in loans for the Trans Mountain Pipeline and expansion via the Canada Development Investment Corporation.” Further, “When it comes to fossil fuel support, EDC is one of the worst-performing export credit agencies in the world, as it has provided more oil and gas finance than any other G20 export credit agency.” Despite this track record, the Brief calls on the EDC to change its ways by matching the performance of other international financial institutions, phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, and setting clear targets for climate action-related investments.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Covid 19, Energy policy, Export Development Canada, fossil fuel industry, Fossil Fuel Subsidies, green hydrogen, Green Investment, Green**

Electric vehicle, retrofitting incentives announced by new Nova Scotia government

Posted on **March 2, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Nova Scotia's new government under Premier Iain Rankin was sworn in on February 23, and immediately sent a message that it was committed to climate change action. A press release titled **Province Invests in Climate Change Action, Supports Jobs and Commits to Renewable Future** announced a rebate program for new and used electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids and e-bikes, ranging from \$3,000 per new vehicle to \$500 for electric bikes. An additional \$9.5 million will be directed to support energy efficiency improvements through retrofitting for low-income families. Further, the Department of Energy and Mines will release a new Renewable Electricity Standard in March, aiming to achieve 80% renewable energy by 2030. Symbolically, the former Department of the Environment was renamed to the Department of Environment and Climate Change .

Environmental advocacy group Ecology Action expressed optimism in [this press release](#) (Feb. 25). The CBC also reported on the new government [here](#) .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Energy policy](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Natural gas drives GHG emissions increase for Toronto region and Ontario

Posted on **March 2, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is home to 7.4 million people in six municipalities: the City of Toronto, City of Hamilton, Halton, Peel, York and Durham regions. According to a new report released by The Atmospheric Fund (TAF), the region produces 44 per cent of total carbon emissions in the province of Ontario. Top level findings from the report, **Reality Check: Carbon Emissions Inventory for the GTHA**: "Total carbon emissions in the GTHA increased 5.2% in 2018, reaching 55.5 Mt. showing that since the completion of the coal phase out, emissions are slowly increasing across all regions and nearly all sources." The report zeroes in on each municipality, and also on sectors, showing that buildings (42.8%), transportation (34.3%), and industry (18.9%) are the most significant sources of emissions in the region.

The key take-away from the report: “Natural gas is a fossil fuel (methane) and it is the most significant source of emissions in the GTHA and Ontario. In 2018 natural gas increased about 10.6%, or 2Mt CO2 eq. Achieving net zero by 2050 will require phasing out virtually all natural gas from both heating and power production.” An associated blog , “[Toronto has an embarrassing gas problem](#)” (Feb.18) states: “the City’s latest emissions inventory showed an increase of 68% from natural gas from 2017 to 2018, and plans are afoot to increase gas-fired electricity which will make emissions skyrocket by over 300%. Toronto cannot meet its 2030 climate goals or the council-approved TransformTO plan if Ontario’s electricity is increasingly generated with fossil gas.”

Based on this analysis, TAF makes policy recommendations for all three levels of government, calling for near zero emissions standards for new building, acceleration of deeper retrofits for existing buildings, and electrification of heating and transportation while decarbonizing electricity production. Detailed recommendations regarding retrofitting measures are provided in [TAF’s submission to the Federal Budget 2021](#), and summarized in “[Four ways the government should boost the retrofit market](#)” (Feb. 23). At the municipal level, TAF is supporting one City of Toronto Councillor’s [motion](#) which calls for the provincial government to phaseout all gas-fired electricity generation as soon as possible. The City of Toronto deferred a vote on that motion, and voted in February on a budget which appears to downgrade the priority for climate initiatives. “[We can’t afford to lose a year’: Worries abound over Toronto’s plan to reduce climate funding](#)” (CBC, Feb. 18) provides details.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Electricity industry](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Natural Gas](#), [Ontario Green Energy Act](#), [retrofitting](#), [Toronto](#), [Toronto Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. offers incentives for charging infrastructure for EV fleets

Posted on [February 23, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

British Columbia continues to lead Canada in electric vehicle ownership, with more than 36,000 light duty electric vehicles in 2019. On February 1, the government [announced](#) a new program to encourage fleet ownership, which offers rebates for the purchase and installation of level 2 and direct-current fast-charging stations for fleets of one or more EVs. “For a limited time, eligible businesses purchasing and installing level 2 charging stations can access a higher rebate of up to \$4,000 per station, representing an increase from 50% to 75% of basic rates. Those purchasing EVs for a fleet are eligible for the same \$3,000 point-of-purchase vehicle rebates as the general public in B.C.”. An overview of all the B.C. incentives for EV vehicles [is here](#). [Electric Vehicle Update 2018 and 2019 Calendar Years](#) is the latest statistical report, which includes that as of 2019, B.C. counts direct employment of more than 6,000 full-time equivalent positions associated with ZEV-related activities, an increase from 3,850 in 2015.

A related report **released** in February by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy ranks the U.S. states on their policies to encourage the use of EV's, and identifies the three policies that are likely to be most effective: ZEV mandates and electric vehicle deployment targets, financial incentives for vehicle purchases, and incentives for installing vehicle chargers. The report ranks California as the national leader as the only state to set deadlines for electrifying transit buses, heavy trucks, and commercial vehicles, and one of few to offer assistance for lower-income drivers to replace high-polluting cars with zero- or near-zero-emissions vehicles. ***ACEEE State Transportation Electrification Scorecard*** is available from this link (free, registration required).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, Electric Vehicles, ev incentives** | **Leave a reply**

How will electrification of vehicles impact auto workers?

Posted on **February 23, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Threats to traditional auto manufacturers are outlined in **“The top trends killing the auto industry”** in *Corporate Knights* (Feb. 3), including the climate crisis, the fall of fossil fuels, electrification and autonomous EV fleets, unfunded pension liabilities (US\$14.4 billion for G.M., US\$10.2 billion for Ford), as well as shifting government policies, and dampened demand in general. All the more reason to celebrate the good **news about investment in EV production in Canada by GM, Ford and Fiat-Chrysler**, as well as GM's January 2021 **announcement that it will sell only zero emissions vehicles** by 2035. In February, **Ford announced its target to sell EV's only in Europe**. But the good news is complicated, as described in **“Auto industry peers into an electric future and sees bumps ahead”** (*Washington Post*, Feb. 6), and by **“Canada and the U.S. auto sector's abrupt pivot to electric vehicles”** (*National Observer*, Feb. 15). For Canada, the challenges include competition for the development of battery technology and the policy challenge of the new **“Made in America” Executive Order** by President Biden on January 25. Despite the brief and optimistic overview presented in **“Jerry on the Job: How the president of Canada's largest union, Jerry Dias, is driving the country's electric vehicle push”** (*Corporate Knights*, Feb. 4), our highly integrated North American auto industry has a complicated path forward.

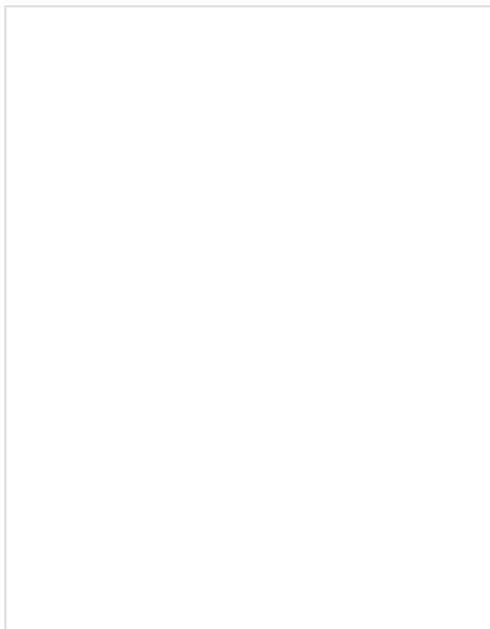
One of the most important issues ahead is how the conversion to electric vehicles will impact the jobs of current auto workers. In late 2020, Germany's Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering conducted a detailed study of this issue on behalf of the Sustainability Council of the Volkswagen Group. ***Employment 2030 Effects Of Electric Mobility And Digitalisation on the Quality and Quantity of Employment at Volkswagen*** (Nov. 2020) is an English-language summary of the full, detailed study, which modelled the impacts of digitization and electrification in the industry. Although the study is specific to VW production in Germany, its findings are

instructive, and include that job losses will be less than anticipated, (a decrease of 12 percent in this decade, mainly due to planned output volumes and higher productivity). Digitization will result in a need for new skills, “will necessitate a profound change in corporate culture”, and will include higher employee expectations for job flexibility. A [summary appearing in Clean Energy Wire](#) states: “ ... there is no uniform employment trend in the ‘transformation corridor’ over the coming decade. Instead, there will be a complex, interconnected mixture of job creation, job upgrading and job cuts. It argues that it will be vital to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do not fall victim to this reorganisation, and warns that Germany’s automotive sector must establish new forms of cooperation so as not to “recklessly surrender the field of mobility to new market players.” The study is also summarized in a [press release by VW](#) (with links to the full study in German).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing industry](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Job Quality](#), [layoffs](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean200 list of global companies released

Posted on [February 23, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Corporate Knights [released the 2021 edition of its annual Clean200 list](#) of publicly traded companies on February 18 – a list of global companies with total revenues over \$1 Billion annually, ranked by green energy revenues. According to [the press release](#): “The Clean200 utilizes Corporate Knights Clean Revenue database which tracks the percent of revenue companies earn from clean economy themes including energy efficiency; green energy; electric vehicles; banks financing low-carbon solutions; real estate companies focused on low-carbon buildings; forestry companies protecting carbon sinks; responsible miners of critical materials for

the low-carbon economy; food and apparel companies with products primarily made of raw materials with a significantly lower carbon footprint; and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) companies that are leading the way on renewable energy while also being best-in-sector according to currently accepted privacy benchmarks.” Certain companies are automatically excluded from consideration: weapons and military arms manufacturers, palm oil, paper/pulp, rubber, timber, beef and soy producers (as identified by As You Sow’s [Deforestation Free Funds](#)), as well as companies using child or forced labour, and companies that engage in negative climate lobbying.

According to the [introductory article](#) : “On average, 39% of revenues earned by Clean200 companies are classified as clean, which the majority of other revenues classified as neutral, compared to just 8% clean revenue for their peers.” Notably, the Clean200 companies also outperform others financially. Forty-six of the 200 Clean companies are headquartered in the United States; followed by Japan (26), China (17), France (15), and Canada and Germany (8 each). The top performing company is [Alphabet Inc.](#), parent company of Google, with 83.33% percent green revenue for 2019. For Canada, the list includes the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways as well as Bombardier, Cascades Inc., Canadian Solar, Telus, Hydro One, and Brookfield Renewable Partners.

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Canadian lawyers reject resolution calling for professional and personal climate responsibility

Posted on [February 23, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Lawyers for Climate Justice](#), a Canadian group of lawyers and law students, tabled a Climate Leadership Resolution at the Canadian Bar Association annual general meeting on February 17, 2021. [The Resolution](#) adopts a definition of climate justice, requests that CBA members consider climate justice and the impacts of climate change in their submissions regarding potential law reform and in developing educational programming, and also urges lawyers to undertake individual actions, such as undertaking pro bono activities related to climate change, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions within their own practice operations. After heated debate, [the resolution was defeated](#). [“Why we must reject the climate justice resolution”](#) is a lengthy article based on one person’s views about the virtues of Canada’s energy sector, and concludes: “I suggest that we leave social and political advocacy on divisive issues to those organizations and experts (some of whom are our clients), who are better equipped than the CBA.” Apparently, a majority agreed.

As described by [The National Observer](#) , this was the second attempt to pass this Resolution – it had also been defeated in 2020. In 2021, advocates gathered the support by the Aboriginal Law Section, Charities and Not-for-Profit Law Section, Labour and Employment Law Section, Municipal Law Section, and the Women Lawyers Forum of the Canadian Bar Association. They also lobbied through articles – notably, [Climate Conscious Lawyering](#), a blog written by [David Estrin](#), international environmental law expert and formerly Co-Chair of the International Bar Association Task Force on Climate Change Justice and Human Rights. The Estrin blog provides the context of international efforts to insert climate change into mainstream legal discussion, citing [The Climate Crisis Statement](#) by the International Bar Association (May 2020) , which also calls on lawyers to take personal actions and to incorporate climate concerns in their professional activities and advice. It follows a report from the International Bar Association Human Rights and Climate Justice Task Force, [Model Statute for Proceedings Challenging Government Failure to Act on Climate Change](#) . Estrin also cites the international [Principles on the Climate Obligations of Enterprises](#) , a 2018 report (since revised) which addresses the legal responsibility of business organizations to respond to climate change.

Estrin concludes his blog with this:

“As of 2021, there can be no doubt that an ordinarily competent and careful lawyer must be aware of climate change issues and impacts, current and changing climate laws and policies, as well as current climate litigation approaches and results as relevant to legal advice; and must use these insights in advising clients. This awareness must also include an understanding of how achieving justice and human rights for current and future generations is increasingly expected, and indeed demanded, by governments, business enterprises, pension plans, investors and lenders who are making decisions on approving or financing projects or plans which could result in new GHG emissions or in simply maintaining current emissions levels. A lawyer’s failure to provide relevant advice pertaining to the implication and impacts of climate change to the standard expected by a reasonably competent lawyer may not only be professional misconduct, but may also amount to professional negligence. “

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Lawyers](#), [Professional Codes and Guidelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fracking boom brings job and income loss to Appalachian communities: study

Posted on [February 23, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A February study examined the economic changes in 22 counties the authors call “Frackalachia” – home to the Utica and Marcellus shale gas industry. The report, ***Appalachia’s Natural Gas Counties: Contributing more to the U.S. economy and Getting less in return*** examines the period from 2008 to 2019, a time when the area went from producing a negligible portion of U.S. natural gas to producing 40%. The report summarizes the job forecasts provided by oil and gas industry economic impact studies, (over 450,000 new jobs for Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia), and shows the actual economic data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis – a 1.6% increase in jobs – at a time when the number of jobs across the U.S. grew by 9.9%. Detailed statistics demonstrate the differences amongst counties and states – with Ohio faring the worst and Pennsylvania faring the best. The report’s analysis shows that in the entire area represented by the 22 counties, the share of the national personal income fell by 6.3 percent, the share of jobs fell by 7.5 percent, and the share of the national population fell by 9.7 percent, while 90% of the wealth generated from fracking left the local communities.

The report was produced and published on February 10 by the **Ohio River Valley Institute**, a non-profit think tank based in Pennsylvania, founded in 2020 with the vision of “moving beyond an extractive economy toward shared prosperity, lasting job growth, clean energy, and civic engagement.” This report has been widely reported, including in “**Appalachia’s fracking boom has done little for local economies: Study**” (Environmental Health News, Feb. 12), which summarizes the report and adds context concerning the health effects of fracking, and the failed attempts to expand production to petrochemicals and plastics using ethane, a by-product of the fracked natural gas.

Posted in **Energy Policy, United States** | Tagged **Appalachian Basin, Fracking, Job Creation, Natural Gas Employment** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian university pension funds unite for low carbon goals, and public

sector pension funds across the country act on sustainability

Posted on **February 22, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the goal to leverage their collective financial clout, Canadian university endowment funds and pension plans launched the **University Network for Investor Engagement (UNIE)** on February 18. Working through **SHARE**, Canada's leading not-for-profit in responsible investment services, "The UNIE initiative will focus on key sectors where advocacy can make the biggest difference, including finance, transportation, energy and utilities, and manufacturing, focusing both on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating the transition to a low carbon economy." Initial participants include Carleton University, Concordia University, McGill University, McMaster University, Mount Alison University, Université de Montreal, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto Asset Management, University of Victoria, and York University.

This development follows on a number of statements and initiatives by Canadian pension administrators – most of which reflect this general strategy to prefer engagement as shareholders over divestment from fossil fuel holdings. Some examples:

In November 2020, the CEOs of Canada's eight major pension administrators, with approximately \$1.6 trillion in assets under management, issued a **press release** announcing their joint position statement, **Companies and investors must put sustainability and inclusive growth at the centre of economic recovery**. The text calls on companies to provide consistent and complete environmental, social, and governance (ESG) information, and continues: "For our part, we continue to strengthen our own ESG disclosure and integration practices, and allocate capital to investments best placed to deliver long-term sustainable value creation." The signatories included: AIMCo, BCI, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, CPP Investments, HOOPP, OMERS, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, and PSP Investments.

"Why are Ontario pensioners investing in future Alberta stranded assets?" (in *Corporate Knights*, December 16, 2020) describes investment by **OP Trust** (which holds the pension funds of Ontario civil servants, teachers and healthcare workers) in a natural gas electricity-generation plant in Alberta. The authors summarize **the growing global realization that fossil fuel investments are financially risky** and conclude, "The people at OPTrust have begun to recognize this. They've created multiple reports, with pretty graphs and rosy statements about supporting the Paris Agreement. But this statement rings out: "Emission reduction targets are not today's objective." Like many other organizations, they are unwilling to walk the talk."

Similarly, a **Net Zero Emissions Commitment** released by the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan on January 21 has been criticized as possible greenwashing. An article in *The National Observer*, **"Breaking down Ontario Teachers' 2050 net-zero emissions promise"** (Feb. 4) states: "With no clear definition for what net-zero means or how it will alter investment decisions, the commitment runs the risk of becoming a cynical example of greenwashing.....If OTPPP is serious about adopting a globally significant climate-safe investment strategy, it needs a plan to exclude all

new oil, gas and coal investments; a timeline for phasing out existing fossil fuel holdings; a commitment to decarbonize its portfolio by 2030; ambitious new targets for increasing investments in profitable climate solutions; and a requirement for owned companies to refrain from lobbying activities that undermine ambitious climate policy, set corporate timelines for reducing emissions, and link executive compensation to measurable climate goals.” These goals reflect the position of the authors, who are members of [ShiftAction for Pension wealth and Planet Health](#), which outlines the same demands in their [Open Letter campaign for teachers](#) . (In the [FAQ](#) statement accompanying the Net Zero statement, the OTPP states: “We favour engagement over divestment, since selling our stakes simply passes on the problem and causes us to lose our ability to influence for positive change.”)

On February 19, the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI), which manages pensions for B.C. public sector workers, [announced](#) that it “will target a cumulative \$5 billion investment in sustainability bonds by 2025 and reduce the carbon exposure in its global public equities portfolio by 30 per cent by 2025” from 2019. BCI was a founding signatory to the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) in 2006, has supported the TCFD recommendations, and issued its own Climate Action Plan in 2018. *The Energy Mix* summarized the B.C. developments in [this February 22 article](#) .

Alberta public sector pensions lose more control over pension savings

A [joint press conference by union leaders](#) protested the January 4 2021 Ministerial Orders which build on [Bill 22 in 2019](#) by further weakening the decision-making powers of the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund . From the unions’ press release: “..... not only will AIMCo be the monopoly provider of investment management services, they will also be able to ignore the wishes of the pension plans when it comes to decisions about how the retirement savings of workers and retirees should be invested.....We think Jason Kenney’s end game is to use the retirement savings of hundreds of thousands of Albertan to prop up oil and gas ventures in the province that are having an increasingly difficult time raising money from global investors and international markets To be clear: we are not opposed to all oil and gas investments. What we ARE opposed to is a system in which the government gives itself the power to invest other people’s money in risky ventures without their permission.” The Alberta Teachers Association is preparing a legal challenge to the Ministerial Order, according to [a CBC report](#). The back story is described in [“Alberta’s United Conservative Party Has Seized Control of Its Public-Sector Pension Funds”](#) (*Jacobin*, Feb. 2), an interview with Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund Board Chair Greg Meeker .

Climate Risk consultations by Canadian pension fund regulator

On January 11, 2011, the [Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions](#) (OSFI), Canada’s regulator of banks and pension plans, [announced](#) a three-month consultation on the climate change risks to financial stability, based on a discussion paper, [Navigating Uncertainty in Climate Change: Promoting Preparedness and Resilience to Climate-Related Risks](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta Teachers Association](#), [Divestment](#), [government employees](#), [Ontario Teachers Pension Plan](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [public sector](#)

The Lancet publishes a damning review of Trump's legacy, including damage to occupational health and the environment

Posted on **February 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A special issue of the prestigious British journal *The Lancet* was released on February 11, titled ***Public policy and health in the Trump era***, with an Editor's introduction which captures the broad scope and tone:

“President Biden must contend with the continued COVID-19 pandemic and economic fallout in addition to Trump’s corrosive legacy. Each roll-back from regulation and every retreat from global cooperation that defined the Trump era has become an action item on a daunting but crucial list: racism, income inequality, immigration protection, universal health coverage, nutrition, the environment, workplace safety, reproductive rights, antiscience, and isolationism.”

Discussion of **“The environment, workplace, and global climate”** starts on page 27, with a list of Trump's regulatory rollbacks related to air pollution and emissions, and toxic chemicals and occupational hazards. It states that Trump used the Covid-19 pandemic as a “cover” for rollbacks, and comes to some shocking conclusions, based on official data: “Between 2016 and 2019, the annual number of environmentally and occupationally related deaths increased by more than 22000, reversing 15 years of steady progress”, and “The Trump administration’s regulatory rollbacks have increased disease, injury, and death among workers in the USA. Its weakening of mine health and safety standards and mine enforcement programmes has led to increased injury deaths among workers employed in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction and increased mortality from coal workers’ pneumoconiosis ... Despite rising deaths from work-related silicosis, the administration terminated a silicosis prevention programme launched during the Obama era.”

The Report concludes with a long list of recommendations for Executive Action (which includes rejoining the Paris climate agreement) and for Legislative Action, including: “Implement the Green New Deal, end subsidies and tax breaks for fossil fuels, and ban coal mining and single-use plastics.” The all-encompassing scope of the review is reflected in these concluding paragraphs:

“The path away from Trump’s politics of anger and despair cannot lead through past policies. President Biden must act for the people, not for the wealthy and the corporations they control.

Resources to combat climate change, raise living standards, drop financial barriers to higher education and medical care, meet global aid responsibilities, and empower oppressed communities within the USA must come from taxes on the rich, and deep cuts in military spending.... For health care, overreliance on the private sector raises costs and distorts priorities, government must be a doer, not just a funder—eg, directly providing health coverage and engaging in drug development rather than paying private firms to carry out such functions.”

This report was authored by a [Lancet Commission on Public Health and Policy in the Trump Era](#), comprised of thirty-three experts from medical, public health and law schools, universities, Indigenous communities, clinical settings, public health agencies, unions, and legislative bodies, in the U.S., the U.K., and Canada. The [Commission website](#) states: “Convened shortly after President Trump’s inauguration in 2017, the *Lancet* Commission on public policy and health in the Trump era, offers the first comprehensive assessment of the detrimental legislation and executive actions during Trump’s presidency with devastating effects on every aspect of health in the USA. The *Lancet* Commission traces the decades of policy failures that preceded and fueled Trump’s ascent and left the USA lagging behind other high-income nations on life expectancy.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Donald Trump](#), [Environmental regulation](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [toxic chemicals](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta government backtracks, promising public consultations on coal mining policy

Posted on **February 17, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The province of Alberta **cancelled its own long-standing regulations** regarding coal mining exploration, leases and development in May 2020, but the government was forced to reverse course – as stated in a press release in February 8, [Alberta’s 1976 coal policy reinstated](#) . The policy was not only reinstated, but the government promises “we will implement further protections and consult with Albertans on a new, modern coal policy.” *The Narwhal* provides an overview of events and the political miscalculations in [“How a public uprising forced a province built on fossil fuels to reverse course on coal mining”](#) – quoting a political science professor at the University of Alberta who calls the public pressure “unprecedented” – “The government simply did not imagine that this kind of mobilization could happen” . The [Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society website](#) has monitored the issue in a series of news releases and hosts an online campaign against coal development, still **expressing concern about the government’s intentions**. The article in *The Narwhal* implies that the current Kenny government is out of touch with the diversity of opinion in Alberta – a diversity reflected in a poll released by Pembina Institute

in February, showing [Albertan attitudes to the oil and gas industry](#) and to the goal of net-zero emissions.

In the interim before the consultation is launched, the *National Observer* published [“There is no such thing as a contamination-free coal mine, top scientist warns Albertans”](#) (Feb. 16) – summarizing [a 2019 evaluation of the Benga Mining proposal](#) for an open-pit coal mine at Grassy Mountain near the Crowsnest Pass in the Rockies, which concluded: “The Grassy Mountain Coal Project will create a ticking environmental time-bomb resulting from selenium pollution of high quality, high value aquatic habitats and culminate in poisoning of provincially and federally protected fish.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [coal mining industry](#), [Environmental regulation](#), [public opinion polls](#), [Water pollution](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal government provides operational funding for public transit – as of 2026

Posted on [February 16, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a [press release on February 10](#), Prime Minister Trudeau announced \$14.9 billion in new funding for public transit, framed as “part of our plan to create one million jobs, fight climate change, and rebuild a more sustainable and resilient economy.” A [Backgrounder](#) states that \$5.9 billion will be distributed on a project-by-project basis starting in 2021 to encourage active transportation projects (e.g. bike paths, walkways), rural transit, and zero-emissions transit vehicles and infrastructure. The bulk of funding – \$9 Billion – is dedicated to creating a permanent public transit fund of \$3 billion per year, but not until 2026. The Backgrounder states: “Over the coming months, Infrastructure Canada will work with provinces, territories, municipalities, local governments, Indigenous communities, transit agencies, policy experts and other stakeholders to develop programming for the \$3 billion in permanent public transit funding in a manner that offers the greatest benefits to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Consultations on the design of the new permanent transit funding will begin in the near future to address how all orders of government can work in partnership to get the most out of investments in public transit.”

This doesn’t answer the demands of the [#Keep Transit Moving coalition](#), led by the Council of Canadians and the David Suzuki Foundation. The Council of Canadians’ response was [“Trudeau’s Transit Announcement throws Just Recovery under the Bus”](#). It states: “Transit infrastructure spending is important and necessary, but the urgent need is for sustained operating funding. ...The federal government’s focus on infrastructure at the expense of operational funding is a classic case of trying to appease social movements without making the needed changes.” The COC also repeats [its warnings against the use of public-](#)

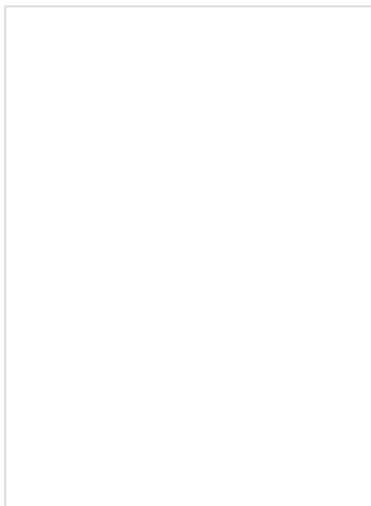
private investment to fund transit, if money is directed through the **Canada Infrastructure Bank**. The Amalgamated Transit Union, facing historic ridership loss because of the pandemic, also expresses disappointment in **their press release**, which states: “What’s needed now is \$400 million per month into emergency operational funding to cover losses at the farebox.” The ATU acknowledges that the government has provided emergency operating funds **through the Safe Restart Agreement**, but those will soon expire, and **other transit-related funding** has been for capital projects and to support the EV bus manufacturers.

The government’s transit funding was more favourably received by others: “**Big City Mayors Cheer as Trudeau Offers Permanent Federal Transit Funding**” (*The Energy Mix*, Feb.12); “**Support for public transit is key to decarbonizing transportation**” (Pembina Institute, Feb. 11); and “**Expanding and electrifying public transit exemplifies the recovery Canada needs**” (Clean Energy Canada, Feb. 11).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Covid-19, pandemic response, Transit Policy** | **Leave a reply**

Fast Fashion reliance on fossil fuels is eating up global carbon budgets and polluting our water

Posted on **February 12, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**



It turns out that recycling all those plastic water bottles into fleece isn’t enough to solve the problems of “fast fashion”. An eye-opening report released on February 3 documents the scope of the environmental damages caused by the global fashion industry, and makes recommendations for government regulation and consumer action.

Fossil Fashion: The hidden reliance of fast fashion on fossil fuels lays out the scale of the problem:

“The global fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world. Research from the European Environment Agency has highlighted that textiles are the fourth largest cause of environmental pressure after food, housing and transport. The fashion industry is responsible for a significant share of global water pollution, consumes more energy than shipping and aviation combined, and by 2050 is anticipated to be responsible for 25% of the world’s remaining carbon budget. Furthermore, our clothes release half a million tonnes of microfibrils into the ocean every year, equivalent to more than 50 billion plastic bottles.”..... “Without prompt and radical legislative action and a considerable slowdown, fast fashion’s quest for cheap clothing will create untenable volumes of waste and toxic microfibrils, and emit more carbon than the planet can handle.”

The report provides detail statistics related to production, recycling, and the environmental and pollution impacts, summarized by this overview: “Production of polyester has grown ninefold in the past 50 years, and the fibre has been widely adopted in the fashion industry as a low-cost material that allows brands to churn out a never-ending variety of cheap itemsPolyester is cheap, costing half as much per kilo as cotton, and has cemented itself as the backbone of today’s throwaway fashion model. The trends speak for themselves, with the average consumer buying 60% more clothing compared to 15 years ago, yet wearing each item of clothing half as long. Polyester’s flexibility as a material has seen it creeping into other materials too, with blends such as cotton and polyester increasingly being used, creating another set of problems when it comes to waste management.Recycling will not solve fast fashion’s problems, nor will it curb the exponential growth in the use of synthetic fibres. Currently, less than 1% of clothes are recycled to make new clothes, and the share of recycled polyester is declining; while it accounted for 14% in 2019, this will in fact decrease to 7.9% of overall polyester production by 2030. Furthermore, virtually all recycled polyester in clothing comes not from recycled garments, but from recycled plastic bottles.” Recycling also does nothing to solve a problem both microscopic and enormous: microfibrils. These tiny fragments of plastic shed from our clothes when we wash them, wear them or throw them out, and leak into our bodies and the natural world. Microfibrils are found throughout ocean ecosystems, with a recent study discovering that 73% of microfibre pollution in formerly pristine Arctic waters is from synthetic fibres that could be coming from textiles. Graver still, microplastics have even been found in the placentas of unborn babies, affecting the human body in ways that are not yet fully understood.”

The main recommendations in this report deal with environmental/sustainability/pollution regulation in the EU – coinciding with January 2021 EU **consultations for a strategy “Roadmap”** to “shift to a climate-neutral, circular economy where products are designed to be more durable, reusable, repairable, recyclable and energy-efficient” in the Covid-19 recovery. Canada, like the EU, is mainly an importer of fast fashion, so the relevant recommendations from Fossil Fashion are those for the consumer. Relying on individual action and purchasing power, they call for people to stop compulsive shopping and buy only from brands which have made a clear and transparent

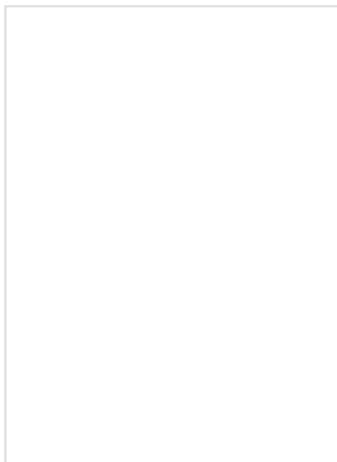
commitment to sustainably sourced supply chains. The report also calls for consumers to join in “raising awareness of the issues surrounding fast fashion, and use their voices to highlight issues such as greenwashing, exploitative practices, environmental harm and unsustainable consumption.”

Fossil Fashion was published by the **Changing Markets Foundation**, whose focus is the environmental impacts of the fashion industry. In November 2020, they also published **Dirty Fashion: Crunch Time**, which updates their 2018 campaign to evaluate and rank individual fashion brands. Another advocacy group, the **Clean Clothes Campaign**, collaborates with Changing Markets and focuses on human rights and working conditions in the global fashion industry. Their latest report was released in January 2021, with a focus on the EU: **Fashioning Justice: A call for mandatory and comprehensive human rights due diligence in the garment industry**.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Circular Economy, clothing industry, fashion industry, fast fashion, microfibres, Oil and gas industry, Recycling, Water pollution** | [Leave a reply](#)

Roadmap for U.S. Decarbonization emphasizes job creation, equity in Transition

Posted on **February 11, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**



A Committee of Experts in the United States collaborated to produce a sweeping policy blueprint for how the U.S. can reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. **Accelerating Decarbonization of the United States Energy System** was published by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in February 2021, and discusses how to decarbonize the transportation, electricity, buildings, and industrial sectors. The Overview emphasizes goals of job creation and equity, with a need to build social license. This aspect of the report is drawn out in **“We risk a**

“yellow vest movement”: *Why the US clean energy transition must be equitable*” a summary which appeared in Vox.

From the report overview

“The transition represents an opportunity to build a more competitive U.S. economy, increase the availability of high-quality jobs, build an energy system without the social injustices that permeate our current system, and allow those individuals, communities, and businesses that are marginalized today to share equitably in future benefits. Maintaining public support through a three decade transition to net zero simply cannot be achieved without the development and maintenance of a strong social contract. This is true for all policy proposals described here, including a carbon tax, clean energy standards, and the push to electrify and increase efficiencies in end uses such as vehicle and building energy use. “

The report recommendations are summarized in this **Policy Table**, and in a 4-page **Highlights document**. These include:

- Setting an emissions budget for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases
- Setting an economy-wide price on carbon (though a low price is set “because of concerns about equity, fairness, and competitiveness”)
- Establish a 2-year federal National Transition Task Force “to evaluate the long-term implications of the transition for communities, workers, and families, and identify strategies for ensuring a just transition”.
- Establish a new Office of Equitable Energy Transitions within the White House to act on the recommendations of the task force, establish just transition targets and track progress
- A new independent National Transition Corporation.
- A new Green Bank, initially capitalized at \$30 billion, to ensure the required capital is available for the net-zero transition and to mobilize greater private investment
- A comprehensive education and training initiative “to develop the workforce required for the net-zero transition, to fuel future innovation, and to provide new high-quality jobs”
- Triple federal investment in clean energy RD&D at the Department of Energy over the next ten years, as well as the support for social science research on the socio-economic aspects of advancing the transition.

The full report, 210 pages, is available free for download **from this link** (registration required).

Posted in **Government Policy, Green Economy, United States** | Tagged **Carbon Budget, Carbon Pricing, Carbon Tax, Decarbonization, Green Finance, Job Creation, Just Transition, Social License, United States** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s net zero future should include policies to support technology “wild cards”: report

Posted on **February 10, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Canada's Net Zero Future: Finding our way in the global transition is a policy document released on February 8 by the **Canadian Institute for Climate Choices**, the national research network created by Environment and Climate Change Canada in 2020. The report provides a simple definition of net zero: “shifting toward technologies and energy systems that do not produce emissions, and offsetting any remaining emissions by removing GHGs from the atmosphere and storing them permanently.” Based on **technical analysis by Navius Research** which examined more than 60 modelling scenarios, the report is announced as “the first in-depth scenario report to explore how Canada can reach net zero emissions by 2050”. It concludes that the goal is doable, using two pathways: “safe bets” and “wild cards”.

Most impact will be made by “Safe bets—commercially available, cost-effective, existing technologies like electric vehicles, heat pumps, and smart grids” which they estimate can generate at least two-thirds of the emission reductions required. In the longer-term, to reach the 2050 target, the authors rely on results from unproven “wild cards”— “high-risk, high reward technologies like advanced biofuels, zero-emissions hydrogen, and some types of engineered negative emission technologies that are not yet commercially available”. The conclusion: “To scale up safe bets, governments should continue to steadily increase the stringency of policies such as carbon pricing and flexible regulations. To advance wild cards, governments should spread their bets—supporting a portfolio of emerging technologies, without delaying progress on existing smart bet solutions over the next crucial decade.”

Of the four formal Recommendations, #4 is “Governments should work to ensure that the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive”. “It is vital that governments understand the full range of implications the transition will have on all of Canada’s regions, sectors, workers, communities, and income groups. This is necessary to ensure that policies successfully address adverse impacts and work to lift up groups who have historically been left behind, instead of exacerbating those inequalities. This will require direct engagement with all of those groups.”

The lead author of the report is Jason Dion, Mitigation Research Director at the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices, but the report is a “consensus document” involving many advisors who compose its Mitigation Expert Panel Working Group, as well as expert external reviewers. Two accompanying blogs condense the message in “***What puts the “net” in net zero?***” (regarding three means of negative emissions) and “***Net zero is compatible with economic growth if we do it right***” (emphasizing the importance of likelihood of GDP growth through the recommended policies.)

Related Recent reports:

The Carbontech Innovation System in Canada released in December 2020 by the Pembina Institute, along with CMC Research Institutes and the Alberta Clean Technology Industry Alliance. It reviews and evaluates Canada’s position in the global carbon capture and utilization marketplace.

Accelerating Decarbonization of the United States Energy System published by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in February 2021. Written by a committee of experts, this is a policy blueprint for the U.S. to decarbonize its transportation, electricity, buildings, and industrial sectors, in order to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. See a summary [here](#).

Can Technology solve Climate Change? two brief essays debating the pro and con arguments, by Adam Dorr and Richard Heinberg.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean Technology](#), [Climate change policy](#), [disruptive technology](#), [Green Innovation](#), [negative emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Benchmarking corporate Just Transition policies gives auto manufacturers like Tesla a low score

Posted on **February 10, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) announced in February that will combine its existing ***Corporate Human Rights Benchmarking*** with its ***Climate and Energy Benchmarking*** of global corporations, to produce a **Just Transition Benchmark Assessment**. The WBA has a practical objective:

“Trade unions and civil society organisations can use the transparency provided by these assessments to hold companies accountable, and governments can use them as evidence to inform policy making for a just transition. Additionally, investors and the companies themselves will be able to use the assessments as a roadmap to move towards practices to ensure no one is left behind in the decarbonisation and energy transformation.”

Assessing a just transition: measuring the decarbonisation and energy



transformation that leaves no one behind outlines the methodology of this new assessment exercise and invites stakeholders to contribute in an ongoing process till 2023. The proposed outcome is to publish Just Transition Benchmark assessments of approximately 450 companies in high-emitting sectors – in publicly available rankings, as are the ***many other reports*** of the World Benchmarking Alliance. ***Assessing a just transition*** also includes results from a pilot project of the automotive sector to illustrate how the Just Transition assessments will be done. It synthesizes the findings from the WBA ***Automotive Benchmarking for 2020*** with its ***Corporate Human Rights Benchmarking***.

Global auto manufacturers are racing to produce electric vehicles, but are they respecting workers' rights?

In combining the findings of the two existing benchmarking initiatives, *Assessing a just transition* states: "... Some companies that demonstrated action on climate issues, such as low-carbon transition plans, emissions reduction targets and climate change oversight, disclosed very little, if any, information on how they manage human rights, and vice versa. This lack of correlation suggests that many automotive manufacturers still consider climate and human rights issues separately, to be addressed independently of each other, despite the fact that they are increasingly recognised as interconnected."

A brief case study highlight of Tesla states: "..... when observing the company's approach to managing human rights, Tesla scores in the bottom third of companies assessed in the CHRB with an overall score of 6.3/100. This approach has come under recent scrutiny, with a 2020 shareholder resolution demanding Tesla improve its disclosures on human rights governance, due diligence and remedy. While the resolution did not pass (24.8% voted in favour), it highlights that even when a company contributes to decarbonisation, a lack of essential human rights policies and processes to prevent abuse of communities and workers cannot be overlooked."

Related reports:

The WBA *Corporate Human Rights Benchmarking Report for 2020 Key Findings* includes five sectors: Agricultural products, Apparel, Extractives & ICT manufacturing – and for the first time ever, 30 companies in the Automotive manufacturing sector. The report states: "The average score for automotive companies is 12%, the lowest score ever for a CHRB-benchmarked sector. Two thirds of the companies scored 0 across all human rights due diligence indicators. These poor results suggest implementation of the UNGPs is weak across the sector."

Twenty-five "keystone" companies in the automotive industry have been benchmarked for their progress towards Paris goals since 2019. Results of the 2020 report are [here](#), and a blog in December 2020 summarizes the results in "*A tale of two automotive companies: sluggish incumbents and opaque disruptors in the race to zero-emissions vehicles*".

Posted in [Business Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing industry](#), [benchmarking](#), [Corporate Climate Policy](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [decent work](#), [electric vehicle manufacture](#), [Just Transition](#), [Tesla](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Australian unions advocating for Just Transition, economic recovery, and decent jobs in renewables

Posted on **February 8, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

As Australia endures more record-breaking heat in its current summer season, the Climate Council released a report in January: ***Hitting Home: the Compounding Costs of Climate Inaction***, which catalogues the natural disasters and their toll on the country. ***New Climate Change legislation*** was introduced in November 2020 which would legislate a net zero emissions target by 2050 and establish a system of emissions budgeting. A Parliamentary **House committee** has just concluded public hearings on the legislation, to which the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) submitted a brief: ***No-one left behind: Australia's transition to zero emissions***. The ACTU chiefly calls for improved supports for workers in an energy transition, and the establishment of a national Just Transition or Energy Transition Authority. (The ACTU passed a more detailed **climate and energy transition policy statement** in 2018)

In November 2020, the ACTU also published ***Sharing the benefits with workers: A decent jobs agenda for the renewable energy industry***, which provides an overview of the renewable energy sector in Australia, and features both best and worst workplace practices. The report proposes an agenda to improve the quality of jobs, with special attention to the small-scale solar industry. "Particular attention is paid to the current practice of outsourcing construction of renewable energy projects to labour hire contractors, which is where many of the poor employment practices occur, and to ensuring project developers are maximising local job creation through procurement, hiring and local content planning."

In August, the Victoria Trades Hall Council, released ***Transition from Crisis: Victoria Trades Hall Council's Just Transition & Economic Recovery Strategy*** which links climate change and Covid-19 in words that could apply in any country:

"...The scale of the fiscal response to COVID-19 shows that, when a government takes a problem seriously and commits to dealing with it, the finances to get the problem fixed can be found and the spending is supported by the general population. The implications for action on climate change are obvious.The trauma, disruption and dislocation caused by COVID-19 are unprecedented outside of war time. The response, with its restrictions of civil liberties and suppression of economic activity, has been necessary, proportionate to the threat, and largely accepted by the population. The deep irony is that acting proportionately to deal with climate change would require none of those infringements of liberties and would produce an economic transformation that would leave Victorians better off. Hence this strategy is not simply for a just transition but for an economic recovery and the reconstruction of Victoria. In the period of recovery, after COVID-19 has been brought under control, we must learn the lessons from the virus response, continue to mobilise the resources we need, build on the incredible growth in community spirit and mutual aid, and get to work to deal with climate change with a determination that is based on hope and necessary action for a better world. "

The ***Transition from Crisis*** report has many purposes, but ultimately it is a comprehensive discussion of policy ideas to help the transition to a socially just and sustainable society, with

workers at the centre. The strategy is built on eleven principles, which include inclusion of First Nations, gender equality, social equity, and new energy ownership models, among others. The report discusses the many ways in which unions can advocate for climate change action and protect their members: through participation in tri-partite industrial planning, training and retraining, occupational health and safety protection, collective bargaining, and union networking and cooperation. Regarding union cooperation for example, the VTHC pledges “to participate in, or establish if needed, national and state level just transitions committees to formulate policies around just transition, provide support to individual unions, engage with state climate and environment organisations, and provide a conduit into national-level decision making.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [climate change legislation](#), [Just Transition](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition for Pennsylvania estimated to cost \$115,000 per worker in latest report from PERI

Posted on **February 8, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the latest of a series of reports titled ***Green Growth Programs for U.S. States***, researchers provide analysis and proposals for economic recovery for Pennsylvania, considering both the impacts of Covid-19 and a necessary transition to a cleaner economy. In ***Impacts of the Reimagine Appalachia & Clean Energy Transition Programs for Pennsylvania: Job Creation, Economic Recovery, and Long-Term Sustainability***, Robert Pollin and co-authors estimate that clean energy investments scaled at about \$23 billion per year from 2021 to 2030 will generate roughly 162,000 jobs per year in Pennsylvania. They detail those investment programs for sectors including public infrastructure, manufacturing, land restoration and agriculture, and including plugging orphaned oil and gas wells.

The report estimates that 64,000 people are currently employed in Pennsylvania in fossil fuel-based industries – including in fracking for natural gas from the Marcellus Shale regions, as well as other oil and gas projects, coal mining, and fossil fuel-based power generation. As the state transitions away from fossil-fuel industries, the authors estimate that about 1,800 workers will be displaced each year between 2021 – 2030, and another 1,000 will voluntarily retire each year. The authors estimate that the average costs of supporting these workers will amount to about \$115,000 per worker, with an overall cost of about \$210 million per year over the duration of the just transition program. The report emphasizes: “It is critical that all of these workers receive pension guarantees, health care coverage, re-employment guarantees, wage insurance, and retraining support, as needed”.

The full series of reports, [Green Growth Programs for U.S. States](#), includes similar analysis and proposals for Ohio, Maine, Colorado, New York, and the state of Washington. They are co-written by experts including Robert Pollin, Shouvik Chakraborty, Heidi Garrett-Peltier, Tyler Hansen, Gregor Semieniuk, and Jeannette Wicks-Lim. The series is published by the Department of Economics and Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Appalachian Basin](#), [coal transition](#), [Fracking](#), [Just Transition](#), [Pennsylvania](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian steel, concrete, aluminum and wood – low carbon solutions for public infrastructure

Posted on **February 2, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a [February 1 press release](#), Ken Neumann, National Director for Canada of the United Steelworkers says, “We need our governments to support the creation and retention of good jobs by strengthening Canadian industrial and manufacturing capacities in ways that support the low-carbon transition of the economy”. To support that point, [Blue Green Canada](#) has released a new report, [Buy Clean: How Public Construction Dollars can create jobs and cut pollution](#). *Buy Clean* calls for the use of Canadian-made building products in infrastructure in order to reap the dual benefit of reducing carbon emissions and supporting local industry and jobs. The USW press release continues: “Buy Clean makes sense for Canada because it leverages our carbon advantage. Whether its steel, aluminum, cement or wood, building materials sourced from within Canada are typically lower carbon than imported materials” – thanks largely to our low-emissions energy supply and reduced transportation costs. The report recommends that all levels of government continue and expand the use of Buy Clean policies for procurement. The report also calls for an Industrial Decarbonization Strategy to encourage technological innovation in the manufacture of steel, aluminum, concrete and wood, and for a “Clean Infrastructure Challenge Fund”, to act as a demonstration fund modelled on the [Low Carbon Economy Challenge](#), but available only for public infrastructure projects, not to private industry.

[Buy Clean: How Public Construction Dollars can create jobs and cut pollution](#) is also available in a French-language version, [Acheter Propre: Créer des emplois et réduire la pollution par une utilisation judicieuse des fonds publics en construction](#). The report includes appendices for each of the sectors, providing brief but specific summaries of how Canadian industry has already achieved lower carbon processes than their competitors – particularly in steel and aluminum, and what further decarbonization opportunities remain.

The Buy Clean message seems closely related to the ***Stand Up for Steel*** national campaign by the United Steelworkers, which also calls for the use of Canadian-made steel in infrastructure projects. After the disruptive tariffs levied by the previous U.S. administration, the ***Stand up for Steel Action Plan*** also calls for the right for unions to initiate trade cases; for expanding the definition of ‘material injury’ in trade cases; and for a carbon border adjustment on imported steel.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **aluminum industry, building materials, cement industry, Decarbonization, Green Infrastructure, Green procurement, steel industry, wood products industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Tidal wave of climate litigation: cases and trends examined in new report

Posted on **February 2, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

On January 26 the United Nations Environment Programme and the Sabin Center at Columbia University published ***Global Climate Litigation Report: 2020 Status Review***, revealing a “growing tidal wave of climate cases” which show “how climate litigation is compelling governments and corporate actors to pursue more ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.”

The report states that as of July 1, 2020, at least 1,550 climate change cases have been filed in 38 countries around the world – nearly double the number of cases in the ***previous report published in 2017***, which had documented 884 cases brought in 24 countries. The report summarizes key trends in cases – “ongoing and increasing numbers of cases relying on fundamental and human rights enshrined in international law and national constitutions to compel climate action; challenging domestic enforcement (and non-enforcement) of climate-related laws and policies; seeking to keep fossil fuels in the ground; claiming corporate liability and responsibility for climate harms; addressing failures to adapt and the impacts of adaptation; and advocating for greater climate disclosures and an end to corporate greenwashing on the subject of climate change and the energy transition.” The report also notes emerging issues in the next five years, including increased attention to attribution studies, and highlights significant and precedent-setting cases throughout.

Global Climate Litigation Report: 2020 Status Review is current to July 1, 2020. Since then, at least three more important cases have been decided: **1.** in December 2020, a U.K. coroner ruled that “***Air pollution a cause in girl’s death, coroner rules in landmark case***” (*The Guardian*, January 2021); **2.** an Appeals court in France overturned an expulsion order against an asthmatic man because he would face “a worsening of his respiratory pathology due to air pollution” in Bangladesh, his home country (the significance described in *The Guardian* in “***Air pollution will lead to mass migration, say experts after landmark ruling***”, with more details [here](#)). And **3.** on January 29, 2021, a Dutch Appeals court brought an end to a case begun in 2008, when it upheld

a decision against Royal Dutch Shell petroleum, finding it responsible for multiple oil spills and leaks which poisoned farmland in the Niger Delta. A [Reuters report](#) quotes Friends of the Earth, saying “the ruling exceeded all expectations and marked the first time a multinational had been instructed by a Dutch court to uphold a duty of care for foreign operations.” The case is also summarized in “[After 13 years, Justice: Dutch court orders Shell to pay for harm done to Nigerian farmers](#)” and in Deutsche Welle in “[Dutch Court rules Shell liable for Niger Delta oil spills](#)” .

And in the United States, a potentially landmark case of climate liability is underway as of January 2021. According to [a summary at NPR](#) the city of Baltimore is presenting its claim for the cost of climate-related damages against more than a dozen major oil and gas companies including BP, ExxonMobil and Shell. According to NPR: “The Supreme Court will announce its decision later this year on the narrow question of whether the Baltimore case should be considered in state or federal court. If the justices decide in favor of the companies and the case proceeds in federal court, it’s possible that the lawsuit will be eventually dismissed without a trial. However, if the justices decide in favor of Baltimore, it is likely that the case will proceed in Maryland state court, which could require the companies in the case to turn over vast troves of documents about their businesses and marketing practices over the decades.” A multitude of legal documents have been compiled since the case began in 2018, and are available at the [Sabin Center for Climate Change Law here](#).

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [attribution](#), [climate change and health](#), [climate liability](#), [Climate litigation](#) | [1 Reply](#)

President Biden’s Executive Orders and Keystone XL cancellation – what impact on Canada?

Posted on **February 1, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Incoming U.S. President Biden exceeded expectations with the climate change initiatives announced in week 1 of his term, and many have important repercussions for Canada. The most obvious came on Day 1, January 20, with [an Executive Order](#) cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline and taking the U.S. back into the Paris Agreement. Also of potential impact for the Canadian clean tech and auto industries – the Buy American policies outlined in [Executive Order on Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America’s Workers](#) (Jan. 25). On January 27 (“Climate Day ”), the [Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at home and abroad](#) (explained in [this Fact Sheet](#)) announced a further series of initiatives, including a pause on oil and gas leases on federal lands, a goal to convert the federal government’s vehicle fleet to electric vehicles, and initiatives towards environmental justice and science-based policies. Essential to the “whole of government” approach, the Executive Order establishes the White

House Office of Domestic Climate Policy to coordinate policies, and a National Climate Task Force composed of leaders from across 21 federal agencies and departments. It also establishes the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, “to be co-chaired by the National Climate Advisor and the Director of the National Economic Council, and directs federal agencies to coordinate investments and other efforts to assist coal, oil and natural gas, and power plant communities.”

The **New York Times** summarized the Jan. 27 Orders as “a sweeping series of executive actions ... while casting the moves as much about job creation as the climate crisis.” A sampling of resulting summaries and reactions: **‘We Need to Be Bold,’ Biden Says, Taking the First Steps in a Major Shift in Climate Policy**” in *Inside Climate News* (Jan. 28); **“Fossils ‘stunned’, ‘aghast’ after Biden pauses new oil and gas leases**” in *The Energy Mix* (Feb. 1); **“Biden’s ‘all of government’ plan for climate, explained**” in *Vox* (updated Jan. 27); **“Biden’s Pause of New Federal Oil and Gas Leases May Not Reduce Production, but It Signals a Reckoning With Fossil Fuels**” (Jan. 27); **“Biden is canceling fossil fuel subsidies. But he can’t end them all”** (Grist, Jan. 28); **“Activists See Biden’s Day One Focus on Environmental Justice as a Critical Campaign Promise Kept**” and **“Climate Groups Begin Vying for Power in the Biden Era as Pressure for Unity Fades”** (Jan 21) in *The Intercept*, which outlines the key policy differences between the BlueGreen Alliance (which includes the Service Employees International Union, the American Federation of Teachers, and the United Steelworkers in the U.S.) and the Climate Justice Alliance, a national coalition of environmental justice groups.

The Narwhal provides an excellent overview of the important issues for Canada in **“Biden has hit the ground running on climate and environmental justice. How will Canada respond?”**

Focus: Cancelling the Keystone XL Pipeline

The January 20 **Executive Order** halting the Keystone XL pipeline construction was meant to be a highly symbolic break with the previous administration’s policies, as described by Bill McKibben in the *New Yorker* as **“Joe Biden’s cancellation of the Keystone Pipeline is a landmark in the climate fight”**. *Inside Climate News* wrote **“Biden Cancels Keystone XL, Halts Drilling in Arctic Refuge on Day One, Signaling a Larger Shift Away From Fossil Fuels”** (Jan. 21).

In Canada, the Keystone XL cancellation set off a torrent of reactions – with Alberta’s Premier immediately calling for trade retaliation – summarized in **“Gut punch’: Alberta premier blasts Biden on revoked Keystone XL permit”** (*National Observer*, Jan. 20). The federal government held an **Emergency Debate on Keystone** on January 25, the first day the House of Commons re-convened after Christmas break. Environmental groups, along with social justice groups, First Nations, and the B.C. Government Employees Union, sent an **Open Letter** to Prime Minister Trudeau and all cabinet ministers on January 26, approving of the Keystone cancellation and stating: “Canada must follow Biden’s lead on Keystone XL and cancel TMX because it directly conflicts with the federal government recently announced climate plan and it does not have permission or consent from affected Indigenous Nations.” An opposite viewpoint was reported in **“Keystone XL denial will hurt communities, Indigenous business coalition leader says”** (*National Observer*, Jan. 22). Consistent with the past policies of the construction unions in the

U.S. and Canada, Canada's Building Trades Unions issued a [press release](#) expressing deep disappointment in lost jobs as a result of the decision – as did their U.S. counterpart the [North American Building Trades Union \(NABTU\)](#) . (The discord amongst unions over pipeline construction has been long-standing and well documented – for example, in “[Contested Futures: Labor after Keystone XL](#)” by Sean Sweeney (*New Labor Forum*, 2016.)

What next for Canada, now that Keystone XL has been cancelled?

CBC reports “[Trudeau government looks to continental energy strategy in wake of Keystone cancellation](#)” (Jan. 27), which summarizes the unimpressive history of international energy initiatives but strikes an optimistic note because of the new Biden administration. Eric Grenier summarizes the political and public opinion landscape and concludes that “[For Trudeau, there's no political reason to fight for Keystone XL](#)” , and Aaron Wherry expands on that theme in “[How political symbolism brought down Keystone XL](#)” (Jan 23). In “[Cenovus unveils capital spending plan, confirms up to 2,150 layoffs still targeted](#)” (Jan. 29) the CEO of Cenovus states that while the Keystone XL pipeline cancellation was a “tragedy” for the industry, it wouldn't affect his company's ability to move oil and that Biden's pause on oil and gas leasing, “is probably good for the Canadian oilpatch” . The Cenovus layoffs announced are not related to Biden's policies but come as a result of its takeover of Husky Energy- Cenovus had already announced it would cut 20 to 25 per cent of its combined employee and contractor workforce (approx. 1,720 and 2,150 workers) in October 2020.

Warren Mabee wrote in *The Conversation Canada* (Jan.21) “[Biden's Keystone XL death sentence requires Canada's oil sector to innovate](#)” – (republished in The Narwhal [here](#)) arguing that Canada and Alberta “need to decide if more pipeline capacity is really needed” and “The future of Canada's oil sector may not be in volume, but in value” – for example, high value-added products such as plastics, rubber and chemicals. But this is Canada, so pipeline battles will continue: “[With Keystone XL cancelled, all eyes turn to Trans Mountain expansion battle](#)” (*Ricochet* , Jan. 27) and “[The cancellation of Keystone XL raises the stakes for Trans Mountain](#)” (*Globe and Mail* Opinion piece, Jan. 26) . [David Hughes has written](#), most recently in October 2020, that the Trans Mountain pipeline capacity is not needed, and on December 8 2020, the [Parliamentary Budget Office released a report](#) with the same conclusion. An excellent overview on [the status of the Trans Mountain](#) issue appears from the West Coast Environmental Law, and the Dogwood Institute maintains an online petition against TMX [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Keystone XL](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Decarbonization requires focus on sector-specific policies and investments: new report

Posted on **February 1, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Pathways to net zero: A decision support tool was released on January 25, directed at policy makers and investors. The report provides a broad-stroke analysis of all sectors of the Canadian economy, summarized in Assessment Tables which identify processes within each sector, classified as “credible” “capable” or “compelling” as pathways to net-zero. Priority areas are identified and highlighted in the final recommendation that “Canada needs a paradigm shift from trying to do a little bit of everything to reduce emissions to accelerating real change by strategically focusing on building out key regional and sector-specific pathways to net zero. ... This means prioritizing decarbonizing electricity, accelerating electric vehicle deployment and performing mass building retrofits, since these sectors are in the more mature ‘diffusion’ phase of their decarbonization transition.”

The report also acknowledges the cross-cutting issues of carbon taxes, energy efficiency, and technologies such as carbon capture and storage. Future reports are promised to provide deeper assessments of the additional sectors of hydrogen and biofuel energy; plastics; iron and steel; aluminum; mass transit.

Pathways to net zero: A decision support tool is written by lead author Professor James Meadowcroft of Carleton University, and published by the Transition Accelerator in Calgary. The Transition Accelerator launched in summer of 2019 with ***Building Pathways to a Sustainable Future***, a report which summarizes the organization’s goals and its “**transition approach**”: partly defined as an examination of “opportunities to transform the large-scale societal systems or sectors which give rise to our emissions. This requires understanding how these systems operate, the stage of transition achieved in specific systems (‘emergence’, ‘diffusion’ or ‘system reconfiguration’), and the non-climate-related problems and disruptive currents influencing their evolution.”

Other reports to date are compiled [here](#) and have focused largely on hydrogen energy and transportation issues.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Climate Policy](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Decarbonization](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Survey of oil and gas workers shows little knowledge of energy transition

Posted on **January 20, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report commissioned by international union coalition **Industrial** examines the geopolitics of fossil fuel producing countries (mainly, the United States, China, Europe and Russia) and the investments and performance of the Oil Majors (Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, Total, as well as

nationally-owned PetroChina, Gazprom and Equinor). ***Energy transition, national strategies, and oil companies: what are the impacts for workers?*** was published in November 2020, with the research updated to reflect the impacts of Covid-19.

In addition to a thorough examination of state and corporate actions, the report asked union representatives from four oil companies about how workers understand the energy transformation and its impact on their own jobs, and whether the concept of Just Transition has become part of their union's agenda.

Some highlights of the responses:

- “the union members interviewed showed little knowledge about either the risks that the current transition process can generate for the industrial employee, or about the union discussion that seeks to equate the concern with the decarbonisation of the economy with the notions of equity and social justice. In some cases, even the term “Just Transition” was not known to respondents.”
- Their lack of knowledge regarding the Just Transition can be justified by the fact that they do not believe that there will be any significant change in the energy mix of these companies.
- Regarding information about energy transitions within the companies, “Managers are included, but the bottom of the work chain is not”
- Lacking corporate policies or support, some employees feel compelled to take responsibility for their own re-training

Echoing results of a similar survey of North Sea oil workers in the summer of 2020, published in ***Offshore: Oil and gas workers' views on industry conditions and the energy transition***, one European respondent is quoted saying: “In the end, everyone is looking for job security, good wages and healthy conditions. It doesn't matter so much if the job is in another area, as long as it is in good working conditions”.

The researchers conclude that: “Far from being just a statement of how disconnected workers are from environmental issues, these researches reveal a window of opportunity for union movements to act in a better communication strategy with their union members, drawing their attention to the climate issue and transforming their hopes for job stability and better working conditions into an ecologically sustainable political agenda.”

The report was commissioned by Industriall and conducted by the Institute of Strategic Studies of Petroleum, Natural Gas and Biofuels (Inep), a research organization created by Brazil's United Federation of Oil and Gas Workers (FUP).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **attitudes of union members, attitudes of workers, fossil fuel industry, Just Transition, labour union policies, Oil and gas industry** | **1 Reply**

A Manual of Arguments to be used to promote a fair and ecological society

Posted on **January 20, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A Manual of Arguments for a Fair and Ecological Society is a new communication tool aimed at a European and Eastern European audience, and at “social democrats working in the context of social-ecological transformation”. According to the manual, it “scrutinizes the seven most important topic areas in which social and environmental concerns are—mistakenly—often played out against each other” – including ***Decarbonization of the Economy and the Future of Jobs***; ***Socially Just Energy Transformation***; and ***Socially Just Mobility Transformation***. It then provides summaries of these issues to be used in discussion.

Although the exact examples used in ***A Manual of Arguments*** are specific to Europe, the language and the framing follows well-established principles in the psychology of climate communication, making it a model which could be adapted in other countries. “We know that it will take more to combat climate crises than just stating the facts. We need to think strategically about our messaging if we want to reach our audience and avoid potential resistance or reactance, which may end up defeating our original purpose.” *A Manual of Arguments for a Fair and Ecological Society* was published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Berlin Germany, and offers brief **summaries of each topic [here](#)**, with a version of the complete Manual **[here](#)**.



Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Activism, climate change communication, jobs vs environment** | [Leave a reply](#)

How “clean” are clean energy and electric vehicles?

Posted on **January 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Several articles and reports published recently have re-visited the question: how “clean” is “clean energy”? Here is a selection, beginning in October 2020 with a multi-part series titled **Recycling**

Clean Energy Technologies , from the Union of Concerned Scientists. It includes: **“Wind Turbine blades don’t have to end up in landfill”**; **“Cracking the code on recycling energy storage batteries”**; and **“Solar Panel Recycling: Let’s Make It Happen”** .

“The glaring problem with Canada’s solar sector and how to fix it” (National Observer, Nov. 2020) states that “While solar is heralded as a clean, green source of renewable energy, this is only true if the panels are manufactured sustainably and can be recycled and kept out of landfills.” Yet right now, Canada has no capacity to recycle the 350 tonnes of solar pv waste produced in 2016 alone, let alone the 650,000 tonnes Canada is expected to produce by 2050. The author points the finger of responsibility at Canadian provinces and territories, which are responsible for waste management and extended producer responsibility (EPR) regulations. A description of solar recycling and waste management systems in Europe and the U.S. points to better practices.

“No ‘green halo’ for renewables: First Solar, Veolia, others tackle wind and solar environmental impacts” appeared in *Utility Drive* (Dec. 14) as a “long read” discussion of progress to uphold environmental and health and safety standards in both the production and disposal of solar panels and wind turbine blades. The article points to examples of industry standards and third-party certification of consumer goods, such as The **Green Electronics Council (GEC)** and **NSF International**. The article also quotes experts such as University of California professor Dustin Mulvaney, author of ***Solar Power: Innovation, Sustainability, and Environmental Justice*** (2019) and numerous other articles which have tracked the environmental impact, and labour standards, of the solar energy industry.

Regarding the recycling of wind turbine blades: A **press release** on December 8 2020 describes a new agreement between GE Renewable Energy and Veolia, whereby Veolia will recycle blades removed from its U.S.-based onshore wind turbines by shredding them at a processing facility in Missouri, so that they can be used as a replacement for coal, sand and clay in cement manufacturing. A broader article appeared in *Grist*, **“Today’s wind turbine blades could become tomorrow’s bridges”** (Jan. 8 2021) which notes the GE- Veoli initiative and describes other emerging and creative ways to deal with blade waste, such as the **Re-Wind project**. Re-Wind is a partnership involving universities in the U.S., Ireland, and Northern Ireland who are engineering ways to repurpose the blades for electrical transmission towers, bridges, and more. The article also quotes a senior wind technology **engineer at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory** in the U.S. who is experimenting with production materials to find more recyclable materials from which to build wind turbine blades in the first place. He states: “Today, recyclability is something that is near the top of the list of concerns” for wind energy companies and blade manufacturers alike All of these companies are saying, ‘We need to change what we’re doing, number one because it’s the right thing to do, number two because regulations might be coming down the road. Number three, because we’re a green industry and we want to remain a green industry.’”

These are concerns also top of mind regarding the electric vehicle industry, where both production and recycling of batteries can be detrimental to the planet. ***The Battery Paradox: How the electric vehicle boom is draining communities and the planet*** is a December 2020 report by the Dutch Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO). It reviews the social and environmental impacts of the whole battery value chain, (mining, production, and recycling) and

the mining of key minerals used in Lithium-ion batteries (lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite and manganese). The report concludes that standardization of battery cells, modules and packs would increase recycling rates and efficiency, but ultimately, “To relieve the pressure on the planet, any energy transition strategy should prioritize reducing demand for batteries and cars... Strategies proposed include ride-sharing, car-sharing and smaller vehicles.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Recycling](#), [Solar Industry](#), [Solar PV Manufacturing](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

GM and Unifor agreement brings production of electric commercial vans to Ingersoll Ontario

Posted on **January 19, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The 1,900 workers at the CAMI auto plant in Ingersoll Ontario had been facing an uncertain future, as production of the Chevrolet Equinox was due to be phased out in 2023. Yet on January 18, 91% of **Unifor Local 88** members voted to ratify **a new agreement with General Motors**, and as a result, GM will invest in the large scale production of EV600's, a zero-emissions, battery-powered commercial van said to be the cornerstone of a new GM business unit called **BrightDrop**, itself only **just unveiled** in January at the Computer and Electronics (CES) Trade Show.

The official **Unifor CAMI Agreement Summary** provides details of the terms of the three-year CAMI agreement, and includes a GM Product and Investment Commitment Letter. It states: “the investments described below underscore GM’s commitment to our customers and employees; and are conditional on stable demand, business and market conditions; the ability to continue producing profitably; and the full execution of GMS. Subject to ratification of a tentative 2021 labour agreement reached with Unifor and confirmation of government support, General Motors plans to bring production of its recently announced BrightDrop electric light commercial vehicle (EV600) to CAMI Assembly. In addition, there are other variants of the electric light commercial vehicle program which are currently under study. This investment at CAMI Assembly will enable General Motors to start work immediately and begin production at the plant in 2021, making this the first large scale production of electric vehicles by a major automotive company in Canada. This will support jobs and transform work at the plant over the life of this agreement from the current

two shifts of Chevrolet Equinox production to a new focus on the production of the all new EV600 to serve the growing North American market for electric delivery solutions.” GM pledges a total of C\$1.0 Billion capital investments for facilities, tools, M&E and supplier tooling. It also states: “.....This investment is contingent upon full acceptance of all elements contained within this Settlement Agreement and the Competitive Operating Agreement.” (which has not been made public).

The **GM Canada press release** summarizes the recent progress at other GM locations: “C\$1.3 billion Oshawa Assembly Pickup investments; a C\$109 million product and C\$28 million Renewable Energy Cogeneration project at St. Catharines; a C\$170 million investment in an after-market parts operation in Oshawa; expansion of GM’s Canadian Technology Centre including investments in the new 55-acre **CTC McLaughlin Advanced Technology Track**” in Oshawa. As **previously reported in the WCR**, Unifor has also negotiated historic agreements to produce electric vehicles in the 2020 Big Three Round of Bargaining. As Heather Scofield wrote in an Opinion piece in the *Toronto Star* on January 18, “**Never mind pipelines: Ontario automakers are showing us a greener way to create jobs now**”.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **CAMI, courier industry, electric light duty trucks, Electric Vehicles, freight industry, General Motors** | [Leave a reply](#)

Principles and best practices for a Just Transition for Canada’s fossil fuel workers

Posted on **January 19, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Economist Jim Stanford has written a timely new report which should be required reading for politicians setting their hair on fire about **Joe Biden’s stated intention to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline project** on Day one of his presidency. ***Employment Transitions and the Phase-Out of Fossil Fuels***, released on January 18, argues that “the actual number of fossil fuel jobs and the number of communities reliant on the industry is small enough that a just and equitable transition plan for workers is very feasible” – and the key is timing.

Stanford’s report begins by setting out the statistics regarding fossil fuel employment in Canada: “under 1% of total payroll employment in Canada (or about 160,000 jobs) is located in seven industrial sectors which together comprise most of the composite fossil fuel industry. “ Using 2016 Census data, the report discusses the distribution of fossil fuel jobs by province and community, showing that Alberta accounts for 75% of fossil-related jobs in 2016, but even there, only it accounts for 7% of all provincial employment. 18 fossil fuel-dependent communities are named, where fossil fuel jobs account for 9.5% of employment – including two well-known examples, Wood Buffalo/Fort McMurray in Alberta and Estevan in Saskatchewan. The report continues to

compare employment in the fossil fuel industry and in the health care sector, Canada's largest employer. The aim is not to diminish the importance of fossil fuel employment, but to illustrate that employment possibilities exist in other sectors, even within fossil fuel-reliant communities.

Stanford looks ahead and states: "given weakening global demand for fossil fuels, depressed prices, continued infrastructure constraints, and aggressive cost-cutting by fossil fuel employers (shedding labour to protect profits despite lower energy prices), fossil fuel industries will see continued downsizing of their employment footprint." He summarizes the employment transitions of other sectors in Canada's history, notably fisheries, auto manufacturing, manufacturing – as well as other sectors currently transitioning, including retail, transportation, and newspapers and media, and documents the overall dynamics which are always churning labour markets. All these arguments build to the report's final section, which is to outline the principles and best practices for planning effective employment and community transitions for the inevitable decline of fossil fuels.

Principles and Best Practices for Transition

Repeating a point he made in a [similar report about Australia](#), Stanford speaks out for younger workers: "Fossil fuels will disappear as a major source of energy within the foreseeable future. Given that reality, it is unhelpful, and indeed cruel, to encourage more workers – including some just entering the workforce – to try to build their livelihoods in an industry that will soon disappear."

And further

"...in an effective, orderly labour market transition..... Most fossil fuel workers will not end up producing solar panels or windmills; in fact, if we manage this transition effectively, most fossil fuel workers will not need to find new jobs at all. As with the climate itself, the sooner we start this transition, the lower its ultimate costs will be, and the greater its net benefits. Delaying these necessary actions only makes matters worse – including for fossil fuel workers. In this context, statements of supposed "solidarity" with fossil fuel workers expressed by some business leaders and political representatives are entirely dubious. Pretending that fossil fuel industries can carry on as "normal" for decades to come (or worse could actually be expanded) is a cruel hoax."

Employment Transitions and the Phase-Out of Fossil Fuels was published by the Centre for Future Work, which is a project of the Australia Institute – which also operates in Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, housed in the CCPA's Vancouver office. The report **was commissioned by Environmental Defence** Canada, which released its own graphically-enhanced summary version, ***Steady Path: How a transition to a fossil-free Canada is in reach for workers and their communities*** .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [phase-out of fossil fuels](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Newfoundland government primes the pump with funding for offshore oil ahead of February election

Posted on **January 18, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey has called a provincial election for February 13 –and **according to a CBC report**, one reason for the quick timing is to get ahead of the forthcoming Interim Report of the provincially-appointed Provincial Economic Recovery Team (PERT), scheduled for late February. The PERT is also called the Greene team for its chair, Dame Moya Greene, who brings a business background, having previously been head of Britain's Royal Mail and Canada Post, as well as positions at TD Securities, CIBC and Bombardier.

Another CBC article highlights that the economic report is going to be a controversial election issue, and discusses the January withdrawal from the team by Mary Shortall, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour. Shortall called the exercise “window dressing” , and **stated**: “I can say that the lack of transparency, top-down approach, rushed timeline, lack of real collaboration and an overall feeling that not all perspectives were being considered, or appreciated, are the overarching themes for my decision”. Shortall's departure is also discussed in **an article** in *The Independent* .

Another key election issue is likely to be the role of the oil and gas industry in the Newfoundland economy. The election announcement was preceded by a series of provincial funding announcements: on January 14, a government pledge of \$175 million funding as well as royalty incentives **to Suncor to prop up the Terra Nova Offshore oil field**; \$38 million for the **Hibernia offshore project** in December 2020; and **\$41.5 million for Husky Energy's White Rose project** – all of which are funded by \$320 million of federal funds, announced in September 2020. (Note that **Husky Energy laid off workers** at one of the worksites just days after the funding was announced) .

On January 12, the Environment and Climate Change Minister **issued his decisions** under the Impact Assessment Act, allowing Chevron Canada, Equinor Canada, and BHP Petroleum to drill exploratory wells offshore from St. John's – although further permits will be required, as explained in this **new “Toolkit”** regarding the process from the East Coast Environmental Law . Provincial approval is likely to be forthcoming, given the pro-industry views expressed by the provincial **Oil and Gas Recovery Task Force** appointed in October 2020 to distribute the federal funding. Reflecting this favourable environment, Equinor announced that it is consolidating its Canadian offices and moving staff from Calgary to St. John's, according to a **Financial Post report** (Jan. 12) .

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

What's ahead for Canadian climate and energy policy in 2021?

Posted on **January 18, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian government has a full climate change agenda ahead when it reconvenes Parliament on January 25, not the least of which will be the debate and passage of **Bill C-12, the Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act**, analyzed by the Climate Action Network [here](#). After its introduction in November, C-12 was criticized for lacking urgency and specific plans – for example, in **an article by Warren Mabee** in *The Conversation* which calls for three per cent to four per cent GHG reductions “every year, starting now.”

On December 11, the government released its latest climate plan, **A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy**, previously **discussed in the WCR** and noted primarily for its proposed carbon tax hike to \$170 per tonne by 2050. According to **“The good, the bad and the ugly in Canada’s 2030 climate plan”** (*The National Observer*, Jan. 18): “The good news is that ...The government’s recently announced **A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy** plan contains enough new climate policy proposals that, if implemented, will allow Canada to reach its 2030 target. The bad news is...Climate laws enacted by Canadian politicians to date don’t come anywhere close to meeting our 2030 target. With time running out and a gigantic emissions gap to close, Canada needs to enact climate laws now.”

Clean Fuel Standard, Hydrogen, and Small Nuclear Energy Policies released

On December 19, the government released the long-awaited **draft regulations for a Clean Fuel Standard**, triggering a 75-day consultation period, with final regulations expected in 2021, to take effect in 2022. According to the **government Q&A website**, the new regulations differ from previous drafts in that they apply only to liquid fossil fuels : gasoline, diesel and oil. Producers and importers of fossil fuels will be required to reduce their carbon content by 2.6% by 2022 and by 13% by 2030 over 2016 levels. Clean Energy Canada compiled the reactions of several environmental groups [here](#). The Pembina Institute called the regulations “both fair and cost-effective” in **a press release reaction**. Their report, **The Clean Fuel Standard: Setting the Record Straight** (Nov. 2020) stated: “ The Clean Fuel Standard is expected to create as many as 30,000 jobs as new clean fuel facilities are built, supplied and operated. While some job losses could result from choices made under the CFS, robust modelling shows a net gain for Canadian workers: Energy-economic modelling suggests the **CFS will yield a net employment gain resulting in between 17,000 and 24,000 additional jobs.**” These projections are taken from on a technical analysis, conducted by Navius and EnviroEconomics consultants before the switch in scope to liquid fossil fuels only.

Next, on December 16, the Minister of Natural Resources Canada released **A Hydrogen Strategy for Canada: Seizing the Opportunities A Call to Action**, another long-awaited strategy document which is the result of three years of study, analysis, and consultations, along with

collaboration with industry associations: the Transition Accelerator, the Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association (CHFCA), the Canadian Gas Association, and others . The report states that the government will now establish a Strategic Steering Committee, with several targeted task teams, to implement recommendations. Key highlights of the Hydrogen Strategy are [here](#); the government's Hydrogen website [is here](#) .

From page 86, a glimpse into the thinking behind the report:

“The energy transition will fundamentally shift the Canadian economy and alter value chains in many related sectors. One shift of particular importance is the transition away from the direct burning of fossil fuels without carbon abatement. Canada’s energy sector accounted for 900,000 direct and indirect jobs as of 2017, with assets valued at \$596 billion . This industry’s significant energy expertise and infrastructure can be leveraged to support the development of the future hydrogen economy in Canada. Hydrogen will be critical to achieving a net-zero transformation for oil and natural gas industries. It provides an opportunity to leverage our valuable energy and infrastructure assets, including fossil fuel reserves and natural gas pipelines, providing a pathway to avoid underutilizing or stranding these assets in a 2050 carbon neutral future. Leveraging these valuable assets will not only be instrumental in achieving the projected economic growth for the domestic market, but also presents the opportunity for Canada to position to become a leading global clean fuels exporter.”

Regarding regulatory changes, the report states: “Policies and regulations that encourage the use of hydrogen technologies include low carbon fuel regulations, carbon pollution pricing, vehicle emissions regulations, zero emission vehicle mandates, creation of emission-free zones, and renewable gas mandates in natural gas networks. Mechanisms to help de-risk investments for endusers to adapt to regulations are also needed.” There is no mention of training or transition policies, although the report forecasts a job creation potential for hydrogen which might reach more than 350,000 jobs in 2050 at the upper end – “a combination of new job growth and retrained and reskilled labour”. (pages 85 and 86).

An [article in *The National Observer*](#) discusses the strategy, the state of [hydrogen initiatives in Alberta](#) , and reaction of environmental groups, including a quote from Environmental Defence, saying: “... “a focus on fossil hydrogen only serves the interests of the oil and gas sector as they seek to create new markets for their products.” Similarly, Clean Energy Canada [released a statement](#) saying, “Canada’s long-awaited federal hydrogen strategy ... falls short of what some other nations have put forward in terms of investment and ambition.” [A New Hope](#), published in October 2020, fleshes out Clean Energy Canada’s recommendations about hydrogen in Canada.

Finally, on December 18, Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources released a [national Small Nuclear Reactor Action Plan \(SMR\)](#) , which responds to the 53 recommendations identified in [Canada’s SMR Roadmap](#) from November 2018. The list of organizations endorsing the SMR Agenda reflects the entrenched “who’s who” of Canada’s “ 75-year nuclear energy heritage.” Each of these organizations – governments, public utilities, Indigenous groups, and unions, contributed

a chapter to the Plan – [available here](#). Individual endorsements include: the **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers**; **The International Union of Operating Engineers** ; **Power Workers Union** – which highlights the pending closure of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station in 2025 and the need to transition that workforce; and the **National Electrical Trade Council (NETCO)** a workforce development organization for Red Seal electrical trades in Canada, jointly led by the Canadian Electrical Contractors Association (CECA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Clean Fuel Standard](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Energy policy](#), [green hydrogen](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Over 400,000 Clean Energy jobs lost in the U.S. since the start of the pandemic

Posted on **January 18, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

U.S. government employment figures for December 2020 show that the U.S. clean energy sector added 16,900 jobs in December. However, analysis **released on January 13** reveals that the recovery is slow, and the industry now has its lowest number of workers since 2015, having suffered a loss of over 400,000 jobs (12%) during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Clean Energy Employment Initial Impacts from the COVID-19 Economic Crisis, December 2020 was prepared by BW Research Partnership, commissioned by industry groups **E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs)**, **E4TheFuture**, and the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE) . The 17-page report provides data by state and by technology, with energy efficiency leading the losses with 302,164 total jobs lost nationally between February and December 2020. California was the hardest hit state.

This is the latest in a monthly series of reports tracking the impact of Covid-19 on clean energy jobs – the series is available at the E2 website [here](#). These reports document the dramatic shift in clean energy employment in the U.S; the E2 ***Clean Jobs America 2020*** annual report outlines the industry’s policy recommendations for recovery as of April 2020.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Covid-19](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

81% of carbon captured to date used in Enhanced Oil Recovery according to new report

Posted on **January 15, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Canada's newly-released climate plan, ***A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy*** (Dec. 2020) states that one of the government's objectives is to: "Develop a comprehensive carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) strategy and explore other opportunities to help keep Canada globally competitive in this growing industry." As a clue to where that is going, the government also states: "The broad range of compliance strategies allowed under the proposed Clean Fuel Standard will give fossil fuel suppliers the flexibility to choose the lowest cost compliance actions available. The same compliance strategies that will support the Clean Fuel Standard will also ensure Canada becomes a leader in carbon capture, utilization and storage, hydrogen production, and other technologies that will allow Canada to extract energy from its resources while significantly reducing and eventually eliminating carbon pollution." The government is no doubt influenced by such views as those in the energy-industry Public Policy Forum, which calls for a favourable regulatory environment in ***Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage – The Time is Now*** (July 2020). (this report is mainly focused on energy industry applications but also discusses decarbonization of industrial processes briefly).

A December report commissioned and released by Friends of the Earth Scotland and Global Witness focuses only on energy industry applications, and comes to a different conclusion. ***A Review of the Role of Fossil Fuel Based Carbon Capture and Storage in the Energy System*** concludes that carbon capture and storage systems will not be as effective in reducing GHG emissions as would ramped up renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures. Further, the authors state that "2030 emissions reduction targets are being set up to fail due to the huge emphasis placed on CCS." The authors, from the UK's Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, highlight three main barriers to success: prohibitive costs; time to reach commercial scale; and the residual emissions from CCS, especially methane. Canada's ***Boundary Dam coal-fired power plant*** in Saskatchewan is discussed, and cited as an example of prohibitive costs, with capital costs of approximately US\$455 million and a capture cost of US\$100 per tonne of CO₂. The report notes that there are just 26 operational CCS plants in the world, and significant scale is not forecast until at least 2030. And the authors state that 81% of carbon captured to date has been used for Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) – a process which pumps captured carbon underground to push previously unreachable fossil fuels up for extraction, extending the life of oil fields. This contributes to the problem of CCS-linked emissions of carbon dioxide and methane .

A Review of the Role of Fossil Fuel Based Carbon Capture and Storage in the Energy System is summarized in an ***Executive Summary*** and by ***the Climate News Network*** . The International Energy Agency has released a number of ***reports related to CCUS*** , most recently ***Special Report on Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage; CCUS in clean energy***

transitions. Another source of information is the **Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute** which maintains a database of information and advocates for CCUS adoption in its publications.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Boundary Dam, Carbon capture and storage (CCS), Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

Global Just Transition case studies from a trade union viewpoint

Posted on **January 14, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

“**Just Transition: Putting planet, people and jobs first**” is the theme of a special issue of *Equal Times*, published in December 2020. The compilation of articles provides a trade union point of view to describe the just transition experiences in **Bangladesh**, Tunisia, Argentina, and **Senegal**, as well as the more frequently cited experiences in **Spain** and **Scotland**. The complete Special Issue is **here**, and was supported financially by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Although Spain’s 2018 agreement regarding coal transition is well known, **this article** is a welcome English-language text, translated from the original Spanish version written by Spanish journalist María José Carmona. Another useful English text on the topic is ***The Just Transition Strategy within the Strategic Energy and Climate Framework***, translated and published by the Spanish government in 2019. And an earlier report from the Central Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) provides brief summaries of Spanish and other Just Transition frameworks, in ***A Fair Climate Policy for Workers: Implementing a just transition in various European countries and Canada*** (2019). It covers Germany, Spain, France, The Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, and Canada in a brief 32 pages.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Argentina, Bangladesh, coal transition, Just Transition, Scotland, Senegal, Spain, Tunisia** | **Leave a reply**

New centre for Vancouver to spur urban climate action, especially building retrofits

Posted on **January 14, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Retrofitting is a priority for the **newly-announced** Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre, to be administered through the Renewable Cities program at Simon Fraser University,

Vancouver. According to the [SFU press release](#) of January 12, the Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre “will be seeded by a generous \$21.7 million endowment from the federal government to identify, finance and scale up local climate solutions, such as building retrofits and electrification of transportation.” The top priorities stated include “Identifying and initiating programmatic priorities, and integrating the [Zero Emission Building Exchange](#) to support building sector capacity building”. For now, though, “the new centre’s work will start modestly. It is expected to grow steadily through partnership, programming investment, leveraging and innovative financing”. The launch of the Centre is scheduled for September 2021, after input is gathered “from a range of stakeholders, including local and provincial government, industry, non-profit organizations and the finance sector.”

The Vancouver Centre will be modelled on [The Atmospheric Fund](#) – originally known as the Toronto Atmospheric Fund when it was established in 1991 through the advocacy of then-Toronto City Councillors Jack Layton and Dan Leckie. [The Atmospheric Fund](#) now serves Canada’s largest urban area, the Greater Toronto/Hamilton region of approximately 7 million people, and is part of the [Low Carbon Cities Canada \(LC3\)](#), a partnership which also includes Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax, as well as the [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#).

In “[What does Canada’s new \\$15 billion plan mean for urban climate action?](#)” (Dec. 15), The Atmospheric Fund reviews the [federal government’s latest climate plan](#) and discusses the two sectors most relevant to municipalities: buildings and transportation. [The Atmospheric Fund](#) states that its own priorities for 2021, include: “Partnering with housing providers to initiate deep retrofits in 3,000 housing units this year; Mobilizing \$150 million in investment to leverage public funding and attract more capital into low-carbon activity; Supporting municipalities to adopt green development standards for new buildings and performance standards for existing ones; Providing grants and investment capital to enable even more low-carbon activity like workforce development (clean jobs!) and EV charger installations; and Publishing new research on growing challenges like fugitive methane emissions and embodied carbon in new construction.”

The governance of climate action in Toronto and Vancouver is summarized in a new article by three academics from the Universities of Waterloo and Toronto, “[Strategies and Governance for Implementing Deep Decarbonization Plans at the Local Level](#)”, published in the latest issue of the journal *Sustainability*. It offers case studies of the best practices in climate action governance in Toronto and Vancouver, along with Bridgewater, Nova Scotia; Guelph, Ontario; Park City and New York City in the U.S., Lahti in Finland and Oslo in Norway. These cities range in size from 8,400 people to 9.6 million, but were chosen as “leading and ambitious” cities. The authors identify the importance of transnational networks in city decarbonization planning, and highlight their efforts “to expand their green economies and the capacity of their workforces to meet the future demand for skilled workers, especially in the buildings and construction sectors.”

And briefly: A recent article in the New York Times also noted the importance of retrofitting: “[New York’s real climate challenge: Fixing its aging buildings](#)” (Dec. 29, *New York Times*). Stating that “Nearly 70 percent of the city’s total carbon emissions come from buildings. A project to retrofit nine buildings with green technology is pioneering a new solution”. The article describes

the [Casa Pasiva retrofitting project](#) , one of a number of [RetrofitNY](#) projects funded by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Building](#), [Municipal Government](#), [New York City](#), [retrofitting](#), [Toronto](#), [Toronto Atmospheric Fund](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Just and fair transition from fossil fuels in Australia

Posted on **January 13, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a new report published in December by the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute, author Jim Stanford argues that Australia's labour market could transition away from fossil fuel jobs without involuntary layoffs or severe disruption to communities—if governments plan a fair transition which includes: a clear, long-term timeline, measures to facilitate inter-industry mobility and voluntary severance as fossil fuels are phased-out, and generous retraining and diversification policies. Fossil fuel jobs, though only 1% of jobs in Australia, have higher than average compensation, so in order to be attractive, alternative jobs must have decent compensation, stable hours and tenure, and collective representation. [Employment aspects of the transition from fossil fuels in Australia](#) echoes a [recent New York Times article](#) about the career disappointment of young oil and gas workers, with this:

“Far from being ‘supportive’ of fossil fuel workers by attempting to disrupt and delay appropriate climate transitions, in fact it does them a great disservice to pretend that these industries have a long-term viable future. It seems a cruel hoax to encourage young workers to begin their careers in industries with an inevitably short time horizon. It would be more compassionate and honest to give fossil fuel workers (both current and prospective) fair notice of the changes coming, and support them in building careers in occupations and industries that are ultimately more promising.”

Author Jim Stanford, formerly with Canada's Unifor union, now splits his time between Canada and Sydney, where he is director of the Australia Institute's [Centre for Future Work](#). He and the Centre are profiled in [“The People's Economist”](#) in the Australian magazine *In the Black*. This research was commissioned by Australian health care industry super fund HESTA.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How the U.S. Capitol mob threatens climate change activism everywhere

Posted on **January 12, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 has relevance for all climate change activists, including Canadians. The overlapping universe of climate change denial and the political extreme of white nationalism is outlined by Eric Holthaus in *The Phoenix* on January 8 in his essay **“White nationalism gave us the climate emergency. Now, it’s our biggest obstacle.”** Holthaus argues: If we don’t acknowledge the racist roots of opposition to climate action, the world is going to keep spiraling towards chaos. It’s bad now. But it will get much, much worse.....Trumpism and the rise of “Big Lie” politics – climate denial, anti-masking, embracing conspiracy theory – is rooted in white supremacy. It’s rooted in the lie that “this world belongs to me, and not you”. white nationalism is not a case of rural, backwards hillbillies. It’s in boardrooms. It’s in the white exodus of public schools. It’s in the privatization of health care. It’s in the fossil fuel industry. It’s in the White House.”

One might also argue it’s in some police forces too, to explain the obvious differences in police tactics meted out to the Capitol mob vs. climate protestors. **“Capitol Rioters Walked Away. Climate Protesters Saw a Double Standard”** in the *New York Times* (Jan. 7) sketches out the issue and states, for example, that more than 600 arrests were made over the course of the non-violent Fire Drill Fridays protests led by Jane Fonda in 2020 – which in itself was treated very differently than **the 2016 Native American protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline**, (never mind the extremes of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests!). In Canada, we have our own recent examples: the RCMP violence against and arrest of 14 members of the **Wet’suwet’en First Nations for their protest** against the Coastal Gas Link pipeline in 2019 . Media accounts of that struggle include **“No Surrender”** (Feb. 20) in *The Intercept* .

Brian Kahn wrote **“The Climate Crisis Will Be Steroids for Fascism”** (in *Earther*, Jan. 7) explaining: “It’s never been clearer that a large chunk of the nation’s top Republican leaders will **embrace and even fuel** this extremism and hate. The Venn diagram of people who push election denial and climate denial has near-perfect overlap, but even if these figures deny the climate crisis, they’ll still look to exploit it. At the end of the day, their goal is to use easy-to-disprove lies to build and consolidate power.” This agrees with Melissa Ryan, who writes about the alt-right and white nationalism as editor of the **Ctrl Alt-Right Delete weekly newsletter** and is quoted **by Desmog Blog** saying: “The goal isn’t necessarily to convince anyone of anything.... The goal is to sow so much confusion that it’s actually hard for people to tell the truth from fiction.....I feel like it’s a very clear end of the Trump administration, ...but what’s terrifying is what it is the birth of.” **“Climate Deniers Moved Rapidly to Spread Misinformation During and After Attack on US Capitol”** (Jan. 8) provides examples by reproducing some shocking post-riot tweets and messages from prominent climate deniers such as the Heartland Institute and Marc Marano. (check out such individuals and organizations in DeSmog Blog’s **Climate Disinformation Database**).

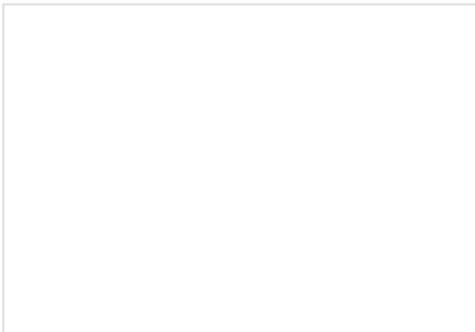
Meanwhile in Canada

And for Canadians in general who might feel we are in less danger from right-wing extremism, we are reminded that [Gavin McInnes](#), founder of the Proud Boys, was born in Canada, in “[Canadian government weighs listing Proud Boys as a terror group](#)”. McGinnis led the [first Canadian Proud Boys demonstration](#) in Nova Scotia in 2017 . In 2018, the CBC warned us that “[Three Percenters are Canada’s ‘most dangerous’ extremist group, say some experts](#)”. A very complete description and analysis of this Canadian scene appears in “[Meanwhile in Canada’: The Groups Inciting a Fascist Insurrection in Washington Are Here in Canada Too](#)” in *Press Progress* on January 7.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change activism](#), [Climate change denial](#), [Donald Trump](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [white nationalists](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change Accountability Report shows rising emissions – B.C. government announces new GHG reduction targets

Posted on [January 11, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The government of British Columbia issued [a press release](#) on December 15 2020, announcing new carbon reduction targets and the release of the first-ever [Climate Change Accountability Report](#) , highlighting progress on the CleanBC action plan. From the press release: “The new emission target requires greenhouse gases in B.C. to be 16% below 2007 levels by 2025. It provides a benchmark on the road to B.C.’s legislated emission targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050 of 40%, 60% and 80% below 2007 levels, respectively. The Province will also set sectoral targets, which will be established before March 31, 2021, and will develop legislation to ensure B.C. reaches net-zero emissions by 2050.”

“Climate Change Accountability Report discloses that B.C. carbon emissions rose three percent in 2018” in *The Straight* (Dec. 16) highlights some findings which the government downplayed – for example, in 2018, “Gross emissions reached 67.9 million tonnes. That’s up a whopping 7.3 million tonnes from 2010, which went unremarked in the report.” The article also quotes from an interview with Environment and Climate Change Strategy Minister George Heyman, pointing out that “Heyman also admitted that the government has never done any modelling of carbon emissions that goes beyond LNG Canada’s phase one portion of its plant in Kitimat.”

The response by the **Sierra Club B.C.** summarized the reactions of environmental advocacy groups, which commended the government for the transparency of the ***Climate Accountability Report***, while criticizing the fossil-friendly policies which have led to missed GHG reduction targets. Reiterating the long-standing criticisms over LNG, notably, by **David Hughes of the CCPA-B.C in a July 2020 report**, the Sierra Club B.C. states: “It is clear that if we continue to allow the growth of oil and gas extraction in this province we won’t ever be able to get climate pollution under control” ... “The sooner we begin a serious conversation about the transition away from fracking and all other forms of fossil fuels, the less disruptive and painful the transition will be for workers, our communities, and the most vulnerable among us.”

The **Pembina Institute** calls the report “sobering” and “a much-needed wake-up call”, while calling for improvements. “The report is inconsistent in its provision of details, which makes it difficult to assess whether or not climate programs should be continued, enhanced, redesigned, or replaced to effectively and efficiently make progress to targets. For a fulsome picture of climate progress, we expect future accountability reports to provide more clarity. We need to see the emissions reductions achieved to date by specific programs; annual budget allocations for programs and the corresponding (anticipated) emissions reductions; how the government has acted on the advice of the Climate Solutions Council; and what course corrections will be made to meet our climate targets. Once interim and sector-specific targets are established, the report should evaluate progress against these goals as well.”

British Columbia as part of the myth of eco-friendly Cascadia

Getting to Zero: Decarbonizing Cascadia is a new investigative series launched on January 11 with an article published in *The Tyee* under the title **“Cascadia Was Poised to Lead on Climate. Can It Still?”**. (At the InvestigateWest website, the same article appeared as **“A Lost Decade: How climate action fizzled in Cascadia”**). It documents the rise of GHG emissions in the jurisdictions which compose Cascadia: British Columbia and the states of Washington and Oregon. The article summarizes political developments, summarizes the development of carbon taxes, and argues that weak decarbonization policies – especially in the transportation sector- are behind the failure to reduce emissions. “Between full economic recovery in 2012 and 2018, the most recent reporting year, California and Cascadia both booked a robust 26 percent increase in GDP. Over that period California drove its annual emissions down by more than 5 percent. Washington’s emissions —and Cascadia’s as a whole — ballooned by over 7 percent.” According to the article, for the period 2012 to 2018, “vehicle emissions had ballooned by over 10% in

Washington and Oregon and more than 29% in BC (in contrast California's grew only 5% during that period.)”

From the article:

“So why is environmentally-conscious Cascadia stuck in first gear? The consensus answer from experts and activists interviewed by InvestigateWest: a shortage of political will. The region has been beset by partisan wrangling, fear of job losses, disagreements over how to ensure equity for already polluted and marginalized communities, and misinformation obscuring the full potential of well-documented solutions. “The constraining factor has always been political feasibility, not economic feasibility,” says political economist and energy modeling expert Mark Jaccard, a professor at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC, and a former chair of the British Columbia Utilities Commission.”

The series **Getting to Zero: Decarbonizing Cascadia** is the result of a year-long reporting initiative led by InvestigateWest, in partnership with Grist, Crosscut, The Tyee, the South Seattle Emerald, The Evergrey, and Jefferson Public Radio. It will run throughout 2021, aiming to document and analyse the political and economic forces and barriers to climate action in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, generally perceived as one of the most eco-friendly regions in the world.

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What we all need: Reasons for climate optimism in 2021

Posted on **January 8, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As always at the New Year, we head into 2021 with many reviews of the year gone by – notably The New York Times interactive **“Climate Change Year in Review”**, **“The Climate Emergency: 2020 in Review”** in *Scientific American*, **“The Best Environmental Journalism of 2020”** from *Unearthed* by Greenpeace International. From a Canadian perspective, **“20 Ideas from 2020”** from British Columbia-focused *The Tyee* includes Climate Change and Green Recovery; Indigenous Rights, decolonization and racism; and social and income inequality in its review.

Offering some much-needed hope for the future: **“6 reasons why 2020 wasn't as bad for climate change as you think”** from *Grist* in the U.S.; **“Climate Action Is Embedding Into How the World Works”** from Bloomberg Green, and a December 2020 **report by Climate Action Tracker** – not normally a hopeful source – which states that global warming by 2100 could be as low as 2.1°C, which they judge as “within striking distance” of the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal.

This assessment is based on the net zero pledges announced as of November 2020 (most importantly China, but including South Africa, Japan, South Korea, Canada, with the assumption of the USA under Biden).

From *The Conversation Canada*, “**2020 was a terrible year for climate disasters but there’s reason for hope in 2021**”, written by Matthew Hoffmann of the University of Toronto. Hoffman cites an **October article in *The Atlantic*** when he states that “climate despair is the new climate denial, dulling the sense of urgency and blunting the momentum for action”. He, like others, seems to be urging us forward with hope.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Denial](#), [climate despair](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New forum for human rights views on Just Recovery

Posted on **January 7, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Launched in December 2020, **Just Recovery from Covid-19** is a new blog forum for the international human rights community. One of the first posts is “**A New Social Contract**” by Sharan Barrow, Secretary-General of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Barrow reviews the impacts of Covid-19 and calls for a new global social contract, based on principles outlined in the 2019 **ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work** – labour protections for all workers, universal social protections for all, a transformative agenda for women, and just transitions for climate and technology shifts. Barrow reviews the current Just Recovery policy debate in Europe, and states: “At the heart of these measures sits the requirement for social dialogue to ensure trust in design and implementation.”

The Just Recovery blog series is hosted by The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, and the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR). It aims to open the door on the community of organizations and people seeking to promote human rights issues in business. For example, the CEO of the **Institute for Human Rights and Business** posted to the blog with “**Building forward better: Thoughts on intergenerational justice**”. (Other reports at the IHRB website include: **Connecting the Climate Change and Business & Human Rights Agendas** (Dec 2020) and **Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights, and Climate Action** (Nov. 2020).)

Another contributor to the Just Recovery blog is the CEO of **Principles for Responsible Investment.**, with the post “**Collaborating for a Just Recovery**”. PRI initiated the pioneering **Blueprint for Responsible Investment** in 2017 and continues to work globally for transparency and environmental responsibility in the investment community.

Green and greenable jobs in the global energy sector – trends and recommendations

Posted on **January 7, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Employment in the Energy Sector: Status Report 2020 is a Science for Policy report released by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in late 2020. It compiles statistics regarding global employment trends related to the greening and decarbonisation of the economy, with a focus on the energy sector, both from a supply side (including fossil fuels, nuclear, solar, wind, biofuels, geothermal, and tidal) and a demand side (construction, energy efficiency, energy storage). The report provides a compilation of the best available statistics from established sources (e.g. IRENA, ILO, Eurostat and academic studies) – though the authors warn that data are not necessarily comparable. Nevertheless, this report offers a wide-ranging review and discussion of the labour market aspects of a greening economy, including a discussion of occupational characteristics based on a framework for “greenable jobs”. It discusses education, skills requirements and skills gaps, gender and generational aspects of new economy jobs, and concludes with policy recommendations.

Some highlights:

According to **an IRENA report in 2020**, Global employment in the energy sector reached nearly 58 million in 2017; about half of these jobs were in the fossil fuel industries.

Also **based on IRENA data**, global renewable energy employment has been increasing continuously since 2012, reaching 11 million jobs in 2018. If ambitious policies are implemented, IRENA forecasts global renewable energy jobs to reach 42 million by 2050.

Based on the task content of occupations, 87.6 million jobs were green(able) in the EU-28 by 2016, amounting to 40 % of employment that year, according to the 2019 annual edition of ***Employment and Social Developments in Europe*** .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [employment statistics](#), [energy industry](#), [Green Jobs](#), [international statistics](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Colorado Office of Just Transition defers actions for worker protection in new Final Action Plan

Posted on **January 7, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

In 2019, the State of Colorado established the first state-level **Office of Just Transition (OJT)** through **House Bill 19-1314** . As required by that legislation, the OJT submitted its final **Just Transition Action Plan** on December 31, 2020, based largely on the **Draft Plan** submitted by its Just Transition Advisory Committee (JTAC) in August 2020. (The structure, mandate, and documentation from the consultation process are accessible [here](#); an excellent summary is provided by the State press release [here](#) .

The December **Just Transition Action Plan** offers discussion and strategy recommendations organized in three sections: communities; workers; and financing. The estimated cost is \$100 million, and the time frame calls for actual closures to finish in 2030. (Perhaps the leisurely schedule will be reviewed in light of events: the **Denver Post reported** on January 4 that Xcel-Energy announced it will close its Hayden coal plant significantly earlier than planned – beginning in 2027). The December Action Plan strategies are dominated by concerns for communities, with six detailed strategies outlined. Recognizing that some communities are more dependent on coal than others, and that average wages are also different across communities, the plan designates four communities as priority Tier One communities, and others as Tier Two communities, as defined in an Appendix. The Hayden plant is located in a Tier One community.

Actions for workers' benefits, environmental justice are deferred

Regarding workers, there are 3 action strategies. The Just Transition Advisory Committee made recommendations to provide displaced workers with temporary benefits related to “wage and health differential” and “wage and health replacement” in the **Draft Plan** in August, but the **final Plan** states: “too much uncertainty remains around cost and scalability for us to feel comfortable advancing this recommendation — especially in the midst of the COVID pandemic and resulting economic downturn.” Instead, the Office for Just Transition: “will drive a serious process to gain more certainty about costs, scalability, potential sources of funding, and possible alternatives at the state level. And we will engage a broad range of stakeholders in a dialogue about whether the State should implement such a strategy — and how it might do so.” This includes discussions with coal-related employers regarding their willingness to provide severance and retirement benefits.

This Plan also discusses and ultimately deflects and defers responsibility for the environmental justice concerns expressed in the **2019 enabling legislation** , which recognized “a moral commitment” to “the disproportionately impacted communities who have borne the costs of coal power pollution for decades”. This December Plan states: “we agree with the JTAC that these issues are best addressed in that broader context, which is why we are following its suggestion that OJT participate actively in emerging interagency efforts — led largely by the Colorado

Department of Public Health and Environment — rather than creating our own independent (and potentially isolated) approach..... OJT will continue to rely on the advice of the Disproportionately Impacted Communities subcommittee of the JTAC, and it will play as active a role as possible in broader interagency efforts. As with our work on behalf of transition communities and workers, this is a long-term challenge to which we make a long-term commitment.”

The final report is summarized in an [article in *The Colorado Sun*](#) , which emphasizes the explicit goal for the Office of Just Transition to “Encourage the federal government to lead with a national strategy for energy transition workers”. This is perhaps thanks to the leadership of Dennis Dougherty, Chair of the Colorado Just Transition Advisory Committee, Executive Director of the Colorado AFL-CIO, and through them, a representative to the [National Economic Transition project](#) – a grassroots organization of representatives from U.S. coal communities. That ongoing project released a [National Economic Transition Platform](#) in the summer of 2020 .

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