

Work and Climate Change Report

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

YEARLY ARCHIVES: 2016

Kinder Morgan Pipeline approval: a new chapter in the struggle against pipelines

Posted on **December 13, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 29, the government of Canada announced the [highly anticipated decision](#) to approve the expansion of two pipeline projects: [Line 3](#) (with 37 conditions) and the [Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Expansion](#) pipeline project (with 157 conditions). The Northern Gateway project was finally, officially dismissed.

Reaction, focused on Kinder Morgan, was swift and strong and very critical on many grounds: economic, environmental, and as a betrayal of the rights of First Nations. The *Globe and Mail* [summarized reaction](#) and quoted a Stand.earth representative that the decision “signals the beginning of a new phase in the struggle against pipelines” – which will include protests, the courts, and the ballot box. And immediately, on December 1, a rally to support the Dakota Access Pipeline protests expanded to include Kinder Morgan protest, with over 1000 people on the streets of Victoria, B.C., [according to the *National Observer*](#). See also “[Trudeau's pipeline approvals spark protests](#)”, which quotes the president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers: ““You can either be serious about climate change, or you can expand the tarsands. But you cannot do both.” Others have written with the same message: UBC Professor [Kathryn Harrison](#) in the *Globe and Mail*; Simon Donner in “[Blowing the Budget on Pipelines](#)” (Nov. 30) in *Policy Options*; Seth Klein and Shannon Daub of the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis (CCPA) in a *Policy Note* article, “[The New Climate Denialism](#)”; Tzeporah Berman, “[Pipelines of Paris: Can Canada have its cake and eat it too?](#) “. David Hughes' June 2016 report, [Can Canada Expand Oil and Gas Production, Build Pipelines and Keep Its Climate Change Commitments?](#) is again being widely cited.

The same message comes from a Dec. 13 article, “ [With Oil Sands Ambitions on a Collision Course With Climate Change, Exxon Still Stepping on the Gas](#)” by *Inside Climate News* (the Pulitzer Prize winning news organization whose reporting has sparked the current U.S. investigations into Exxon). This highly detailed historical look at Imperial Oil investments and operations in Canada (complete with photos of Murray Westgate), concludes by noting the recent pipelines approvals, and states: “Canadian officials, who have committed the nation to emissions cuts, continue to promote growth, even though environmentalists say the two are incompatible....Politicians are not being honest with Canadians.”



Opposition in the courts – with seven cases already underway – is being led by First Nations. In an OpEd in the *Globe and Mail*, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs wrote: “ Prime Minister Justin Trudeau failed to protect the health and safety of Canadians or uphold his government’s vaunted new relationship with First Peoples when he announced approval for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.” He stated that there are more than 10,000 “[Coastal Protectors](#)” who are ready “to do what needs to be done to stop Kinder Morgan”. This is in addition to the [Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion](#) formed by 50 First Nations and tribes from all over Canada and the Northern U.S. in September 2016 – now over 100 – to work together to stop all proposed tar sands pipeline , tanker and rail projects in their respective territorial lands and waters. And see DeSmog blog, “ [Federal Liberals Approval of Kinder Morgan Is Final Nail in the Coffin of ‘Reconciliation’](#) . For a first-person account of First Nations reactions and mobilization, see “[Field notes: A week of pipeline action and cross-Canada solidarity](#)” from West Coast Environmental Law.

From [Greenpeace](#) : “With this announcement, Prime Minister Trudeau has broken his climate commitments, broken his commitments to Indigenous rights, and has declared war on B.C. If Prime Minister Trudeau wanted to bring Standing Rock-like protests to Canada, he succeeded.” Similarly, *Common Dreams* published “[Kinder Morgan Pipeline Might Be Canada’s DAPL](#) ” (Dec. 4) , and from ThinkProgress , “ [The next Standing Rock: Fossil fuel battles loom across North America](#)“.

Representing reaction from ground zero, British Columbia: The B.C. office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives blogged: “[Trudeau disappoints a generation, betrays rights and title of Indigenous people with Kinder Morgan decision](#)” . Andrew Nikofofuk wrote in *The Tyee* , “[Kinder Morgan Approval Insults Democracy, Science and Economic Logic](#)” (Nov. 30) , that the decision

“put his government on a collision course with First Nations and British Columbia’s coastal communities.” Robyn Allan, quoted by Nikoforuk, states: “Trudeau has out-trumped Stephen Harper.”

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Provisions for Clean energy and Oil and gas development in Quebec’s Bill 106

Posted on **December 12, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Bill 106, *An Act to implement the 2030 Energy Policy and to amend various legislative provisions*, passed into law in the Quebec National Assembly in a special session on Saturday Dec. 10. The Bill establishes Transition énergétique Québec (TEQ), an agency to “support, stimulate and promote energy transition, innovation and efficiency and to coordinate the implementation of all of the programs and measures necessary to achieve the energy targets defined by the Government”. In addition to the clean energy provisions, Bill 106 also introduces new measures concerning the distribution of “renewable natural gas”, and enacts the Petroleum Resources Act, whose purpose is to “to govern the development of petroleum resources while ensuring the safety of persons and property, environmental protection, and optimal recovery of the resource, in compliance with the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set by the Government.” The Bill establishes a licence and authorization system for the production and storage of oil, including a requirement for a guarantee to cover the costs of well closure and site restoration. The *Globe and Mail* report, “[Quebec paves way for oil, gas exploration with new energy plan](#)” (Dec. 11) highlights opposition by environmental and citizen groups, and states that the provisions regarding oil and gas could potentially allow for fracking.

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Environmental Psychology: Motivating behaviour change and

coping with the fear of climate change

Posted on **December 12, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

A new environmental psychology study released in December concludes that the most effective programs to encourage climate-friendly behaviour such as reducing energy consumption are those in which financial incentives (rebates, or cheaper prices) are paired with appeals to personal identity and values. The authors of [Social Mobilization: How to Encourage Action on Climate Change](#) review four decades of psychological research and find strong empirical support for employing a number of strategies : providing tailored information, soliciting commitment (e.g. pledges), recruiting leaders from within social networks, giving feedback, and using a variety of other social influence strategies . This report highlights several successful large-scale programs as models – mostly by utility companies in the United States . The study was financed and published by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), University of Victoria. A related, longer report by one of the authors, Reuven Sussman, was published in October 2016 by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. [Behavior change programs: Status and impact is here](#) (registration required, free).

Another recent study of found that the moral values of compassion and fairness influenced an individual's willingness to take personal action to mitigate the effects of climate change. The authors, from Cornell University, showed that participants who were younger, more liberal, and reported greater belief in climate change, also showed increased willingness to act on climate change. Ingroup loyalty and authority were not supported as important predictor variables. However, [the authors state](#) : “Our finding that willingness to take action on climate change was related to moral values embraced by both liberals and conservatives suggests that it is too simplistic to use political ideology alone to predict support for climate change action. ” The full article, “[Which Moral Foundations Predict Willingness to Make Lifestyle Changes to Avert Climate Change in the USA?](#)” appeared in *PLOSOne* in October 2016, and was summarized by the *Huffington Post* in “[Why some people take action on climate change – and others don't](#)” (November).

Environmental psychology is also turning attention to the growing mental health issues caused by climate change. The first-ever [International Conference on Building Personal and Psychosocial Resilience for Climate Change](#) was held on November 3-4, 2016 in Washington D.C. . *Climate Progress* reports on the conference in “[How to stay sane in the face of climate change](#)” , and quotes psychiatrist Lise van Susteren: “before people let their fear turn to hopelessness ... it's critical to tell them that there are actionable things they can do, in their everyday life—measuring your own carbon footprint, putting solar panels on your own home, or paying for carbon offsets to counteract your own travel—can help a person take their fear and transfer that energy into positive action. And that in turn can help mitigate the mental trauma of the reality of climate change.” *Climate Progress* also quotes consultant [Bob Doppelt](#), who told the conference “Psychological traumas of more frequent storms, floods, and fires associated with climate change, as well as toxic stresses—long term heat waves and droughts, food shortages, involuntary

migration, loss of community and breakdown of culture—are eroding personal protective systems, amplifying preexisting mental health problems and creating new mental health issues.” Doppelt has recently published *Transformational Resilience: How Building Human Resilience to Climate Disruption Can Safeguard Society and Increase Wellbeing* .

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New Brunswick arrives at First Ministers’ meeting with a new Climate Action Plan

Posted on **December 12, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On December 7, the government of New Brunswick released its climate action plan, [Transitioning to a Low-carbon Economy](#) . It pledges a “made-in-New Brunswick price on carbon and caps on GHG emissions that reflect the reality of the New Brunswick economy”; similarly, the pledge to phase out coal as a source of electricity is “respecting New Brunswick’s economic reality and considering potential financial support from the federal government”. Government operations, facilities and vehicles will become carbon-neutral by 2030 . The government pledges to develop working groups with First Nations to address priority actions, and include First Nations representatives on a climate change advisory committee. Only one day previously, on December 6, New Brunswick issued a [press release](#) reiterating the government’s support for the Energy East pipeline, on the grounds that “An estimated 4,551 direct and indirect jobs are expected during construction of the pipeline, with 321 jobs every year of operation. The potential increase to New Brunswick’s GDP is more than \$3 billion.”

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New study of Comprehensive Wealth shows Canada’s fossil fuel economy is unsustainable

Posted on **December 12, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a pioneering report, the International Institute for Sustainable Development in December released the first national study of “comprehensive wealth”, by examining Statistics Canada data

from 1980 to 2013. The concept of comprehensive wealth goes beyond the usual wealth measure of Gross Domestic Product and also includes natural, human and social capital. The IISD study, [Comprehensive Wealth in Canada—Measuring what matters in the long run](#) states that natural capital is the largest component of Canada's comprehensive wealth at 80 per cent, but did not grow at all between 1980 and 2013. What does this mean for Canada? The report states: "The need for Canada to measure and understand comprehensive wealth has never been greater. Its development model is based heavily on the exploitation of natural capital, and the country cannot sustain another 30 years of natural capital depletion. Short-term commodity price volatility and the longer-term global shift to a cleaner, knowledge-driven economy mean that future reliance on fossil fuels to underpin the country's growth is risky. The current debate about fossil fuel projects and pipelines needs, therefore, to include a vision of transformation toward a low-carbon economy." The IISD cites a United Nations report which ranks Canada first among G7 nations in terms of the level of comprehensive wealth per capita but last in terms of growth in comprehensive wealth.

[Report Highlights](#) are at the IISD website ; the *National Observer* also summarized the report in "Canada's slipping national wealth addicted to oil and gas". A Commentary article by the report's author Robert Smith appears as "Why Canada's resource wealth should fuel the economy" in the *Globe and Mail ROB* (Dec. 7).

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C40 Summit of Mayors and cities' climate leadership; Toronto receives its "Environmental Report Card"

Posted on **December 12, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [C40 Summit of Mayors](#) held in Mexico City in early December occasioned a number of announcements and publications. The city of Montreal has joined the growing C40 network, according to the Montreal [press release](#) . Paris, Madrid, Athens and Mexico City announced that they will ban diesel cars from their centres by 2025, according to [The Guardian](#). A new report, [Deadline 2020: How cities will get the job done](#) provides an analysis and a roadmap of what the 84 global C40 cities need to do to accomplish the goals of the Paris Agreement. It calls for emission reduction from an annual average of above 5 tCO₂e per citizen today to around 2.9 tCO₂e per citizen by 2030. A companion report, [How U.S. Cities Will Get the Job Done](#) highlights the nearly 2,400 individual climate actions taken by the 12 current U.S. members of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group over the past decade. Michael Bloomberg, former New York City mayor and President of C40, said, "Mayors don't look at climate change as an ideological issue. They look at it as an economic and public health issue.... Regardless of the decisions of the incoming administration, U.S. mayors will continue to deliver action and lead the way."

Toronto's former mayor David Miller was President of C40 in 2008 – but Toronto's recent [Environmental Progress Report](#) from the volunteer [Toronto Environmental Alliance](#) finds that “While we have seen some progress issues like toxics and waste, City Hall is still far from fulfilling their responsibilities on climate change and transportation.” In reviewing the environment-related decisions made by Toronto City Council since the election in Fall 2014, the report notes that the current mayor committed to the Paris Agreement, and the Council has committed to develop a new long-term climate action plan for May 2017 with an 80% reduction target by 2050. Neither of these actions have any funds associated with them, and the TEA urges Council to “dramatically ramp up funding”. Toronto's climate and energy goals, and its current Action Plan, are available [here](#).

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Alberta Federation of Labour and the Conference Board agree: Refineries provide jobs

Posted on **December 11, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report by the Conference Board of Canada, [Is There Value In Adding Value: An Assessment of the Sturgeon Refinery](#), released on December 5, evaluates the business case of the first phase of the Sturgeon Refinery in northeastern Alberta, designed to process 78,630 barrels per day of dilbit. The Conference Board uses macroeconomic modelling to conclude that there will be long-term positive effects of the construction and operation of the refinery, in increased GDP, government revenues, and employment opportunities. For the construction phase alone, the report estimates 75,884 person-years of total employment impacts; the operation phase is estimated to contribute 6,658 full-time jobs for the life of the refinery. An Alberta Federation of Labour [press release](#) quotes president Gil McGowan: “This report confirms what we've been saying for years — that adding value to our resources through upgrading and refining makes sense for the province and for the country”. The AFL had commissioned a report in 2014, [In-Province Upgrading Economics of a Greenfield Oil Sands Refinery](#), which examined the potential economics of in-province upgrading of oil sands produced within Alberta.

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Canada's Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change: an important first step

Posted on **December 11, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**



On December 9, a [Communique from the First Ministers of Canada](#) announced the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, following the commitments made in the Vancouver Declaration of March 2016 . The Framework promises that 90 percent of Canada's energy needs will be met by clean sources by 2030, and emphasizes carbon taxes and new investment in clean technologies. For a general summary, see the CBC [here](#) . Unsurprisingly, Saskatchewan, which has been steadfastly opposed to carbon taxes, refused to sign the agreement; [Manitoba, more surprisingly, also refused](#), and has been accused of attempting political horsetrading by linking support for the climate pact to health care budget needs. See "Trudeau claims victory on national climate framework" and "Inside Christy Clark's climate change brinksmanship" in *Maclean's* (Dec. 9 & 10) for reporting on what went on behind the closed doors of the premiers' meeting.

There is scant reference to jobs or workers in the Pan-Canadian Framework. A weak and unique reference to Just transition appears in this statement on page 40, in the "Section on Clean Technology, Innovation and Jobs": "Further development of clean technologies could create new opportunities in Canada's resource sectors, increase the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian businesses, and create new employment opportunities, while also improving environmental performance. Canada will need to be able to access the skills and expertise of talented workers from around the world to enable Canadian businesses to succeed in the global marketplace. **It will also be important to ensure a commitment to skills and training to provide Canadian workers with a just and fair transition to opportunities in Canada's clean growth economy.**" Civil society groups are only vaguely indicated in the statement:

"Governments, Indigenous Peoples, industry, and other stakeholders all have a role to play and must be engaged."

See a [dedicated website](#) with details of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change . The Framework document is [here](#) . The Ministers' discussions were informed

by the reports of the four Working Groups struck following the Vancouver Declaration : the [Working Group Report on Carbon Pricing](#); the [Working Group Report on Clean Technology, Innovation and Jobs](#); the [Working Group Report on Specific Mitigation Opportunities](#) ; and the [Working Group Report on Adaptation and Climate Resilience](#) .

Climate Action Network has compiled responses to the Framework in “ [Civil Society Responds to Release of Canada's National Framework for Climate Action](#)”; most reactions reflect the common theme that this is a commendable good start, but much more is required to meet our Paris commitments. The comment from the David Suzuki Foundation was also typical: “For a plan to be credible, it must not send mixed signals about national priorities. Responsible action on climate change means shifting from fossil fuels and diversifying the economy to ensure Canadians have good jobs today and into the future while also protecting the environment.”

The [Pembina Institute](#) says specifically: “We applaud the first ministers’ effort made to date and expect continued collaboration and swift implementation of all recently announced climate measures. In particular, it is essential that provinces work with the federal government to adopt strengthened building codes, to implement an effective clean fuels standard, and to increase the carbon price after 2022.”

The Climate Action Network also cites specifics in [A Canadian Accountability Mechanism](#) , asserting: “Canada must adopt a more ambitious climate pledge (NDC) in 2018, by which time all countries should come up with the tougher actions they will take after 2020. ... “It’s time to break the cycle of empty target-setting in Canada. We know it’s absolutely possible to reach Canada’s current goal of reducing GHG emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. We also know the 2030 target does not represent our fair share of addressing global climate change and that Canada needs to do more. CAN-Rac’s estimations of Canada’s fair share contribution suggests we should be reducing emissions by 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 while increasing our contribution to international climate financing to \$4 billion/year by 2020.”

The Framework highlights all the right things, including: “ respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, with robust, meaningful engagement drawing on their Traditional Knowledge” , and “the importance of ongoing collaboration”, “leveraging technology and innovation to seize export and trade opportunities for Canada, which will allow us to become a leader in the global clean growth economy”. But it is not yet a plan: (“We have tasked our ministers and officials to implement the Framework and report back to us on progress within a year, and annually thereafter.”) Nor will it be implemented quickly: (“ Federal, provincial and territorial governments will work together to establish a review of carbon pricing, including expert assessment of stringency and effectiveness that compares carbon pricing systems across Canada, which will be completed by early 2022 to provide certainty on the path forward. An interim report will be completed in 2020, which will be reviewed and assessed by First Ministers. As an early deliverable, the review will assess approaches and best practices to address the competitiveness of emissions-intensive, trade-exposed sectors.”) An essay by the Pembina Institute, from the Pembina Institute, “[Canada is back](#)” — on Friday, let’s hope for one more time with feeling” (Dec. 8) anticipates what should be included, and thus provides a yardstick by which to measure how successful the Framework agreement will be.

Community Benefits Agreement for Light Rail Transit a model for good jobs through infrastructure development

Posted on **December 9, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A Community Benefits Agreement for the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit project in Toronto is expected to create around 300 jobs for youth, women and minority workers from the low income areas the project traverses. According to [an article](#) in the *Toronto Star*, local people “will receive construction and trades training through education centres set up by local unions — who are guaranteeing job placements for those who complete their skills-building programs.” A [Framework Agreement](#) was first struck in 2014; at that point, the [Toronto Community Benefits Network](#) had proposed that 15 % of employee hours on the Crosstown project should go to people with employment barriers, including women, aboriginal people, racialized workers, and new Canadians. The new project [Declaration](#), finalized on December 7, 2016, has set the bar at 10% of employee hours, but is being hailed as a precedent-setting example of the community benefits model for large scale infrastructure projects in Canada. For the first time in North America, this agreement includes professional, administration, and technical jobs as well as skilled construction trades. The Toronto and York District Labour Council states it best in its [press release](#): “A Community Benefits Agreement is powerful tool to overcome the historical underrepresentation of minorities and women in the construction industry. Jobs in the construction trades are good, well-paying jobs with benefits and a focus on safety. They can also be green jobs. Most importantly, workers have the opportunity to help build up their communities with the sense of pride, ownership and responsibility that engenders.”

A [June 2015 article](#) in WCR describes the community benefits agreement concept, cites examples in Vancouver and Los Angeles, and highlights Ontario’s [Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015](#). That Ontario legislation from June 2015 requires “Infrastructure planning and investment should promote community benefits to improve the well-being of a community affected by the project, such as local job creation and training opportunities”.

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UNFCC Report on Just Transition highlights the work of the ACW

Posted on **December 9, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new technical report by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) “will deepen the international community’s understanding of the need to consider the impact of climate policies on workers, and the essential role that labour unions have in combatting climate change,” according to Carla Lipsig Mummé, in a [press release](#) at the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) website. Professor Lipsig Mummé, ACW Project Director and Principal Investigator, was responding to the recognition in the UNFCC report of ACW’s unique [online database of green collective agreements](#) from Canada, the UK, Australia and the U.S.. “I am delighted that our research, produced through a collaboration of academic and organized labour researchers funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, has contributed to intergovernmental climate change negotiations through the UNFCCC” she stated.

The UNFCC report, *Just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs* describes itself as a step-by-step, “how-to” guide for Parties, in particular developing country Parties. It provides a detailed description of the actions and policies of international organizations such as the UNEP and ILO, but also catalogues the research documents of various sources, including international organizations, research institutes and advocacy groups. It utilizes a framework of the qualitative and quantitative impacts of climate change on jobs, and organizes its discussion of mitigation policies using the five principles of a Just Transition, established in the ILO’s report, *Guidelines for a Just Transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all (2015)* . The contribution of the labour movement is clearly acknowledged.

At a meeting of ACW international researchers in Vancouver in November, concerns about Just Transition for workers impacted by climate change mitigation measures were high on the agenda. Participants noted with concern that governments are skirting their obligation to assist workers in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

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Canadian government announces a phase-out of “traditional” coal-fired electricity by 2030

Posted on **November 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 21, the federal Environment Minister [announced](#) that the four remaining provinces with coal-fired electricity (Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia) must speed up their emissions reduction targets. All traditional coal-fired units (i.e. those without carbon capture and storage) will be required to meet a performance standard of 420 tonnes of carbon dioxide per gigawatt hour by no later than 2030, and performance standards must be developed for new units to ensure they are built using efficient technology. Details are set out in a [Backgrounder](#). To allow for flexibility, Equivalency Agreements can be negotiated under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, and both Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan are pursuing such agreements. Nova Scotia, which [announced](#) on November 21 that it would implement a cap and trade system which would meet or exceed the federal emissions reduction target, will be allowed to continue to use coal in high-demand winter months even after 2030, (with no specific date set yet for full compliance). Saskatchewan, which relies heavily on carbon capture and sequestration technology to meet its recent emissions reduction plan, is “displeased” about the coal phase-out plan, according to a [CBC report](#). Alberta has already announced [its own plans](#) for a coal phase-out by 2030, promising support for workers and communities. See the “[Liberals present plan to phase out coal-powered electricity by 2030](#)” CBC (Nov. 21) for a good overview.

What does this mean for coal workers? Currently, coal-fired power generated at 35 plants represents over 70% of emissions in Canada’s electricity sector, but provides only 11% of our electricity. The coal industry employs approximately 42,000 direct and indirect workers. In “[Canada’s rejection of coal will clear the air but impact workers and power bills](#)”, the CBC (Nov. 22) examines the likely higher electricity bills in store for consumers, and the likely job losses. The CBC article quotes Warren Mabee, a researcher with the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project and the associate director of the Queen’s Institute for Energy and Environmental Policy: he states that many workers in coal mines will be laid off “while others will shift to extracting metallurgical coal, which is used in the steel-making process.” It is important to note that the [government press release](#) explicitly promises: “The Government of Canada will work with provinces and labour organizations to ensure workers affected by the accelerated phase-out of traditional coal power are involved in a successful transition to the low-carbon economy of the future.”

Much of the government’s motivation for its initiative comes down to the health benefits of removing pollutants of coal-fired electricity – carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrous oxide, mercury and other heavy metals. The Pembina Institute, along with the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Canadian Public Health Association and others, released [Out with the coal, In with the new: National benefits of an accelerated phase-out of coal-fired power](#) on November 21. The report estimates that a national coal phase-out by 2030 would prevent 1,008 premature deaths, 871 ER visits, and health outcomes valued at nearly \$5 billion (including health and lower productivity costs) between 2015 and 2035. The [Pembina Institute reacted](#) to the government announcement, calling it “timely” and “necessary”. Clean Energy Canada responded with [Quitting coal will drive clean growth and cut pollution](#). BlueGreen Canada, which includes the United Steelworkers union, recently published the [Job Growth in Clean Energy](#) report, which recognizes the world-wide decline of the coal industry, and states that, “if properly supported now, Alberta’s renewable energy sector will create enough jobs to absorb the coal labour force”.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [Alberta](#), [carbon capture and storage](#), [Coal Industry](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [electricity sector](#), [Just Transition](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [renewable energy](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How best to boost Electric vehicle sales in Canada?

Posted on **November 21, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In his [remarks](#) at the launch of the [Transportation 2030 policy](#) in November, Minister Garneau stated “The future of transportation will be in electric cars and vehicles using zero-emission fuels like hydrogen.” Yet in Canada, electric vehicles are still rare, representing only 1% of all new vehicle sales and just over 18000 cars in total in 2015, according to the [Global EV Outlook Report 2016](#). A [CBC article](#) in August 2016 reported on an internal federal government report that recommended tax incentives and cash rebates as the best policy means to encourage Canadians to buy cars. In November, the Sustainable Transportation Action Research Team at Simon Fraser University published [Canada’s Electric Vehicle Policy Report Card](#), evaluating whether existing provincial policies are likely to be sufficient to boost electric vehicle sales to the levels needed to achieve Canada’s emissions targets. The report provides policy “report cards” for each province and concludes that the most effective policies include a Zero Emission Vehicle mandate (as in California and Quebec), strong and long-duration financial incentives (as in Norway and Ontario), and strong taxation on gasoline or carbon pricing. The report also notes that municipal governments can also play a role through building regulations and public charging infrastructure deployment.

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Toronto’s Greenprint advocates a network of union environmental advocates

Posted on **November 21, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

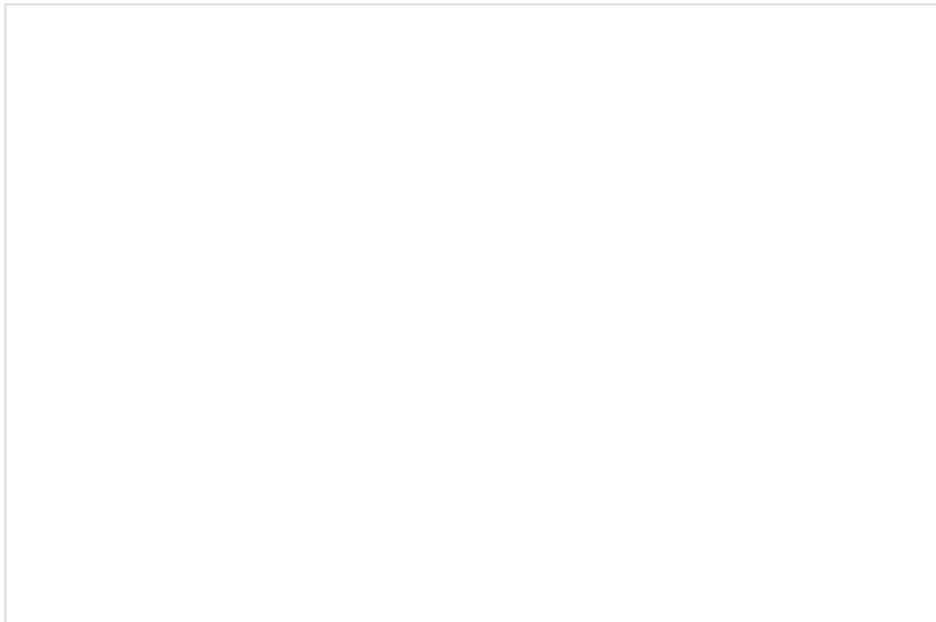
In the newly –published [Greenprint for Greater Toronto](#) written by President John Cartwright, the Metro Toronto and York District Labour Council provides a concise and comprehensive overview of what has been done and what needs to be done to answer climate challenges, with specific examples from Toronto. The report recognizes that workplaces contribute significant greenhouse gas emissions, and though there are many examples of dramatic workplace improvements around

energy use, waste reduction and green procurement in the workplace, there remains much to do. “The Labour Council is proposing to establish a network of environmental advocates to power the climate change agenda both within workplaces and in society as a whole.” Environmental representatives “would function in much the same manner as health and safety reps do under current Ontario legislation”, and based on existing models in Canada and Britain, could be involved in “waste audits; supply chain reviews; reviews of the movement of materials; identifying ways to re-use excess energy or heat; suggesting improvements around staff commuting.” The Greenprint document was promised, and many of the ideas sketched out, in an earlier Labour Council document: [Labour and Climate Change Statement , January 7th, 2016 : The road did not end in Paris, but goes through it](#). To see collective agreement language already achieved to form workplace environment committees and representatives in Canada, go to the ACW database [here](#) . To see British examples, see [Go Green at Work: A handbook for union green representatives](#), published by the Trades Union Congress in 2010 .

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Decision approaches for the Kinder Morgan Transmountain Pipeline Expansion

Posted on **November 20, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Liberal government announced a national [Ocean Protection Plan](#) on November 8, investing \$1.5 billion over five years, “to ensure that our coasts are protected in a modern and advanced way that ensures environmental sustainability, safe and responsible commercial use, and

collaboration with coastal and Indigenous communities.” Although one of the goals is “restoring and protecting the marine ecosystems and habitats”, the main thrust appears to emphasize commercial shipping, maritime traffic, and improved response to tanker oil spills. A sample of reaction: An Editorial from the *National Observer* “[‘Ocean protection’ is now code for oilsands pipelines and tanker traffic](#)” (Nov. 8); “[No tanker ban in Trudeau’s \\$1.5-Billion Coastal Protection Plan](#)” in *The Tyee*; and though Equiterre’s [press release](#) strikes a constructive tone, it links the Plan directly to the Kinder Morgan pipeline and subsequent tanker traffic. As Chantal Hebert [wrote in the Toronto Star](#), “it is obvious to everyone following along that he (Prime Minister Trudeau) was getting some framing in place before green-lighting Kinder Morgan’s TransMountain pipeline expansion”.

The [Report from the Ministerial Panel for the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project](#) was presented to Natural Resources Minister Carr in early November, the Panel having been appointed by the Minister in May 2016 to quell public outrage over the National Energy Board process. From the Report introduction: “The panel’s mandate was not to test or build social licence for the project. It was to identify what might have been missed in the original review. Appropriate to the panel’s mandate, therefore, this report does not contain specific recommendations. Rather, it provides an overview of input, a reflection of public concern about changing circumstances, and a synthesis of major issues “. Nevertheless, the panelists managed to say that the Kinder Morgan project “cannot proceed without a serious reassessment of its impacts on climate change commitments, indigenous rights and marine mammal safety.” [DeSmog blog](#) summarizes the report and commends the Panel .

Others dispute that the pipeline is even needed, on economic grounds – see [Climate Action Network](#) or Robyn Allan in “[Opinion: Premier Notley relies on fiction to push Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion](#)” in the *National Observer* (Nov. 14) . From Vancouver-based Conversations for Responsible Economic Development (CRED), self-described as “fiercely pro-business and pro-economic development” : “It’s crucial that the federal government reject the KM pipeline and instead support sectors in BC that create family-sustaining jobs, make significant tax contributions, insulate the regional economy from boom-and-bust cycles, and promote economic growth compatible with Canada’s national climate commitment.” See the full CRED report, [What’s Fuelling Our Economy: Is Kinder Morgan’s Proposed Pipeline Inconsistent with New Economic Trends and Realities?](#)

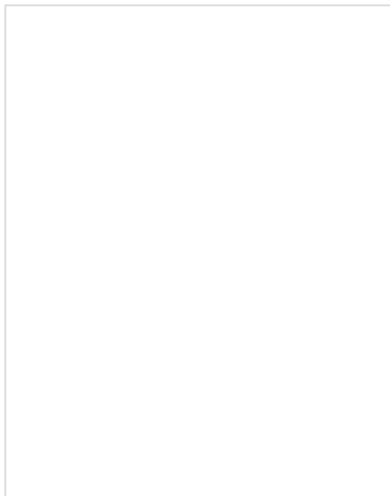
Protests and legal action against the Kinder Morgan project have been going on for years – see our previous [WCR coverage here](#) – but they are intensifying with the upcoming December 19 deadline for a government decision. In October, [99 protestors were arrested](#) on Parliament Hill, and British Columbia’s former Premier Mike Harcourt warned in a [November interview](#) that an approval could result in “a Clayoquot or North Dakota type of insurrection”. A November 17 [event hosted by Leadnow.ca](#) also makes the link: “From Standing Rock to Burnaby Mountain: Can Direct Action Stop the Kinder Morgan Pipeline?”. On November 16, the Canadian Youth Delegation at COP22 in Marrakech delivered a petition with 210,000 names opposing the Kinder Morgan pipeline; demonstrations and vigils are planned across Canada for November 21, coordinated by [350.org](#) , [Leadnow.ca](#), [Greenpeace Canada](#) , the [Council of Canadians](#) , the

[Canadian Youth Climate Coalition](#) and others. The Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion is being framed as the acid test for the Liberal government's environmental position.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [North Dakota pipeline](#), [Ocean Protection](#), [Oil pipelines](#), [Oil Spills](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Policy proposals for a greener Canadian economy

Posted on **November 20, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Sustainable Prosperity, based at the University of Ottawa, [changed its name](#) in October to the Smart Prosperity Institute, and in November issued one of its first new publications: [Big Ideas for Sustainable Prosperity: Policy Innovation for Greening Growth](#). This is a Special Issue of the journal *Canadian Public Policy*, and reproduces the papers from a two-day conference at the University of Ottawa. Some of the papers: “[Building the Green Economy](#)” by Edward Barbier; “[Getting the Institutions Right: Designing the Public Sector to Promote Clean Innovation](#)” by Brendan Haley; “[Let's Get this Transition Moving](#)” by James Meadowcroft, and “[Accelerating the Take-Up of Climate Change Innovations](#)” by Ann Dale, which describes the climate innovation of 11 municipalities in B.C.).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Green Economy](#), [Municipal Government](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Proposals for Alberta: Job creation and a healthier environment

Posted on **November 20, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report from the Pembina Institute, in cooperation with Blue Green Canada and the Alberta Federation of Labour, discusses the employment potential for renewables in Alberta – and concludes that investing in renewable sources of electricity and energy efficiency would generate more jobs than would be lost through the retirement of coal power. Further jobs still could be created by additional investment in community energy, and further jobs again by investing in long-term infrastructure and electricity grids. *[Job Growth in Clean Energy – Employment in Alberta’s emerging renewables and energy efficiency sectors](#)* provides detailed statistics and includes a major section on methodology; Pembina’s job estimates are higher than those of the Alberta government, partly because Pembina’s modelling includes solar energy while the government’s estimates are understood to be based on extrapolating from Alberta’s historic experience with wind. The report makes policy recommendations relevant to the Climate Leadership Plan and the current Energy Diversification Advisory Committee and encourages a speed-up of the phase-out of coal-fired electricity. (See also a related Pembina report, *[Canada and Coal at COP22: Tracking the global momentum to end coal-fired power –and why Canada should lead the way](#)*).

A worker-generated proposal for job creation and GHG reduction is described by Andrew Nikofoeruk in “[A Bold Clean-Up Plan for Alberta’s Giant Oil Industry Pollution Liabilities](#)” in *The Tyee* (Nov. 4) . The author summarizes the RAFT plan proposed by two workers from Grande Prairie, Alberta. *[Reclaiming Alberta’s Future Today \(RAFT\)](#)* is “a plan for the unionized abandonment, decommissioning, and reclamation of Alberta’s aging and expired fossil fuel infrastructure over the next 50 years...” The Plan begins with a proposal for an expert analysis of the state of liabilities from inactive oil and gas wells and abandoned pipelines – including analysis of the health and environmental effects, and the existing mechanisms to address the problem.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Alberta Federation of Labour](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Coal Industry](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Job Creation](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [reclamation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada at COP22: Federal Strategy to 2050, and a middle of the road position

Posted on **November 20, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The UN COP22 meetings began in Marakkesh on November 7, and the election of Donald Trump as U.S. President on November 8 threatened to derail progress. Yet as the *Climate Change News* stated on Nov. 18: “An oasis of climate commitment in a desert of Trump panic, [the UN talks made steady progress on putting the Paris Agreement into action](#)”. For COP22 coverage, the most complete compilation of day by day events, side events, and documents is at the [IISD website](#); see also the [official COP22 website](#); or the news compilations of *The Guardian* newspaper, *Climate Home*, or *Democracy Now*. There is even [a compilation of the almost 1 million tweets](#) from delegates at Marakkesh.

In the end, on November 18, [111 signatories](#) representing 77.22 percent of carbon emissions had ratified the Paris Agreement, (including [Australia](#) and the [U.K.](#)). The parties issued the [Marrakech Action Proclamation](#) stating, “Our climate is warming at an alarming and unprecedented rate, and we have an urgent duty to respond. ... We call for the highest political commitment to combat climate change, as a matter of urgent priority” and “full implementation” of the Paris Agreement.

What did Canada do at Marrakesh? Canada’s [stated Priorities for COP22](#) included promoting carbon pricing, linkages of carbon market policies, sub-national carbon market efforts, as well as “mobilizing private sector investment and innovation to accelerate the adoption of clean technology”. According to an November 14 [article in the *National Observer*](#), “Delegates in Marrakech say Canada’s negotiators over the past week have been heavily focused on Article 6 of the Paris agreement, which addresses emissions trading between countries.” On November 16, government press releases, [here](#) and [here](#) announced that Canada will invest nearly \$1.8 billion (as part of an already committed \$2.65 billion pledge for climate finance) for “clean technology, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forestry, and climate-resilient infrastructure” throughout the world.

Most notably, along with the U.S., Germany, and Mexico, Canada released a mid-Century strategy to achieve an 80% reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2050. In contrast with [The U.S. Mid-Century Strategy for Deep Decarbonization](#) issued by the White House, [Canada’s Mid-Century Long-term Low Greenhouse Gas Development Strategy](#) “is not a blueprint for action, and it is not policy prescriptive. Rather, the report is meant to inform the conversation about how Canada can achieve a low-carbon economy.” The document summarizes a full range of the recent policy documents, and modelling analyses with various scenarios towards deep emissions reductions. It also states: “Working collaboratively with Indigenous peoples by supporting their on-going implementation of climate change initiatives will be key. Consultations with Indigenous communities must respect the constitutional, legal, and international obligations that Canada has for its Indigenous peoples”, and “Canada will need to fundamentally transform all economic sectors, especially patterns of energy production and consumption. Over time, this requires major structural changes to the economy and the way people live, work, and consume.”

Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change hosted an Indigenous panel at COP22. Among the Indigenous leaders present, Kevin Hart, regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations, arrived directly from the Dakota Access Pipeline demonstrations, and spoke of the dangers of further development of pipelines and dams – specifically Keystone XL and the Site C

dam in B.C. See “[Indigenous leaders call on Canada’s Trudeau to uphold Paris deal](#)” in *Climate Change News* (Nov. 18) and “[Canada Fought to Include Indigenous Rights in the Paris Agreement, But Will Those Rights Be Protected Back Home?](#)” in *DeSmog Blog* (Nov. 16).

One evaluation of COP22, from a Canadian point of view, comes from Climate Action Network-Canada, [World looks to Canada for exceptional leadership](#). “Canada played a solid, steady role at COP22. Canada should be proud of its work to maximize the impact of the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue, a critically important moment when countries will have a chance to assess their progress and amp up their commitments to rapid greenhouse gas reductions. Canada also made a winning case for more gender-inclusive climate policies, led the charge for an upcoming workshop to discuss economic diversification and jobs, and was one of the first countries to get the ball rolling on its long-term climate strategy.”

“Yet Canada defaulted to middle-of-the-road positions on a variety issues, including climate and adaptation financing.... the time for middle-of-the-road positioning is over....Canada is “past the point where we can trade off a new pipeline against an ambitious building efficiency standard” ... “Climate change is now a zero-sum game, and there are no more trade-offs.”

And for an overall summary of developments: Mitchell Beer of *Energy Mix* in “[‘Action COP’ Protects Paris Gains Against Trump But Postpones Tough Decisions on Climate Finance, Adaptation](#)”. The article concludes with reactions from civil society groups, including Oil Change International , which stated: “The lessons of Marrakech are clear: Don’t look to bureaucrats or climate-denying presidents to take the lead on global climate action...Look to the people in the streets and in communities around the world. These are the people-powered movements resisting fossil fuels and building a renewable energy future, and this is the path to victory.”

Canadian youth are another source of hope: see “[Canadian youth lay out demands for climate justice](#)” in the *National Observer* (Nov. 21), which summarizes the demands of the Canadian Youth Delegation to COP22. Among their 9 demands: A justice-based transition to a green economy, and good green jobs.

At the provincial level: The government of British Columbia received the UNFCCC’s Momentum for Change award for its revenue-neutral carbon tax – although the Pembina Institute makes it clear in [an OpEd](#) that more is needed for B.C. to maintain its climate leadership. From a November 18 [Ontario government press release](#) we learn that Ontario joined the 2050 Pathway Platform , and [met with delegates from Quebec and California](#) regarding their linked cap and trade markets , as well as separate meetings with Vermont and the State of Washington . [Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard](#) was reconfirmed as the North American Chair of the States and Regions Alliance , a network of 25 jurisdictions. Premier Jay Weatherill of South Australia was confirmed as the Asia Pacific Co-chair.

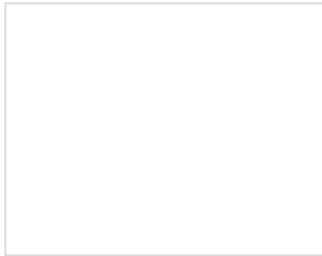
Who spoke about the issue of Just Transition at COP22? As detailed in [another WCR post](#), the [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#) and the [European Trade Union Confederation \(ETUC\)](#) carried the flag on Just Transition. Surprisingly perhaps, on the eve of the COP22 meetings, the CEO of [We Mean Business](#) , wrote [A Just Transition to defeat the Populist](#)

[Politicians](#) (Nov. 5) summing up the business point of view about Just Transition. Some excerpts: “as we move into a low-carbon future, a just transition is needed to ensure that the impact on local employment and economies is managed in a way that allows the obsolete jobs and sectors to be replaced by equally skilled and well-paid, low-carbon jobs. ..Blindness to unintended consequences, or a lack of adequate planning and management to ensure opportunities for local jobs and economies are maximised, could lead to public sentiment quickly turning against the effort to combat climate change.”...“We can’t think narrowly about climate as we go forward, we have to think more politically about the overall balance of jobs and wealth distribution.”..... “A resurgence of protectionism and anti-globalisation is bad for business and likely to slow down positive change. Typically, when populist governments move in that direction they prop up industries that would otherwise die out. Businesses should seek out the new opportunities, rather than ask for the hand-outs that come from government protection.” We Mean Business, along with the BGroup, is an affiliate of the ITUC [Just Transition Centre](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [COP22](#), [First Nations](#), [international agreements](#), [Just Transition](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [Younger workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International Trade Union Confederation unveils a Just Transition Centre at COP22

Posted on **November 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The 22nd meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP22) in Marrakesh Morocco concluded on November 18, having made dogged progress despite the looming spectre of President Donald Trump . (see “[7 things you missed at COP22 while Trump hogged the headlines](#)“). 150 trade union members from 50 countries comprised a delegation led by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). On November 18, the ITUC released their assessment of COP22: “ [Marrakech Climate Conference: Real Progress on economic diversification, transformation and just transition, but more ambition and more finance needed](#)” .

The three “[top line](#)” [ITUC demands](#) going in to the meetings can be summed up as: greater ambition and urgency for action; commitments on climate finance, especially for vulnerable

countries, and commitment to just transition for workers and communities. The summary of demands is reproduced at the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy [website](#) and described in detail in the *ITUC Frontlines Briefing: Climate Justice COP 22 Special Edition* . (Note that one of the case studies in the Special Edition highlights the president of Unifor Local 707A in Fort McMurray, Alberta, who describes the union's efforts to lobby government, to bargain for just transition provisions, and to sponsor job fairs for displaced workers.) The union demands are consistent with the issues raised in *Setting the Path Toward 1.5 C – A Civil Society Equity Review of Pre-2020 Ambition* . The ITUC is a signatory to the *Setting the Path* document – along with dozens of other civil society groups, including Canada Action Network, David Suzuki Foundation, and Friends of the Earth Canada.

The ITUC *Special Edition* statement announced “...the ITUC and its partners are establishing a [Just Transition Centre](#) . The Centre will facilitate government, business, trade unions, communities, investors and civil society groups to collaborate in the national, industrial, workplace and community planning, agreements, technologies, investments and the necessary public policies.” The “partners” mentioned include the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the [B Team](#) , an international network of business executives who believe that “the purpose of business is to become a driving force for social, environmental and economic benefit” and [We Mean Business](#), a coalition of business, NGO and government policy organizations promoting the transition to a low-carbon economy.

As an aside: The CEO of [We Mean Business](#) wrote [A Just Transition to defeat the populist politicians](#) (Nov. 5), summing up the business point of view about Just Transition. See excerpts [here](#).

The European Trade Union Congress, a member of ITUC, promoted five demands in its own [Position Statement](#) , adopted by the Executive Committee on the 26-27 October. The ETUC demands largely mirror those of ITUC but also call for concrete action to move the issue of Just Transition from the Preamble of the Paris Agreement, (where it landed by compromise) . “The COP 22 must now urge Parties to integrate just transition elements into their national contributions, notably by mandating the Subsidiary Bodies Implementation (SBI) and for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), for they define the terms of this integration.” The ETUC urges that the ILO *Principles for a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all* provide an internationally recognized reference for governments and social partners concerning just transition.

The Canadian Labour Congress, Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux and Centrale des Syndicats Démocratiques in Canada, and the American Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) are ITUC affiliates. Details, pictures, videos are posted on Twitter at [#unions4climate](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [COP22](#), [European Trade Union Confederation \(ETUC\)](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [We Mean Business coalition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Provincial Policy updates: Quebec

Posted on **November 7, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Quebec's Bill 104 was passed unanimously in the National Assembly on October 26, requiring that 3.5 % of the total number of vehicles sold or leased by car manufacturers in Quebec must be zero emissions vehicles (ZEV), starting in 2018. By 2020, the standard will rise to 15.5 %. This is a first for Canada, although 10 states in the U.S. have ZEV regulations. See the government's detailed [press release and background information](#), or a [Summary of Measures of Bill 104](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [alternative fuel vehicles](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Quebec](#), [zero emissions vehicles](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Provincial Policy updates: New Brunswick

Posted on **November 7, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 24, the Final Report of the Select Committee on Climate Change was tabled by the Legislative Committee. The report, [New Brunswickers' Response to Climate Change](#), is built on community consultations based on a [discussion paper](#) from April 2016. Amongst the recommendations of the Select Committee: a cabinet committee devoted to climate change, as well as climate change legislation, to accomplish the following goals: GHG emissions reduction targets of 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80 per cent below 2001 levels by 2050; phase out of fossil fuel electricity generation by 2030 with a target of 60% for in-province electricity sales from renewable sources by 2030; energy efficiency targets for all government owned and funded facilities; a permanent, independent provincial agency with a mandate for energy efficiency and promotion of renewable energy; a target of 5,000 electric vehicles in the province by 2020 and 20,000 by 2030, and electrifying the government vehicle fleet; focusing on industrial energy efficiency; exploring opportunities for carbon offset markets; and establishing a "made in New Brunswick" carbon pricing mechanism.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Ghg emissions reduction targets](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Provincial Policy updates: Alberta

Posted on **November 7, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 1, Bill 25, the [Oil Sands Emissions Limits Act](#) becomes the first attempt by any oil-producing jurisdiction to put a cap – in this case, 100 megatonnes per year – on the emissions from its fossil fuel industry. According to a *National Observer* [article](#) the Alberta oilsands currently emit about 66 megatonnes of greenhouse gases a year, and are expected to reach 100 megatonnes by 2030. The legislation ensures that this level is not exceeded and gives producers incentives to minimize emissions in order to increase production. The Pembina Institute [reacted](#) with tepid approval, calling the legislation a key part of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan.

On November 3, the government [announced](#) that it will soon introduce a *Renewable Electricity Act*, which will set a target of 30 per cent of electricity sourced from renewables by 2030, and provide the legislative framework for a [Renewable Electricity Program](#). Projects will be privately funded under the program, and the government forecasts that there will be at least \$10.5 billion of new investment by 2030, with at least 7,200 jobs created. Seeing the writing on the wall, the Petroleum Services Association of Canada (PSAC), an industry group, has decided to allow wind, solar and other renewable energy companies to become members, [according to a CBC report](#). The advantages of setting a “30 by 30” target for renewables were outlined in an [Open Letter](#) to the Premier from several environmental groups and renewable energy companies in October.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Non-violent climate insurgency: people using the power of the law to protect the planet

Posted on **November 6, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Despite the hooplah of Paris and Marakkesh, a new article by Jeremy Brecher argues that climate protection will never be accomplished by existing government and institutional actors. “[Climate Emergency: Global Insurgency](#): There is no choice but to escalate today's campaigns against global fossil fuel infrastructure” appeared in *Common Dreams* on October 14, and while the

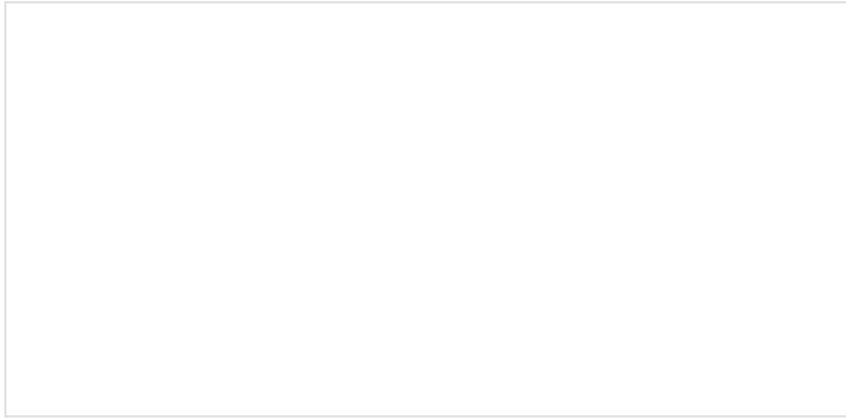
author commends the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, (mirrored in Canada by protests against the Kinder Morgan Pipeline) he quotes Bill McKibben that “Fighting one pipeline at a time, the industry will eventually prevail.” Brecher advocates instead what he calls a “global nonviolent constitutional insurgency”. “A non-violent insurgency, like an armed insurgency, refuses to accept the limits on its action imposed by the powers that be. Unlike an armed insurgency, it eschews violence and instead expresses power by mobilizing people for mass nonviolent direct action....It is not formally a revolutionary movement because it does not challenge the legitimacy of the fundamental law; rather, it asserts that current officials are in violation of the very laws that they themselves claim provide the justification for their authority. Although the established courts may condemn and punish them, constitutional insurgents view their “civil disobedience” as actually obedience to law, even a form of law enforcement.”

Recalling the great civil disobedience campaigns of Gandhi, the American civil rights movement, and Polish Solidarity movement, Brecher points to the current “[Break Free From Fossil Fuels](#)” global campaign, begun after the Paris Agreement in 2015, as an encouraging start to the climate insurgency he advocates. The U.S. organizers of Break Free From Fossil Fuels issued a “[Public Trust Proclamation](#)” which summarizes the principles. The legal actions inspired by the Urgenda case and [Our Children's Trust](#) in the U.S. share many of the same values, but apply them in the courts. Brecher links these two movements in an earlier article, “[A new wave of climate insurgents defines itself as law-enforcers](#)”. Brecher’s 2014 book, *[Climate Insurgency: A Strategy for Survival](#)* has been updated and reissued as a free ebook, to make it as widely available as possible to those who want to understand and help halt climate change.

Note: In Canada, the May 2016 Break Free protests were focused on the Kinder Morgan pipeline (photos still available [here](#)). Protests are continuing – [including sit-ins](#) in the offices of government ministers in November, as even the federal government’s [Ministerial Panel Report](#), released on November 3, raises questions about how the pipeline fits with the government’s commitments on climate change, First Nations reconciliation, and social license for fossil fuel projects. According to [Environmental Defence](#), rejecting Kinder Morgan and restarting the review process after reforming the National Energy Board is the only viable option for the federal government. The government’s decision is due December 19, and is seen as a defining moment for the Trudeau government to demonstrate a clear commitment to its climate goals, rather than a compromise with energy/economics.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Climate Legislation](#), [international protests](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Our Children's Trust](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [public trust](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

November 4: An historic day for climate action, but UNEP report calls for stronger IDNC targets



As the Paris Climate Agreement enters legal force on November 4, 2016 , 100 Parties have ratified the agreement, representing 69.47% of the world's emissions, according to the [Paris Agreement Tracker](#) at World Resources Institute. Carbon Brief provides an “[Explainer](#)” of the Paris Agreement process , *The Guardian* [summarizes the significance](#), and Environmental Defence sums it up with [Now comes the hard part for Canada](#) .

To set the stage for the world's climate experts who are gathering in Marrakesh for COP22 from November 8 to 17, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) released its annual [Emissions Gap Report](#) , the first assessment to calculate the emissions that will occur under all the pledges made in Paris. It shows that, even under those reduction pledges, [the world is heading to a temperature rise of 2.9 to 3.4°C this century](#). The UNEP underlines the urgency and seriousness in its press release: “If we don't start taking additional action now, beginning with the upcoming climate meeting in Marrakesh, we will grieve over the avoidable human tragedy. The growing numbers of climate refugees hit by hunger, poverty, illness and conflict will be a constant reminder of our failure to deliver. The science shows that we need to move much faster.” Understandably, the *Emissions Gap report* generated a lot of reaction: see [Inside Climate News](#) , and [from Carbon Brief](#), a warning about the reliance on negative emissions which are included in most scenarios for emissions reduction.

Will Canada heed the UNEP call to countries for stronger IDNC targets for emissions reduction at into the COP 22 meetings at Marakkesh ? There has been no signal of that. On the clean energy file, however, the Liberal government released its [Fall Economic Statement](#) on November 1, including plans for more transit support and a new infrastructure bank with \$35 billion of public and private sector money to support green initiatives such as electricity transmission lines and energy storage capacity . [Clean Energy Canada](#) commended the government though few details are available yet. The [National Observer report](#) emphasizes that lack of detail to date. The Minister of Transportation has released the [Transportation 2030 Plan](#) , with a section related to greener transport. Finally, the federal government [announced](#) on November 2 that it will reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 (with an aspirational goal of accomplishing that by 2025). This will be done “by strategic investments in infrastructure and vehicle fleets, green procurement, and support for clean technology”. By 2030, the government will source 100% of the electricity for its buildings and operations from renewable energy sources. The release also notes

that a new group is being established – the Centre for Greening Government – that will track emissions centrally, coordinate efforts across government and drive results to make sure these objectives are met. See the [Greening Government Backgrounder](#) [here](#) .

Prime Minister Trudeau is scheduled to meet with the provincial and territorial leaders in early December to advance the pan- Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. Meanwhile, all eyes are also watching the federal decision on the Kinder Morgan pipeline project, also due in December.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [federal government](#), [Green procurement](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [international agreements](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

An Australian view of Just Transition and a clean energy future

Posted on **November 5, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A joint report of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the Australian Conservation Foundations (ACF) models three future scenarios of climate and economic policies, and estimates that a “strong action” scenario could create one million new jobs and reduce pollution by 80 per cent by 2040. In releasing [Jobs in a clean energy future](#) on October 26, the [ACF stated](#): “it is important to remember Australians should not have to choose between jobs and cutting pollution.” The “strong action” policies of the report include all of : investing in renewable energy, soil carbon capture, public transport, household energy efficiency, transport infrastructure and the introduction of a price on pollution, as well as investment in industrial energy efficiency and the development of alternative fuel sources such as bio-diesel. Almost 500,000 of the one million resulting new jobs would be in the electricity, gas and water, construction and health sectors, and employment in construction would be almost double 2015 levels.

The report calls for a Just Transition as part of this scenario, which would include: ” • an equitable sharing of responsibilities and fair distribution of the costs • consultations with relevant organisations – including trade unions, employers and communities, at national, regional and sectoral levels • the promotion of clean job opportunities and the greening of existing jobs and industries, achieved through public and private investment in low-pollution industries and appropriate educational qualifications that enhance workers’ skills • formal education, training and re-training for workers, their families and their communities • economic and employment diversification policies within sectors and communities at risk • social protection measures (active labour market policies, access to health services, social insurances, among others) • respect for and protection of human and labour rights.”

Jobs in a clean energy future is based on modelling by Australia's National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) and updates a 2010 report released by the ACTU and ACF: [Creating Jobs – Cutting Pollution](#), and [Green Gold Rush](#) from 2008. The previous reports advocated similar policies but didn't define or address Just Transition.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Job Creation](#), [Just Transition](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Workers Plan to Transition to Renewable Energy Jobs, based on workers' views

Posted on **November 5, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A [Workers Climate Plan](#), submitted to the federal government its climate change consultations in September, was more publicly launched on November 1 at a solar panel installation training facility in Edmonton, Alberta. The report by [Iron and Earth](#) is much more than a publicity stunt: it offers serious policy suggestions, and also “gives voice to the workers” by reporting the results of a survey of opinions of Alberta's energy sector workers.

The Plan is based on four months of consultation with workers and stakeholder groups in the West, and on the analysis of the more than one thousand responses to an opinion survey conducted online from June to August 2016. These survey responses challenge the stereotype of the oil sands worker: for example, 59% of energy sector workers are actually willing to take some kind of pay cut to transition to renewable energy; 63 % of respondents said they could shift to renewable projects “directly with some training” and another 16 % said they could shift without any need for retraining; 69% of energy sector workers agree or strongly agree that Canada should make a 100% transition to renewable energy by 2050; 71% believe climate change is the biggest threat facing the global community.

On the policy side, the *Workers' Climate Plan* focuses on the need for upskilling for the energy sector workforce; more manufacturing capacity for renewable energy in Canada; support for contractors and unions that want to transition to renewables; and the integration of renewable technologies into existing energy projects. As well, the Plan states: “as we advocate for a just transition of workers into the renewable energy sector, we must also uphold our obligations to First Nations by aligning our campaigns at Iron & Earth with the calls to action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”

The *Plan* says this about the role of unions: "At Iron & Earth we think it is vital that existing energy sector unions are positioned within Canada's developing renewable energy sector, and take a leading role in the design and implementation of Canada's transition to renewable energy. The views of unions and associations such as IBEW, IBB, UA, Unifor, USWA, CLC, CUPE, and CAW, among others, on a wide range of issues, including sector regulations, training and employment legislation, will be key in developing a viable strategy to position existing energy sector workers in renewable energy."

[Iron and Earth](#) was founded in 2015 as a platform for oil sands workers to engage in renewable energy development issues, especially retraining. From their website: "Our intention is not to shut down the oilsands, but to see they are managed more sustainably while developing our renewable energy resources more ambitiously." The membership includes workers from a variety of industrial trades, including boilermakers, electricians, pipe fitters, ironworkers, and labourers, and has spread beyond Alberta to include an East Coast chapter in Newfoundland.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [attitudes of workers](#), [Energy policy](#), [Iron and Earth](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil Sands](#), [renewable energy](#), [Retraining](#), [Skilled Workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

In Alberta: A Call for Renewable energy legislation ; Government funds directed to methane emission reduction

Posted on **October 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 24, several renewable energy companies, industry associations and think-tanks released an [Open Letter](#) to the Alberta government, urging it to establish in law [its commitment](#) for renewables to supply at least 30 per cent of the province's electricity by 2030. Amongst several arguments in the Letter is one related to job creation: "the fraction of construction jobs as well as head office jobs based in Alberta would be much higher and more stable under the larger market assured by a legislated target. Without the clarity of a legislated multiyear commitment, there is a risk that companies would keep Alberta operations to a minimum and with many of the jobs created in other jurisdictions." The arguments are supported by other documents at Pembina Institute, including [Cheaper renewables spur companies to buy clean energy directly from producers](#).

This may be of interest to the Energy Diversification Committee [announced](#) on October 13, which is tasked to consult with Albertans and make recommendations in the fall of 2017 on how to increase the value of energy resources, create jobs and attract new investment. The press release gives examples of "value-added ideas" such as partial upgrading, refining, petrochemicals and

chemicals manufacturing. Nothing about renewables. The [Committee website](#) names two Co-Chairs: Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, along with Jeanette Patell, government affairs and policy leader at GE Canada. Warren Fraleigh, Executive director of the Building Trades of Alberta is a member, along with business and First Nations representatives.

On October 21, the government of Alberta [announced](#) that it will redirect \$33 million to support medium- and long-term technologies that reduce methane emissions in the oil and gas, agriculture and landfill sectors, as well as projects to improve methane detection and quantification. This initiative springs from the [commitment in the Climate Leadership Plan](#) to reduce methane emissions by 45 per cent by 2025. The augmented funding, which will total \$40 million, will be administered by [Emissions Reduction Alberta \(ERA\)](#), which is the new name being given to the industry-sponsored Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Methane Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada promises action to implement the Kigali agreement on HFC's

Posted on **October 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The agreement reached in Kigali, Rwanda on October 15 2016, to regulate the use of the hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HFC's) in air conditioners and refrigerators, is expected to lead to the reduction of the equivalent of 70 billion tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and "is the single largest contribution the world has made towards keeping the global temperature rise 'well below' 2 degrees Celsius", according to the [UNEP Press release](#) about the agreement. The 197 countries which had previously been party to the Montreal Protocol reached a compromise, under which developed countries will start to phase down HFC's by 2019. The deadline for some developing countries to freeze their HFC's consumption levels is 2024, and some of the world's hottest countries (India, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) will have the most lenient deadlines, to freeze HFC use by 2028 and reduce it to about 15 percent of 2025 levels by 2047.

Read the *New York Times* report [here](#), or the National Observer report [here](#), and for background, an August *NYT* article, "[How bad is your air conditioner for the planet?](#)". For a legal perspective, see "[Cutting HFC's under the Montreal Protocol – A few thoughts](#)" from the Legal Planet blog of UCLA Berkeley.

The Kigali agreement is seen as a powerful positive symbol: "It is a clear statement by all world leaders that the green transformation started in Paris is irreversible and unstoppable." But though

it is seen as a much stronger commitment than the Paris Agreement, it also requires ratification by two-thirds of the parties to come into force, and may not be “unstoppable”. According to [Climate Central](#), “American experts on international environmental law say ratifying the new HFC agreement would almost certainly require a two-thirds vote from the Senate”. In other words, even more is now riding on the U.S. election on November 8. A [Globe and Mail article](#) on October 16 expanded on the [brief government press release](#), quoting the Canadian Environment and Climate Change Minister, who pledged: “Ottawa will adopt regulations to reduce the use of the chemicals in the coming years. The government will provide rules and incentives for the destruction of existing HFCs.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [air conditioning industry](#), [air pollution](#), [HFC's](#), [international agreements](#), [Kigali Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Youth of Norway are suing for their constitutional climate rights

Posted on **October 23, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The government of Norway and thirteen oil companies [are being sued](#) by Greenpeace International and a Norwegian youth alliance called Nature and Youth, who are challenging the government's decision to allow oil exploration in the Barents Sea. The suit argues that further oil exploration violates threatens Norway's commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement and violates the constitutional right to a healthy and safe environment for future generations. Two Greenpeace blogs emphasize that this is meant to be an historic case, protecting the final frontier of the Arctic, and also exercising the people-power of a new generation stepping up to hold governments accountable to their climate promises. Read “[This is the People vs. Arctic Oil](#)” and “[Why we are taking Arctic Oil to Court](#)”, which appeals to the global community for support. (Note: the Greenpeace Canada also maintains an [Arctic campaign](#) but the website doesn't reflect the Norwegian case yet). An article in *Common Dreams*, “[Norwegian Youth Taking Government to Court Over 'Unconstitutional' Arctic Drilling](#)” explains the case fully and makes the links with the U.S. case brought by James Hansen and [Our Children's Trust](#). The groundbreaking federal lawsuit by Our Children's Trust, having been challenged repeatedly by the fossil fuel industry, is under review by a U.S. District Court Judge, who heard [oral arguments](#) on September 13. A decision is expected by mid-November, at which time the case will head to trial, or go to appeal. Our Children's Trust is the subject of an October article in *Fusion*: “[Generational Injustice: Inside the Legal Movement suing for Climate Justice Now](#)”.

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Legislation](#), [environmental rights](#), [Norway](#), [Our Children's Trust](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Is the Dakota Access Pipeline the next Keystone Pipeline battle within U.S. Labour?

Posted on **October 23, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“Standing Rock Solid with the Frackers: Are the Trades Putting Labor’s Head in the Gas Oven? is a new article by Sean Sweeney, examining the divisions in the U.S. labour movement over the Dakota Access Pipeline. The article , [originally published](#) in *New Labor Forum* and [re-posted and updated](#) on the website of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy on October 14 , describes the pro-pipeline statements of the North American Building Trades Unions (NABTU) , and, like [Jeremy Brecher’s article](#) on the same issue , Sweeney sees NABTU as the driving force behind the AFL-CIO’s energy positions. Likening the current dispute to the internal division over the Keystone XL Pipeline, Sweeney states that “The DAPL fight suggests that the split in labor is deepening.” Sweeney pays particular attention to (and promises a future article about) the Laborers’ International Union (LIUNA)’s [Clean Power Progress campaign](#), launched in June 2016 to support natural gas as a clean, bridging fuel – with the glaring omission of any mention of the emissions of fracking. The article concludes: “For now, having waged a successful putsch, NABTU is the voice of the AFL-CIO regarding a big chunk of labor’s energy policy. The Federation’s reputation is now so low that it seems to be no longer concerned about ‘reputational damage.’ By linking arms with Standing Rock Sioux, progressive labor is keeping alive the best traditions of labor environmentalism pioneered by Tony Mazzocchi and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers in the 1970s.”

Further updates on the DAPL front: [Protests and arrests](#) continue as recently as October 22.

But in what is seen as a victory for freedom of the press, on October 18 a judge dismissed trespassing and riot charges against reporter Amy Goodman, the reporter for *Democracy Now* whose video ignited support for the Standing Rock Sioux Nation protest. Read the transcript of Amy Goodman’s reaction [here](#) , and complete *Democracy Now* coverage of the DAPL protests [here](#) . For a summary of the judge’s decision, see the [New York Times report](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [AFL–CIO](#), [Dakota Access Pipeline](#), [Energy policy](#), [First Nations](#), [Journalism](#), [labour union policies](#), [North American Building Trades Unions](#), [Protests & Rallies](#) | [1 Reply](#)

How can I make a difference?

Posted on **October 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Some inspirational excerpts from Bill McKibben’s recent blog, [The Question I get asked the Most](#), in which he argues that “What can I do to make a difference?” is the wrong question ... ” Because

if individual action can't alter the momentum of global warming, movements may still do the trick. Movements are how people organize themselves to gain power—enough power, in this case, to perhaps overcome the financial might of the fossil fuel industry.... So when people ask me what can I do, I know say the same thing every time: The most important thing an individual can do is not be an individual. Join together—that's why we have movements like [350.org](#) or [Green for All](#), like [BlackLivesMatter](#) or [Occupy](#). If there's not a fight where you live, find people to support, from Standing Rock to the Pacific islands. Job one is to organize and jobs two and three. And if you have some time left over after that, then by all means make sure your lightbulbs are all LEDs and your kale comes from close to home."

And for some practical examples: the [Good Anthropocene](#) website has posted 100 stories about "practical, community-based initiatives that enhance people's health and well-being, while at the same time protecting their environment and benefiting the climate." These existing initiatives that are not widespread or well-known, which the site calls 'seeds', include: [Social change through "Social Ecology" in Montreal](#) and [Idle no more: Indigenous activists call for peaceful revolution](#). Good Anthropocene has been compiled by academics from Montreal, Stockholm, and Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [community action](#), [motivation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Habitat protection, supply management key concerns in review of Canada's Fisheries Act

Posted on **October 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada's Fisheries Act, last amended by the Conservative government in 2012, now clearly needs review. [Sustaining Canada's Major Fish Stocks](#), a highly critical audit of the management and conservation activities of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, was released by the Commissioner on Environment and Sustainable Development on October 4. The [response](#) by New Brunswick EcoAction states, "Several of the gaps and failings identified in the report can be addressed by a commitment to modernizing the Fisheries Act In other developed fishing nations, the fisheries legislation includes provisions for stock rebuilding and targets and timelines to guide this work. Canada's Fisheries Act has none of this, not even references to the precautionary or ecosystem approaches to fisheries management – which have been enshrined in international law for over 20 years." The CBC summary of the report was blunt: [Another cod-like collapse possible](#). Keith Sullivan, President of Fish Food and Allied Workers union (Unifor) appeared before the [House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans](#) at the end of September, [explaining the union's position](#) about the competitive need for quality more than quantity, in order [for the cod fishing industry to rebound](#). At present, 32 union harvesters are part of [a research project](#) to determine the best new techniques required to achieve this.

The Standing Committee has also been holding [hearings into the Wild Atlantic Salmon](#) . Advocacy group EcoJustice has launched a [court case](#) challenging the approval of genetically modified salmon in Prince Edward Island under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* , and a [separate case](#) against the Minister of Fisheries regarding B.C.'s salmon . West Coast Environment Law has recently [written about the threat to salmon](#) habitat from the approval of the Pacific North West LNG project in B.C. , with a full brief, *Scaling up the Fisheries Act* , which argues for changes to the legislation to identify and protect essential fish habitat .

On October 18, the federal government announced a public consultation as part of the [government's review of the Fisheries Act](#), part of the larger [Review of Environmental and Regulatory Processes](#) . The [Let's Talk Fish Habitat website](#) provides information and an opportunity to submit ideas.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Commercial Fisheries](#), [Environmental Protection](#), [Fisheries Industry](#), [Water Protection Legislation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Pension Plan: improved benefits, but still exposed to fossil fuel risk

Posted on **October 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Welcome as it is that the federal government [announced improvements](#) in the Canada Pension Plan on October 4, it would be even more welcome to know that the CPP Investment Board (CPPIB) was not risking our future pensions by remaining invested in the fossil fuel industry. Friends of the Earth Canada has launched a new campaign, [Time to Climate Risk-proof the CPP](#), which reveals that approximately 22% of the Canadian portfolio is invested in fossil fuel producers or pipeline companies, including coal. The Friends of the Earth campaign includes an online site called [Pension Power](#) , enabling ordinary Canadians to query their pension fund managers. It also calls on the CPPIB to sign onto the [Montreal Pledge](#), and the [Portfolio Decarbonization Coalition](#) (PDC), two United Nations Environmental Program initiatives that encourage institutional investors to decarbonize their portfolios and disclose risky assets. Anything less ignores the now-apparent decline of the fossil fuel industry and the shift to a low carbon world, and thus fails the fiduciary responsibility of institutional investors – to protect assets against risk.

Canada's Shareholder Association for Research and Education ([SHARE](#)) has published studies on the need for responsible investment; Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), Suncor Energy and NEI Investments published *Unburnable Carbon and Stranded Assets : What investors need to know* in January 2015, and Canada's Marc Carney, in his high profile role as Governor of the Bank of England and Chair of the international Financial Stability Board, [has been a world leader in](#)

[warning](#) about the dangers of stranded assets since 2015 . How can the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board have missed the message that other Canadians are so well aware of?

Further reading: For an overview of the international literature, see [Divestment and Stranded Assets in the Low-carbon Transition](#) from the OECD (Oct. 2015) or more recently: [Unconventional Risks: The Growing Uncertainty of Oil Investments](#) in July 2016; [Shorting the Climate](#) (from the Rainforest Alliance Network, BankTrack, Sierra Club and Oil Change International); “[New York City Pension Funds begin to craft a Fossil Fuel Divestment Path others can Follow](#)” (July 2016), and “[Fiduciary responsibility and climate change](#)” in *Corporate Knights* (Aug. 30).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada Pension Plan](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario’s energy landscape is changing: with access to Quebec hydro power, a consultation to update its Long Term Energy Plan, and beginning of the massive Darlington Nuclear Plant Refurbishment

Posted on **October 21, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Ontario and Quebec [announced](#) the conclusion of 7 agreements on October 21, including one will allow the two provinces to trade electricity, energy capacity and energy storage, and another to build more than 200 new high-speed charging stations for electric vehicles along the Highway 401 corridor by the end of March 2017. Ontario will be able to purchase electricity from Hydro Quebec from 2017 – 2023 – thus reducing costs to consumers and GhG emissions. See the CBC summary [here](#).

On October 13, Ontario announced that it is seeking public input to help develop the province’s next Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP) . The [Environmental Registry notice](#) includes most information, including the Discussion Guide, [Planning Ontario’s Energy Future](#) . The Registry also acts as a portal to receive written submissions until December 16, 2016 . Other technical documents and the 2013 version of the Long-Term Energy Plan are posted [here](#) ; detailed information about the public meetings throughout the province in October and November is [here](#) . Also related to the energy file: [the announcement](#) on October 19 of the *Ontario Rebate for Electricity Consumers Act, 2016*, which promises to reduce electricity bills by 8 per cent (more for rural consumers) as of January 2017.

And the October 14 [announcement](#) that the Darlington Nuclear Power Plant Refurbishment project has begun, at a projected cost of \$12.8 billion, to be completed by 2026. (The decision [had been announced](#) in January 2016) . Ontario Power Generation (OPG) commissioned and funded an analysis of the economic impact of the continued operation of Darlington, from 2017 to 2055 ; the report, conducted by the Conference Board of Canada, is available [here](#) . Regarding job creation, the report estimates “The combined impact of the refurbishment and continued operation of Darlington Station is projected to increase employment by 704,000 person-years between 2010 and 2055.” See the OPG website dedicated to the Darlington Refurbishment [here](#).



Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Darlington Nuclear Power](#), [Energy policy](#), [Nuclear energy](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Pricing now covering 13% of global GHG emissions; Canadian and U.S. developments

Posted on **October 21, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The World Bank released the *State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2016* report on October 18, which measures the growing momentum of carbon markets: in 2016, 40 national jurisdictions and over 20 cities, states, and regions are putting a price on carbon, including seven out of 10 of the world's largest economies. About 13 percent of global GHG emissions are now covered by carbon pricing initiatives. Drawing on new economic modelling, the report also predicts that this coverage

could increase by the largest leap ever in 2017, to between 20 – 25 percent, if the Chinese national Emissions Trading System (ETS) is implemented in 2017 as planned .

Carbon pricing in Canada continues to draw opinion and reaction, including from Toby Sanger, a Senior Economist at CUPE and a member of the Federal Sustainable Development Advisory Council, who reiterates a call for Just Transition and equity considerations in [“How to offset the hardship of carbon pricing”](#) in the *Ottawa Citizen* (Oct. 6) . Andrew Gage at West Coast Environmental Law (Oct. 17) asks important questions about the price levels, scope, and timing of the national carbon price proposals currently under consideration in [“Will Canada’s national carbon price clean up our climate mess?”](#) . His blog includes consideration of the impact on B.C., and sends a message for Saskatchewan: “So suck it up, Mr. Wall – it’s time to pay the carbon price and get on board with a national plan to deal with Canada’s climate mess”. And a blog from Keith Brooks at Environmental Defence takes issue from an Ontario viewpoint with a recent Fraser Institute criticism of the Trudeau carbon pricing proposal in [“Stupid or Just Lying? What’s up with the Fraser Institute?”](#) (Oct. 13).

In the U.S., all eyes are on the State of Washington, where a ballot question in the November 8 election will decide whether Washington becomes the first state in the U.S. with a carbon tax. The [Washington Carbon Emission Tax and Sales Tax Reduction](#) question, known as Initiative 732 (I-732) is modelled after B.C.’s carbon tax, but has divided traditional left and environmental allies, with the Alliance for Clean Jobs and Energy and the Washington District Labor Council opposed to the initiative, and the Sierra Club and others taking a “do not support” position. For background, see the excellent overview (with links) at [Ballotpedia](#), or [“How a tax on carbon has divided Northwest climate activists”](#) in the *Los Angeles Times* (Oct. 13) .

Proposals for carbon pricing designs: A new policy brief released by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) in Waterloo, Ontario proposes a [carbon-fee-and-dividend \(CFD\) program](#) , which has been advocated by the Citizens’ Climate Lobby. [How the United States Can Do Much More on Climate and Jobs](#) envisions a federal program which would collect a carbon fee from coal, oil and natural gas producers and importers, and distribute all the revenue (after administrative costs) directly to American households in equal per capita monthly dividends. To address fears of carbon leakage, the program would include a border adjustment, authorizing a special duty on imports from countries lacking equivalent carbon pricing. The paper concludes with arguments as to why this is the most likely- to- succeed political option.

Another U.S. discussion paper, from Resources for the Future, [Adding Quantity Certainty to a Carbon Tax](#), defines and discusses the multitude of design elements for a Tax Adjustment Mechanism for Policy Pre-Commitment (TAMPP) – which would adjust the tax rate of a carbon tax at intermediate benchmark points if emissions reductions deviate sufficiently to threaten the long-term targets . The paper argues that the approach should be rule-based with a clear and transparent adjustment process to reduce unnecessary uncertainty for investment.

Saskatchewan backs CCS and Nuclear power in its Climate Change Plan

Posted on **October 20, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The *White Paper on Climate Change* released by Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall on October 18 makes 13 recommendations in the hopes of redirecting the national conversation away from a national carbon pricing policy, as [introduced by Prime Minister Trudeau on October 3](#). A [CBC report headlined](#) one of the proposals, to “redeploy” \$2.65 billion in federal funds for developing countries to invest in clean technologies, but the real story is that Saskatchewan’s *White Paper* continues to reject the national carbon pricing scheme, advocating instead for innovative technology such as next-generation carbon capture and storage (CCS), and nuclear power. The *Climate Examiner* from PICS provides a [thorough summary of the White Paper](#). [Climate Justice Saskatoon’s reaction](#) calls for carbon pricing and technological solutions together, and the [Pembina Institute states](#) that Premier Wall is out of step with climate reality by remaining outside the fold of provincial support for carbon pricing.

The Saskatchewan’s Boundary Dam Carbon Capture and Storage project which Premier Wall holds up as his solution is the world’s first large-scale application of carbon capture technology in a power plant, according to a profile in the [Smart Prosperity newsletter](#) (October 13). [SaskWind](#), a community-owned wind and solar project, released a [report in March 2015](#) which concluded that Boundary Dam generated losses of over of \$1-billion, which Saskatchewan’s electricity consumers must pay for. The [Boundary Dam website](#) provides its own statistics.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Boundary Dam](#), [carbon capture and storage](#), [CCS](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

EU trade unions and the transition to low carbon industry: an opportunity to create jobs

Posted on **October 11, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In introducing a new report on October 5, the Confederal Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) said, “Most trade unions see the transition to low-carbon industry as an opportunity to create industrial growth and jobs, but many workers understandably fear widespread job losses.” The report, [*Industrial regions and climate policies: towards a just transition?*](#), summarizes the results of questionnaire sent to ETUC affiliates in 17 countries. 31 responses were received, and the report provides case studies from seven, in the following regions: Yorkshire and the Humber in the UK, North Rhine Westphalia in Germany, Asturias in Spain, Antwerp area in Belgium, Norbotten in Sweden, Stara Zagora in Bulgaria, and Silesia in Poland. They generally provide an overview of the low-carbon policies of unions, government policies, and union involvement with policy formation in each region. Overall in the EU, responses indicated trade unions were involved in the development process of a national industrial strategy in 75% of cases, usually through tripartite bodies. There were few responses regarding training initiatives. In conclusion, the ETUC calls for a socially just transition to low-carbon economy which will include consultation and participation of trade unions and employers to manage decarbonization of industry; accelerated deployment of breakthrough low-carbon technologies; investment in skills for a socially just transition to a low-carbon economy; attention to the social impacts of decarbonization .

This report updates the information [from a 2014 report](#), and is the result of a two-year research project.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [ETUC](#), [European Union](#), [Green Economy](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Mars](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Renewable energy news: Alberta, Ontario, U.S. and International statistics show a “broad shift to clean energy” investment

Posted on [October 11, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

As part of its Climate Leadership Plan, Alberta launched the [Alberta Indigenous Solar Program \(AISP\)](#) and the [Alberta Indigenous Community Energy Program \(AICEP\)](#) on October 5. With a total budget of \$2.5 million, the two programs are directed at First Nations and Metis communities, to undertake pilot projects for renewable energy and energy efficiency audits. Alberta next issued a [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) on October 6, for procuring solar power for half of government operations , anticipating that it will lead to Western Canada’s first solar farm. See “[Here comes](#)

the sun: [Alberta Plans to establish first solar farms](#)” from the *Edmonton Journal* (Oct. 6) and an item that appeared before the government announcement, “[Growing list of solar projects in wings as Alberta moves to replace coal](#)” at CBC (Sept. 15).

In a surprising change of direction at the end of September, the Ontario government announced the cancellation of a second round of renewable energy procurement that would have added 1,000 megawatts of wind and solar power to the province’s grid. Existing FIT and MicroFIT projects will be unaffected, but the government hopes to put a lid on electricity cost increases for consumers by avoiding the costs of building infrastructure. See the government [press release](#) ; “[Spooked Ontario Liberals Retreat From Green Goals](#)” from the Energy Mix ; “[Why did the Liberals backtrack on their renewable energy plan?](#)” from TVO, or “[Wind Industry shocked as Ontario halts LRP Mechanism](#)” in *North American WindPower*.

In the U.S. , the federal Department of Energy released its [National Offshore Wind Strategy](#) on September 9, with a goal of generating enough electricity from offshore wind to power 23 million homes.

And from the International Energy Agency in mid-September, the first in a new annual report series, [World Energy Investment 2016](#), with the stated premise that investment is “ the lifeblood of the global energy system”. Statistics show the state of investment in energy across technologies, sectors and regions around the world; they reveal a “broad shift towards cleaner energy”, with \$313 billion invested in renewables in 2015. Though this is flat in dollar terms, it produced 33% more energy due to improved wind and solar technology. A further \$221 billion was invested in energy efficiency. While oil and gas investment was still tops in 2015, it declined by 25% from 2014 and is projected to decline a further 24% in 2016.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Energy Investment](#), [First Nations](#), [Ontario](#), [renewable energy](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Business and government gather at Climate Week NYC

Posted on **October 11, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Many publications and press statements were released to coincide with Climate Week NYC 2016, a gathering of businesses and government officials in New York City from September 19 – 26. A sampling brings some insight into business/climate thinking. For example, General Motors was one of several companies joining the [energy campaigns of RE100](#) , a global initiative of companies committed to transitioning to 100% renewable power. (A sister campaign, [EP100](#), works with businesses committed to doubling their energy productivity) . GM’s [stated goal](#) to meet 100% of its electricity needs with renewable energy by 2050 includes about 350 facilities in 59 countries, including both manufacturing and non-manufacturing buildings . The CEO is quoted as saying that

GM wants to contribute to cleaner air “while strengthening our business through lower and more stable energy costs.” Further, in [GM Details its 100% Renewable Goal](#) : “Renewable energy offers more stable pricing options than traditional energy sources like fossil fuel, reducing the price volatility caused by external threats like government relations and natural disasters. Wind energy is already price competitive with traditional forms of energy and we expect the price of solar power to continue to decrease as demand grows.” Related reading: GM’s [2015 Sustainability Report](#) and its environmental blog, [GM Green](#) .

From CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project) , [Embedding a carbon price into business strategy](#) : based on responses from over 5,000 companies, the report states that 1,200 companies either plan to or currently place an internal price on carbon. Why? Could be the cost of capital, as signalled in the Forward: “As public pension funds, CalSTRS and AP4 have hundreds of thousands of members and stakeholders relying on the secure retirement future that we are here to provide in perpetuity—it is absolutely critical that we take action to guard against this risk [climate change].....“As the momentum for full disclosure in this area increases, we will not only be looking at company emissions but also analyzing how climate risk mitigation is embedded within their corporate strategies. Those companies who show investors and owners that they take this issue seriously and have a plan in place to tackle it will enjoy a lower cost of capital in the future against those that don’t.”

Consultants EY and the UN Global Compact published a report, [The State of Sustainable Supply Chains](#), based on interviews with 70 companies. From the introduction: “Over the past few years, sustainability has been added to the procurement and sourcing criteria for many companies. Workforce health and safety incidents, labor disputes, geopolitical conflicts, raw materials shortages, environmental disasters and new legislation in areas such as conflict minerals and modern slavery have contributed to the growing awareness of supply chain risks among customers, consumers, investors, employees and local communities.”.... Overall, the results of the study show that by improving environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance throughout their supply chains, companies can enhance processes, save costs, increase labor productivity, uncover product innovation, achieve market differentiation and have a significant impact on society.” This report is complemented by the website: UN Global Compact [Sustainable Supply Chains: Resources and Practices](#) .

In October, CDP North America released a report discussing the “paradigm shift” in the importance attributed to the “total cost of ownership”, or life cycle of products. With examples from the U.S. military and the IT industry, it concludes that “It has become a business necessity because it saves money, smooths operations, diminishes risk in supply chains and opens new business opportunities.” See: [A paradigm shift in total cost of ownership](#) From procurement to product innovation:How companies are hardwiring sustainability across the value chain to future-proof their business.

U.S. Labour Resolutions to fight climate change

Posted on **October 11, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The most recent e-bulletin from the Labor Network for Sustainability in the U.S. highlights the Labor Convergence Conference which they convened in January 2016. The [Convergence website](#) includes a draft version of [Principles](#), with a strong statement on environmental justice. It concludes: “As workers and trade unionists we will either initiate change or be the victims of it. We hereby resolve to use our power to reshape the economic, political, and social system in the interests of all the world’s people who are threatened by climate change.” Also from the Convergence conference, a statement of [Goals and Strategies](#), with one of the first year goals to “Create a Labor Resolution on Climate Justice”. Some Convergence members have passed resolutions within their own unions: see the American Postal Workers Union resolution, “[Climate Change, Jobs and Justice](#)”, passed August 21, 2016 and the International Association of Machinists Local 1746 [Climate Change Resolution](#) passed in September 2016.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New agreement to curb emissions from global aviation is welcome but weak

Posted on **October 8, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A landmark agreement for the world’s aviation industry was reached on October 6 at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) meetings in Montreal. The global [Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation \(CORSIA\)](#) will apply to the world’s international passenger and cargo flights (approximately 85% of aviation activity), requiring the airlines to buy carbon credits or fund projects that offset their greenhouse gas emissions. The agreement is voluntary from 2021 to 2026, and becomes mandatory in 2027. A [Fact Sheet from the White House](#) explains the nuts and bolts of the agreement. Widely hailed as a first step in finally addressing the emissions of the airline industry, the agreement has also been criticized for being too weak. The [International Coalition on Sustainable Aviation](#) “recognizes the agreement as a hard-fought political compromise to see that aviation contributes its fair share in the climate change fight, but critical work remains to ensure environmental integrity and broad participation..... countries sent a worrying signal by deleting key provisions for the aviation agreement that would align its ambitions with the Paris Agreement’s aim of limiting global temperature rise to well below

2 degrees with best efforts to not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius.” The [Coalition’s press release](#) also contrasts the pros and cons of the agreement. See also overview at [Think Progress](#) ; and [an article in Climate Home](#) which summarizes responses from environmentalists and the industry. The International Council on Clean Transportation, (the folks who exposed the VW diesel scandal), point to a superior route: rather than shifting emissions around, airlines should adopt new technologies, as



described in their September report, *Cost assessment of near- and mid-term technologies to improve new aircraft fuel efficiency* .

The large air carriers in Canada are members of the [National Airlines Council of Canada](#), who in 2005 signed a joint industry-government Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and in 2012 partnered with the federal government in [Canada’s Action Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Aviation](#). See the NACC website for details of the technological and operational measures taken to reduce emissions to date. For Air Canada, see their Corporate Sustainability Report for 2015 [here](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Aviation Industry](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [international agreements](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

More proof that green buildings are better for workers

Posted on **October 7, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The health impact of green workplaces was the subject of a new article, *The Impact of Working in a Green Certified Building on Cognitive Function and Health* , by researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and SUNY Upstate Medical University. Researchers studied 109 workers at 10 buildings and found that employees who worked in certified green buildings had higher cognitive function scores, fewer sick building symptoms and higher sleep quality scores than those working in non-certified buildings. The research was sponsored by United Technologies. For an overview of ongoing research at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health , go to its [Nature, Health and the Built Environment website](#) . Other related information is available at the World Green Building Council’s “[Better Places for People](#)” website .

From a management point of view, an article in the *Harvard Business Review*, “[Air Pollution making office workers less productive](#)” (September 29) reports on the effect of air pollution on call-center workers at Ctrip, China’s largest travel agency. The authors conclude that these office workers are 5%–6% more productive when air pollution levels are rated as “good” (an Air Quality Index of 0–50) versus when they are rated as unhealthy (an Air Quality Index of 150–200). Productivity was measured by completed calls each day, length of breaks, and time logged in.

All this points to the importance of green building. [World Green Building Week](#) began on September 26, 2016 – preceded by an agreement amongst the national green building councils from 10 countries (including Canada) to adopt zero net carbon certification programs by the end of 2017. See the World Green Building Council [press release](#) for a description of the meetings, including the [definition of “zero net carbon” \(ZNC\)](#) as advanced by the architectural network, [Architecture 2030](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [Architecture](#), [green buildings](#), [indoor air quality](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [office workers](#), [Productivity](#), [sick building syndrome](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Why has the Dakota Access Pipeline become a divisive issue for U.S. Labour?

Posted on **October 7, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota are continuing, according to [Democracy Now on October 7](#). On October 5, three U.S. federal judges [heard arguments](#) over whether to stop the construction, but they are not expected to make a ruling for three or four months. Meanwhile, Jeremy Brecher of the Labor Network for Sustainability released a new post , [Dakota Access Pipeline and the Future of American Labor](#), which asks “Why has this become a divisive issue within labor, and can it have a silver lining for a troubled labor movement?” The article discusses the AFL-CIO’s [statement](#) in support of the pipeline, and points to the growing influence of the North America’s Building Trades Unions’ within the AFL-CIO through their campaign of “stealth disaffiliation”. It also cites an “unprecedented decision” by the Labor Coalition for Community Action, an official constituency group of the AFL-CIO , to issue [their own statement](#) in support of the rights of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, in direct opposition to the main AFL-CIO position. The Climate Justice Alliance, an environmental justice group of 40 organizations, has also written to the AFL-CIO in an attempt to begin discussions. Brecher’s article concludes that the allies and activist members of the AFL-CIO are exerting increasing pressure, and asks “Isn’t it time?” for a dialogue which will shift direction and build a new fossil-free infrastructure which will also create jobs in the U.S. For unions interested in supporting the

protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, a [sample resolution for local unions](#) is available from the Climate Workers website.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [AFL–CIO](#), [community action](#), [Dakota Access Pipeline](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [First Nations](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada votes to ratify the Paris Climate Agreement

Posted on **October 7, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Paris Climate Agreement will enter into force on November 4, 2016, now that 73 nations accounting for nearly 57% of GHG emissions have formally ratified it: most recently, [India](#), the [European Union](#) and Canada. According to an [October 5 article](#) in *The Guardian*, even if Donald Trump were to win the U.S. presidency, the U.S. would be locked into the commitment for four years at least. See also “[The Paris Climate Agreement is entering into force. Now comes the hard part](#)” from the *Washington Post* (Oct. 4). Next step: the [COP 22 meetings scheduled for Marrakesh, Morocco](#) from November 7 – 18, which will include the first meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1).

In Canada, Members of Parliament voted by a margin of 207 to 81 to approve the Paris Agreement on October 5 – see the brief [government press release](#), or read the [CBC report](#); or coverage at the [National Observer](#), or the [Globe and Mail](#). Transcripts of the debates in the House of Commons are here, for [October 3](#) (Trudeau’s carbon pricing speech), [October 4](#) and [October 5](#) (when the vote was held).

Leading up to the Paris vote, in what has been called a “bombshell”, “ultimatum”, and “[his government’s most consequential and surprising day to date](#)”, Prime Minister Trudeau announced the “[Pan-Canadian Approach on Pricing Carbon Pollution](#)” in the House on October 3, requiring that provinces implement either a carbon tax (at a minimum price of \$10 a tonne in 2018, rising each year to \$50 a tonne by 2022) or a cap and trade system. “If neither price nor cap and trade is in place by 2018, the [government of Canada will implement a price in that jurisdiction](#)”. Provinces will retain revenues from whichever system they choose to implement.

An [article at the CBC](#) states that, “Trudeau’s pre-emptive announcement landed like a grenade” in the midst of the the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers’ meeting in Montreal, being chaired by Environment and Climate Change Minister McKenna. Delegates from Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia walked out of the room. For a summary of the political fight, see “[Premiers draw battle lines as Trudeau seeks support for carbon-pricing plan](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (Oct. 4). And see the Alberta government [press release](#) of October 3, which states, “Alberta will not be supporting this proposal absent serious concurrent progress on energy

infrastructure, to ensure we have the economic means to fund these policies.....Albertans have contributed very generously for many years to national initiatives designed to help other regions address economic challenges. What we are asking for now is that our landlock be broken, in one direction or another, so that we can get back on our feet.” A tough demand to meet, according to David Hughes’ report in June [“Can Canada Expand Oil and Gas Production, Build Pipelines and Keep Its Climate Change Commitments?”](#) .

Some reactions to the federal carbon pricing announcement: From the [Canadian Labour Congress](#): “The CLC applauds carbon pricing targets “As a next step, the CLC calls for a federal strategy to guarantee new opportunities for workers and communities impacted by the transition to a low-carbon economy.” From the [Climate Action Network](#) ; from the [Pembina Institute](#) (“Pan-Canadian carbon price is big, positive news for economy and environment”); from [DeSmog Canada](#) (The Good, bad and the ugly) . Generally supportive reaction also came from [Smart Prosperity](#), a group composed of twenty-two prominent business and civil society leaders (including WWF, Broadbent Institute, Clean Energy Canada, and the Pembina Institute) . Yet Marc Lee of the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis nails it in [“A Reality Check on a national carbon price”](#) (October 4): “It’s good news that Canada is starting to listen to climate science, but we are still left with a problem around the climate math” – which requires no new fossil fuel infrastructure. Bill McKibben, populizer of the term “climate math”, also [panned the Trudeau announcement](#) in the *National Observer* on Oct. 3. Read McKibben’s article [“Recalculating the Climate Math: The numbers on global warming are even scarier than we thought”](#) in the *New Republic* (September 22), which updates his earlier, frequently cited piece.

A useful overview to understand the Canadian situation: [Race to the Front](#), released by the Pembina Institute on September 28, with recommendations for the politicians and policy-makers in their Fall working meetings to finalize a “Pan Canadian” policy. [Race to the Front](#) summarizes Canada’s progress at reducing carbon pollution over the last decade, evaluates trends in Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions inventory, and summarizes existing national and provincial climate policy .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Canada](#), [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Climate change policy](#), [European Union](#), [India](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal Government approves Pacific NorthWest LNG project in B.C.

Posted on **September 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Is there a pattern emerging in the federal government's leanings regarding controversial energy projects? After its [approval of the Site C dam in B.C.](#) in August 2016, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced, late on the evening of September 27, approval with 190 conditions for the Pacific North West LNG project, to be built near Lelu Island, north of Prince Rupert, B.C. . See the Government of Canada [press release](#) and the full text of the [Decision Statement](#), including conditions, released by Canada Environment Assessment Agency. For summaries, read the the [Globe and Mail](#) (Sept. 28) or the [Vancouver Province](#) (Sept. 28) or the [National Observer](#) . CBC offers a brief analysis at "[Trudeau government at pains to explain Pacific West LNG](#)" at the CBC.

More reaction is sure to pour in as environmentalists analyse the Decision and conditions, but an [article in The Tyee](#) (Sept. 28) summarizes initial reactions by major environmental groups. The Pembina Institute's Matt Horne been writing about the climate change implications for a long time, as recently September 27 in IRPP's *Policy Options*, "[Cabinet should not allow BC's and Petronas' mistakes in Pacific NorthWest to be locked in for the next 30-plus years](#)". For Pembina's initial reaction, plus links to many earlier critiques, see "[Pacific NorthWest LNG approval is step backward for climate action in Canada](#)" .

B.C. also awaits a federal decision about the proposed expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline from Alberta to Burnaby, B.C., due in mid-December.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [BC LNG](#), [British Columbia](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Pricing carbon: views from Marc Jaccard and Unifor

Posted on **September 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Energy economist Marc Jaccard has [written previously](#) on the need for political reality in the discussion of carbon taxes. In September, he and colleagues at Simon Fraser University released a new paper [Is Win-Win Possible? Can Canada's Government Achieve Its Paris Commitment. . . and Get Re-Elected?](#). As described at [his own blog](#) , the report uses a national energy-economy model to simulate climate policy scenarios that explore the effect of current Canadian policies, and contrast the current policies with 1. "must-price-emissions" policies and 2. Flexible regulations, such as those in California. The alternative policy approach in *Is Win-Win possible* assumes that the federal government would apply flexible regulations in key sectors – transportation, electricity generation, industry, etc. – in conjunction with a modest emissions price, reaching \$40 by 2030.

Another carbon market piece, released in *iPolitics* at the end of August summarizes Unifor's position on Ontario's cap and trade regulations. "[Could Ontario's climate strategy trigger an industrial exodus? Not if the province acts now to blunt the effects](#)" by Jordan Brennan identifies industrial leakage as "an obvious threat" to the cap-and-trade program underway in Ontario. Stating that firms operating in emissions-intensive trade-exposed (EITE) industries ...(like auto manufacturing for instance ...) might relocate to jurisdictions that do not price carbon, Brennan summarizes recommendations that his union, Unifor, has made : " First, 'transition credits' should be allocated to industries that bear an extraordinary burden of change. Second, the cap-and-trade program should include a 'carbon price border adjustment' to ensure that commodities entering Ontario from jurisdictions without a carbon price (or with a lower price) do not gain an unfair cost advantage over Ontario producers. Third, the carbon revenue system should not be revenue-neutral. The Green Fund should be used for 'just transition' as well as mitigate the impact on low-income people and to foster the development of low-carbon technologies such as energy efficiency, retrofits and renewable energy." Unifor's public reaction to Ontario's Climate Action Plan in June 2016 is [here](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [industrial leakage](#), [labour union policies](#), [Ontario](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta keeps its options open with renewable energy targets and preliminary approvals for 3 oil sands projects

Posted on **September 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In addition to a commitment to phase out coal-fired power by 2030, on September 14, the Government of Alberta [announced](#) a firm target to generate 30 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources such as wind, hydro and solar by 2030. The [government press release](#) associates this target with a projection that "at least \$10.5 billion in new investment will flow into the provincial economy by 2030. This will mean at least 7,200 new jobs for Albertans as projects are built." The health benefits of shutting down coal plants are highlighted in [Breathing in the benefits: How an accelerated coal phase-out can reduce health impacts and costs for Albertans](#), a joint report from the Pembina Institute, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, the Lung Association of Alberta and NWT, and the Asthma Society of Canada, released on September 14.

On September 19, the government appointed a [Task Force](#), to be chaired by Gordon Lambert, to make recommendations on targeting investments in climate technology to help transition to a lower-carbon economy. Submissions are invited; a report will be submitted by the end of

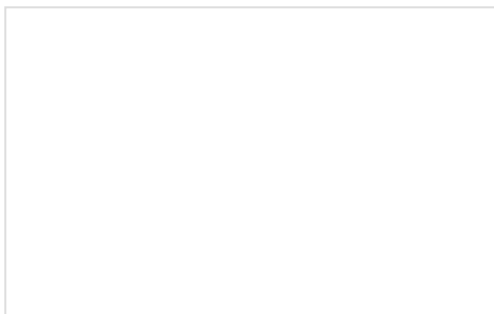
November, summarizing the findings of the engagement and providing recommendations for a provincial Climate Change Innovation and Technology Framework. Also underway: an [Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel](#) which was launched in June 2016 (see the Discussion Document [here](#)) and an [Oil Sands Advisory Group](#). But not all is renewable in Alberta: on September 15, the [government announced](#) early stage approval of 3 new oil sands projects, representing “about \$4 billion of potential investment into Alberta’s economy and about 95,000 barrels per day of production”. The proposed developments will still undergo further environmental reviews and will fall under the oil sands 100 megatonne greenhouse gas emissions limit, announced with Alberta’s Climate Leadership Plan.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [Alberta](#), [climate change and health](#), [Climate change policy](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International Criminal Court expands its priorities to include cases of environmental destruction

Posted on [September 26, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Criminal Court in The Hague, normally associated with war crimes of violence, on September 15 issued a [new Policy Paper](#) which expands the terms of its case selection and prioritization to include cases relating to “the destruction of the environment and the illegal exploitation of natural resources or the illegal dispossession of land.” The Guardian summarized developments on September 15: “[ICC widens remit to include environmental destruction cases](#)” in *The Guardian* (Sept. 15), and Global Witness issued a press release: “[Company executives could now be tried for land grabs and environmental destruction](#)”. The policy change comes as the Prosecutor of the ICC considers whether to investigate a 2014 case filing that catalogues mass human rights abuses linked to systematic land seizures in Cambodia. Global Witness, an advocacy group, published [On Dangerous Ground](#) in June 2016, documenting the extent of the problem: “More than three people were killed a week in 2015 defending their land, forests and rivers against destructive industries. ... we documented 185 killings across 16 countries – by far the highest annual death toll on record and more than double the number of journalists killed in the same period.”

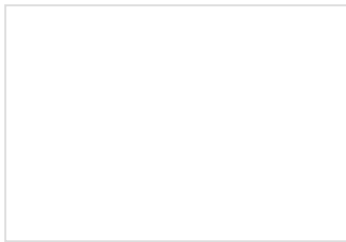


2015 was also the year of the murder of [Berta Cáceres](#), the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize-winner for her decade-long opposition to the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam on her community's land in Honduras.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Berta Cáceres](#), [Climate change Law](#), [environmental rights](#), [Human Rights](#), [International Criminal Court](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada falling behind in the Parade to Ratify the Paris Climate Agreement

Posted on **September 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



After a special ceremony at the United Nations on September 21, 2016, with 31 nations participating, the [U.N. announced](#) that 60 countries representing 48% of GHG emissions had formally joined the Paris Agreement. [Brazil had already ratified](#) on September 13, and Theresa May, Britain's new Prime Minister, had also [pledged to ratify the agreement](#) before the end of the year. Video messages from nations including Germany, France, the EU, Canada, Australia and South Korea all promised to ratify the Paris accord in the coming months. Importantly, a [Reuters report](#) on September 25 states that India, representing approximately 4% of global emissions, will ratify the agreement on October 2, the anniversary of Gandhi's birthday. See also the [Times of India report](#). Watch the [Paris Agreement Tracker](#) for the status of ratification as the world pushes to reach the trigger point of 55 nations which produce 55 percent of the global carbon dioxide pollution.

Where does Canada, responsible for approximately 1.9% of emissions, stand? Text of [Justin Trudeau's speech at the United Nations](#) on September 20 focused more on the needs of Syrian refugees than on our climate commitments. Official statements have not been forthcoming, but interviews indicate ["Canada to ratify Paris climate deal while still working on national plan"](#) (CBC, Sept. 16). Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna is scheduled to meet her provincial and territorial counterparts on October 3 in Montreal to discuss the options put forward by [the four working groups](#) formed at the Vancouver meetings last April. Their recommendations were due by the end of September. On September 18, the [Globe and Mail reported](#) that the federal government may impose a national carbon price plan, and that the emissions reduction target will not exceed that of the previous Conservative government: 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. See also ["Federal government sends mixed messages on how provinces can price carbon"](#) from the *National Observer* (September 25) for an update.

Parliament has now returned from summer recess, but a meeting between the Prime Minister and the premiers is not expected before the COP22 UN climate conference in Marrakech, Nov. 7-18.

Not only scientific urgency is pushing the recent global rush to ratify . On September 20, 2016, 375 members of the National Academy of Sciences of the U.S., including 30 Nobel laureates, published an [Open Letter](#) warning that the consequences of opting out of the Paris agreement would be severe and long-lasting for the planet's climate and for the international credibility of the United States. "The political system also has tipping points. Thus it is of great concern that the Republican nominee for President has advocated U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Accord. A "Parexit" would send a clear signal to the rest of the world: "The United States does not care about the global problem of human-caused climate change. You are on your own." Such a decision would make it far more difficult to develop effective global strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change. The consequences of opting out of the global community would be severe and long-lasting – for our planet's climate and for the international credibility of the United States."

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Recommendations by House of Commons committee is at odds with GHG reduction

Posted on **September 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources](#) released its second report, *[The Future of Canada's Oil and Gas Sector: Innovation, sustainable solutions and economic opportunities](#)* on September 21. The report summarizes the comments from 33 witnesses who appeared before the committee in 7 meetings, and makes recommendations, including: "1. The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to promote the benefits of investing in Canada's Natural Resources sectors, including oil and gas, which shall include the continued encouragement of innovation, research and development." And "2. The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada work in collaboration with industry and the indigenous, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to develop the supporting infrastructure needed to create a favourable environment for natural resource development and transportation, and to deliver oil and gas products to strategic domestic and international markets." The Dissenting Report from the Conservative members goes even further to support the fossil fuel industry, making 5 recommendations which include: "We strongly encourage the government not to impose any additional tax or regulation on the oil and gas sector or the Canadian consumer that our continental trading partners and competitors do not have. This includes measuring the upstream greenhouse gas emissions from pipelines..." The Opinion statement by the New Democratic Party members of the Committee calls for speedy, permanent

changes to the National Energy Board assessment process, and for the Government to honour its obligation for a Nation to Nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, including proper consultation and accommodation on all energy projects and the protection of Indigenous rights. The NDP also states its support for the testimony of Gil McGowan, President of the Alberta Federation of Labour, calling for support for value-added development of the oil and gas industry, “because these kinds of investments not only create jobs directly in upgrading, refining, and petrochemicals but also create other jobs”.

Contrast these recommendations with the message released on the next day, September 22, by Oil Change International in its report, [The Sky's Limit](#) . The report states that developed reserves of oil and gas alone would take the world beyond 1.5°C, even if coal were phased out immediately, and lists examples of some of the biggest projects around the world that cannot go ahead – in the U.S., Canada, Australia, India, Russia, Qatar and Iran . It concludes that “To stay within our carbon budgets, we must go further than stopping new construction: some fossil fuel extraction assets must be closed before they are exploited fully. These early shut-downs should occur predominantly in rich countries.” (This urgency is in the spirit of a recent Dutch parliamentary vote in favour of closing down all remaining coal-generation power plants, even though 3 of them were just opened in 2015: see the [article in The Guardian](#)).

The *Sky's the Limit* states further, “extraction should not continue where it violates the rights of local people – including indigenous peoples – nor should it continue where resulting pollution would cause intolerable health impacts or seriously damage biodiversity.” Finally, in a discussion of Just Transition, “The most critical questions lie in how industry and policymakers will conduct an orderly and managed decline of fossil fuel extraction, with robust planning for economic and energy diversification.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta Federation of Labour](#), [Canada](#), [Carbon Budget](#), [Energy policy](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition: U.S. viewpoints and 2 new Policy proposals

Posted on **September 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“*Just Transition: Just What Is It?: An Analysis of Language, Strategies, and Projects*” is a paper published by the Labor Network for Sustainability, along with Strategic Practice: Grassroots Policy Project. It traces the history of the Just Transition concept from a U.S. point of view, starting with the Jobs for Peace movement post-WW2, to the Super Fund for Workers initiated by Oil Chemical, and Atomic Workers leader Tony Mazzocchi, to the adoption of the idea by the environmental movement, the resistance that has developed to the “just transition” idea within much of organized labor, and finally to the adoption of the term and its reinterpretation by the environmental justice and climate justice movements. An analysis of policy is followed by seven

“mini-case studies” of concrete social experiments, and the paper concludes with a series of questions which aim to bring a common vision to the fight for Just Transition. The report is based on 17 interviews conducted between October, 2015 and March, 2016. Leaders of the following organizations reflect on their experiences and interpretations of “Just Transition”: Climate Justice Alliance; GreenWave; National People’s Action; New Economy Coalition; ALIGN: The Alliance for Greater New York ; Asian Pacific Environmental Network; Buffalo PUSH; Kentuckians For The Commonwealth; Movement Generation; AFL-CIO; Black Workers for Justice; BlueGreen Alliance; Labor Network for Sustainability; Oregon AFL-CIO; North Carolina League of Conservation Voters; and Sierra Club.

A related paper, jointly published by the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) and the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER), is another example of the many policy proposals to achieve Just Transition. The unique aspect in [Beyond a Band-Aid: A Discussion Paper on Protecting Workers and Communities in the Great Energy Transition](#), is the proactive approach to Just Transition strategy, calling for direct investments to be made in local economies dependent on fossil fuel jobs before devastating economic disruption begins. A Community and Worker Protection Fund (CWP Fund) is proposed to replace the taxes and fees paid by fossil fuel facilities; it would make targeted investments designed to create jobs, before or at the pace that fossil fuel jobs are declining. Job creation would be directed at such initiatives as renewable energy, HVAC conversion, decommissioning fossil fuel facilities, and economic diversification. The paper also discusses possible ways to pay for the CWP Fund, including: levying a “modest” carbon fee or tax, or eliminating fossil fuel subsidies and tax breaks.

Also, from the Labor Center at the University of California, Berkeley, comes [Advancing Equity in California Climate Policy: A New Social Contract for Low-Carbon Transition](#). (Executive Summary [here](#)). This paper, directed at advocacy groups, lawmakers and regulators, proposes a “Climate Policy Equity Framework” and uses it to evaluate California’s climate policies to date, using three principles: Environmental Justice; Economic Equity; and Public Accountability. It also applies the Framework to two cases of statewide GHG reduction strategies, one in the area of energy efficiency and the other in renewable energy. Finally, the report recommends strategies to build a social contract as part of the effort to restructure to a greener economy, “to move beyond a “lowest common denominator” approach towards a proactive equity agenda” with greater public accountability.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [California](#), [Climate Justice](#), [displaced workers](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

First Nations provide a model for activism and for sustainable development

Posted on **September 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Headlines most often go towards legal efforts or protests of First Nations to block pipelines and development – most recently, against the [Site C dam in B.C.](#) and the [Standing Rock protests](#) against the Dakota Access Pipeline in the U.S. But until the September visit by British royalty prompted articles in the [Globe and Mail](#) and [Maclean's magazine](#), few people knew about the sustainable economic development efforts of the First Nations of Haida Gwaii on the B.C. coast. Significant projects have been funded by [Coast Funds](#), a partnership of private foundations and the B.C. and Canadian governments. Founded in 2007 with a mandate to invest to strengthen the well-being of First Nations and the ecological integrity of the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii regions, Coast Funds has approved over \$70 million towards 297 conservation and sustainable development projects in the region. [Their website](#) provides statistics – for example, that First Nations have created 501 permanent new jobs held by First Nation community members through projects supported by Coast Funds (equivalent to 9% of the working age population of First Nations). Perhaps more importantly, the case studies provide models of sustainable community economies based on [ecotourism](#), a [sustainable fishery](#), and [sustainable forestry](#).

Similar benefits are described by the T'Sou-ke Nation at their [website](#), describing their solar and ecotourism initiatives since 2008. And Greenpeace also recently profiled a First Nations solar project in Alberta, in "[Louis Bull First Nation is Making a Solar Transition](#)".

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Standing Rock Sioux Nation protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline: A turning point for Indigenous solidarity

Posted on **September 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline have been underway since August; the [Standing Rock Sioux Nation](#) through whose land the pipeline would pass say that it would damage the Missouri River, their water supply, as well as sacred sites. [Environmentalists object](#) to its capacity of 570,000-barrels-per-day of oil from North Dakota's Bakken shale formation, representing GHG emissions equivalent to 29.5 coal plants. For a chronology and in-depth coverage of the issue, go to [Democracy Now](#), whose reporter Amy Goodman brought the world's attention to the protests with her [video report on September 6](#), showing security personnel attacking protestors with

mace and dogs. The [Indigenous Environment Network](#) also offers frequent updates. On September 9, a U.S. court denied the Sioux Nation's request for an emergency restraining order against the project; hours later, the White House intervened to order a halt on the disputed section, and the Department of Justice, the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior issued a [Joint Statement](#) withdrawing the Army's authorization for construction until it can determine whether it needs to revisit any of its previous decisions regarding the Lake Oahe site. Furthermore, from the Joint Statement: "this case has highlighted the need for a serious discussion on whether there should be nationwide reform with respect to considering tribes' views on these types of infrastructure projects. Therefore, this fall, we will invite tribes to formal, government-to-government consultations on two questions: (1) within the existing statutory framework, what should the federal government do to better ensure meaningful tribal input into infrastructure-related reviews and decisions and the protection of tribal lands, resources, and treaty rights; and (2) should new legislation be proposed to Congress to alter that statutory framework and promote those goals." Even before the White House intervention, the *Washington Post* acknowledged the importance of this dispute in "[Showdown over oil pipeline becomes a national movement for Native Americans](#)" (Sept. 7); for a more up-to-date appraisal see an article at *Think Progress* which acknowledges the long legal road ahead, but calls the DAPL a turning point.

On September 22, in ceremonies in Vancouver and Montreal, [at least 50 First Nations from Canada and the U.S.](#) (including the Standing Rock Sioux) signed on to the Treaty Alliance against Oils Sands Expansion, which pledges coordinated opposition to projects that will expand the production of the Alberta Tar Sands, including the transport of oil sands products by pipeline, rail or tanker. That includes "all five current tar sands pipeline and tanker project proposals – Kinder Morgan, Energy East, Line 3, Northern Gateway and Keystone XL. The Treaty, as well as the background to it, is available [here](#) .

In the U.S., the "jobs vs. the environment" controversy has surfaced again over the DAPL. See the [August press release](#) from the Laborers' International Union which states: "Today, the General Presidents of four skilled craft unions, Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and United Association (UA), sent a letter to the North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple encouraging him to use the power of his office to protect the jobs of thousands of American workers who are lawfully constructing the Dakota Access Pipeline." On September 15, the AFL-CIO issued a [statement](#) calling on the Obama administration to allow construction to continue, saying "it is fundamentally unfair to hold union members' livelihoods and their families' financial security hostage to endless delay. The Dakota Access Pipeline is providing over 4,500 high-quality, family supporting jobs." Other U.S. unions, including the National Nurses Union, Amalgamated Transit Union, and United Electrical Workers, are supporting the DAPL protests: see *Portside* coverage [here](#) (Sept 17), [here](#) (Sept. 19), and see analysis at "[As Tribes Fight Pipeline, Internal AFL-CIO Letter Exposes 'Very Real Split'](#)" in *Common Dreams* (Sept. 22).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [AFL-CIO](#), [Dakota Access Pipeline](#), [First Nations](#), [labour union policies](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pipeline Jobs](#), [Protests & Rallies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

In Case you missed it: Some policy landmarks over the summer

Posted on **September 12, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Ontario, Quebec and Mexico agree to promote carbon markets in North America: On August 31, at the [2016 Climate Summit of the Americas](#), the three jurisdictions [announced](#) a [joint declaration](#) which states: “The Partners are determined to jointly promote the expansion of carbon market instruments for greenhouse gas emissions reduction in North America.” See the *Globe and Mail* summary [here](#).

Alberta appoints an Oil Sands Advisory Group: On July 14, Alberta appointed a 15-member [Oil Sands Advisory Group](#) to provide expert advice on how to implement its 100 megatonne per year carbon emissions limit for the oil sands industry, and on “a pathway to 2050, including responding to federal and other initiatives that may affect the oil sands after 2030.” Co-chairs appointed are: Climate and energy advocate [Tzeporah Berman](#), Melody Lepine of the Mikisew Cree First Nation, and Dave Collyer, former president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.

New Brunswick Climate Action Committee: The government’s [Select Committee on Climate Change](#) held public hearings and accepted submissions over the summer. In July, New Brunswick’s Conservation Council produced its “[Climate Action Plan for New Brunswick](#)”. It proposes to reduce GHG emissions through investments in retrofitting, starting with social and low-income housing; expand renewable energy; provide incentives for electric and energy efficient vehicles; modernize industry and manufacturing to reduce waste and pollution, and accelerate installation of the Energy Internet (Smart Grid telecommunications) to manage a more distributed electricity load. These investments would help NB Power phase coal out of electricity production over the next 15 years.

U.S. and China formally join the Paris Agreement: On September 3, the eve of the G20 Summit in Hangzhou China, the two countries responsible for almost 40% of the world’s GHG emissions announced that they will formally ratify the Paris Accord. See [coverage in *The Guardian*](#); “[U.S. and China formally join historic Paris climate agreement; Canada not yet ready](#)” in the *Globe and Mail*; “[Landmark China-U.S. climate breakthrough elicits tepid response](#)” from *Weekly Climate Review*. Check the [Climate Analytics website](#) for their “ratification tracker”, which on September 9 states “it is estimated that at least 58 countries are likely to have ratified the Paris Agreement by the end of 2016, accounting for 59.88% of global emissions. Under this scenario, the Paris Agreement will entry into force by the end of the year.” The website has details country-by-country.

New U.S. fuel standards for heavy-duty vehicles after model year 2018: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration jointly finalized standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, to

improve fuel efficiency and cut carbon pollution. Heavy duty vehicles include: combination tractors (semi trucks), heavy-duty pickup trucks and vans, and vocational vehicles (including buses and garbage or utility trucks). The [new rule and an archive of related documents](#) is available at the EPA website . The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy [applauds the new rules](#); as does the trucking industry, according to the [New York Times coverage](#) . Canada is expected to follow suit, based on the the [Joint Leaders' statement](#) from the Three Amigos Summit, June 29, : “Canada, the U.S., and Mexico commit to reduce GHG emissions from light- and heavy-duty vehicles by aligning fuel efficiency and/or GHG emission standards by 2025 and 2027, respectively. We also commit to reduce air pollutant emissions by aligning air pollutant emission standards for light- and heavy-duty vehicles and corresponding low-sulphur fuel standards beginning in 2018. In addition, we will encourage greener freight transportation throughout North America by expanding the SmartWay program to Mexico.” Canada last updated its [emission standards for heavy-duty trucks](#) in 2013, covering up to model year 2018.

California continues to lead with landmark legislation: California legislation (SB32) [was passed in late August](#), and signed by Governor Jerry Brown on September 8, requiring the state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 . An [economic analysis](#) by consulting firm Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) was released during the public debate around SB32, claiming that thousands of jobs had been created in every District of the state by the predecessor *Global Warming Solutions Act*. See the press release [here](#). And the 8th annual edition of [California's Green Innovation Index](#) by Next10 quantifies a booming clean energy economy, with solar generation increased by 1,378 percent in the past 5 years. “[California's Historic Climate Legislation becomes Law](#)” from *Think Progress* is typical of the superlatives throughout the news coverage.

As evidence of California's important leadership role: on August 1, New York's Public Service Commission [approved the Clean Energy Standard](#) which mandates that 50 percent of the New York state's electricity will come from renewable, clean energy sources by 2030 . California had passed legislation in 2015 to mandate utilities to provide 50 percent of their electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030, and require a 50 percent increase in energy efficiency in buildings by 2030.

Minority Report challenges Australia's Climate Change policies: Australia's Climate Change Authority released a report at the end of August: [Towards a climate policy toolkit: Special Review of Australia's climate goals and policies](#) . Authority experts David Karoly and Clive Hamilton so disagreed with the majority report that they issued their own [Minority Report](#) (see the press release [here](#)) . Clive Hamilton stated “The majority report gives the impression that Australia has plenty of time to implement measures to bring Australia's emissions sharply down. This is untrue and dangerous”.

Shift in Climate Change policy in the U.K. government: The new post-Brexit government of Theresa May has made “ a stupid and deeply worrying” decision [according to The Independent](#) , by moving the work of the Department for Environment and Climate Change to a new “[Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#).” Reassurance from the June adoption of a world-leading GHG emissions reduction target, as reported in *The Guardian* [here](#) and [here](#) ,

has been challenged. The [BBC reported](#) that “Just days after the United Kingdom committed to cut greenhouse gas emissions 57% from 1990 levels by 2032, the country’s grid operator reported this morning that the country will miss its existing EU long-term targets for 2020, unless it adopts more aggressive clean energy policies.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Australia](#), [California](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [China](#), [COP21](#), [Fuel Emission Standards](#), [New Brunswick](#), [New York State](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Ontario](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [Trucking Industry](#), [United Kingdom](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Pricing: Important, Complicated, but only part of the solution

Posted on [September 11, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Prime Minister Trudeau, in [an interview with CBC news](#) on July 22 after the Premiers’ meetings in Whitehorse, stated that a price on carbon is an “essential element” of Canada’s climate change plan and the federal government is “going to make sure there is a strong price on carbon right across the country”. Premier Brad Wall of Saskatchewan is the most vocal of the Premiers opposed to carbon pricing: see [“Saskatchewan threatens legal clash over nationwide carbon price”](#). There’s been no shortage of reports on the issue: most recently, [The Least Costly Path to Climate Action](#) was released by think tank Clean Prosperity on August 25. Dave Sawyer and Chris Bataille were commissioned as co-authors to model the economic performance, environmental effectiveness, and scalability of two carbon pricing alternatives: a “pure carbon tax” modelled on the B.C. program, and a “hybrid” scenario based on Alberta’s system. Both scenarios assumed the carbon price would rise from \$30 per tonne in 2018 to roughly \$110 per tonne by 2030. Among the conclusions: “When applied to key jurisdictions and Canada-wide, the hybrid carbon price policy actually boosts economic performance when compared to current and developing federal and provincial policies. For energy producing provinces, an Alberta-style hybrid carbon price model ... improves economic performance by 1.43% in Alberta and 4.23% in Saskatchewan.” The authors conclude: “We believe that adopting an Alberta-style hybrid carbon pricing policy, and recycling the revenues by reducing personal and corporate income taxes, represents the best way forward for Canadian governments” to achieve the goals of environmental and economic performance as well as a perception of regional fairness.

Other notable reports: On July 27, the EcoFiscal Commission released [Comparing Stringency of Carbon Pricing Policies](#) in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. Although the report provides numbers and rankings, [Energy Mix states](#) that “More important than the ranking of provincial carbon taxes may be the Ecofiscal Commission’s development of a methodology for

comparing dissimilar systems across the country.” Also in July, the C.D. Howe Institute published [A Blueprint for Going Green: The Best Policy Mix for Promoting Low-Emissions Technology](#), which concludes that “Supporting technology development means not only investing in new technologies but also creating demand for clean technologies in the broader economy, through carbon pricing.” Internationally, the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition of the World Bank released [Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition: What is the Impact of Carbon Pricing on Competitiveness?](#) in September.

Though important, carbon tax policy is only one aspect of climate change policy. An August 30 Opinion Piece in the *National Observer*, “[Carbon tax fetishism: We’re losing the plot on climate change](#)” reflects on the intense attention to carbon taxes, including in the public reaction to the B.C. Climate Leadership Plan. It argues that the attention to carbon taxes “sucks politicians, analysts, and journalists into groupthink, and the entire national climate conversation is losing the plot.” And “[5 reasons there’s more to climate policy than a price on carbon](#)” in Vox (June 28) defends Ontario’s cap and trade policy from the criticism in a June 10 *Globe and Mail* editorial. The Vox article is based on [an essay by Brendan Haley](#), which concludes “The sooner we dispel ourselves from the myth that the market alone will solve the climate change problem, the sooner we can start to ensure more technology and sector specific policy approaches are implemented effectively and democratically.” It’s complicated.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Jobs in Renewable Energy: the importance of Community Ownership, and the growth of good union jobs under California’s policies

Posted on **September 10, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the end of June, the Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative (TREC) released a report outlining the environmental, social, and economic benefits of locally owned and operated renewable power. [The Power of Community](#) calculates the direct and indirect economic impacts of a solar FIT community project and SolarShare power projects in Ontario since the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act*, and emphasizes the superior results when projects involve community ownership and participation. The TREC report cites a 2016 report published by the Community Energy Association, QUEST, and Sustainable Prosperity. [Community Energy Planning: The Value Proposition — Environmental, Health and Economic Benefits](#) reported that, for every \$1 million invested in building energy efficiency retrofits, over 9 person-years of permanent employment would be created within the province of Ontario. The TREC report also cites a 2014 study by

Institute for Local Self Reliance, [Advantage Local: Why Local Energy Ownership Matters](#), which states that community owned projects in the U.S. generally generate twice the number of jobs as commercially-run projects.

[The Link Between Good Jobs and a Low Carbon Future](#), released in June by the Don Vial Center on the Green Economy at Berkeley's Labor Center, examines large-scale clean energy construction projects in California. The key finding of the report is that these projects are creating high-paying, long-lasting blue-collar jobs, the majority of which are unionized. The report provides data measuring the quantity of job creation, but also pension and health insurance contributions as well as apprenticeship enrollments for the period 2002 – 2015. The situation is credited to California's unique Renewables Portfolio Standard, which allows for Project Labor Agreements (PLA's) between employers and building trades unions. Read the summary [here](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [California](#), [Community benefits](#), [Construction Industry](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Ontario Green Energy Act](#), [Project Labor Agreements](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Building organizations call for Zero Emissions by 2030, along with World Green Building Council. Vancouver and Victoria take action

Posted on **September 6, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In August, eleven organizations in Canada's building industry released a public letter to the Ministers of Natural Resources and of Environment and Climate Change, calling on the federal government to develop "strong action and new policy for the buildings sector". [Their letter](#) calls for a national plan with goals for 2030: retrofitting so that 30 per cent of existing building stock achieves energy reductions of 25 to 50 per cent, and "nearly zero" for all new construction. The letter also calls for a suite of policies relating to benchmarking, standards, building codes, and "support for education and training of professionals and trades involved in retrofit and new construction projects". Signatories to the letter are: Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance; Pembina Institute; Toronto Atmospheric Fund; Architecture Canada; Association Québécoise pour la Maîtrise de l'Énergie; BOMA Toronto; Council for Clean Capitalism; Environmental Defense; Équiterre; MaRS Advanced Energy Centre; and Passive House Canada.

Canada was one of 8 countries named in a [press release](#) by the World Green Building Council on June 28, announcing the Advancing Net Zero Project. [Architecture 2030](#), a non-profit, is also a partner. The goal of the initiative is to meet the COP21 pledge to reduce CO₂ emissions from the buildings sector by 84 gigatonnes by 2050, through net zero buildings and deep renovation, including all new buildings and major renovations should be net zero starting in 2030, all buildings

should be net zero by 2050, and 75,000 professionals trained on net zero building by 2030, with 300,000 by 2050 .

In July, the City of Vancouver released a [Zero Emissions Building Plan](#), which states: “this is an action plan to achieve zero emissions in all new residential and office building by 2025; high-rise multi-unit residential buildings will be required to achieve zero emissions by 2030.” (The Plan states that 82% of new development in Vancouver is residential, 1-2% is office space, and the remaining 16% miscellaneous building types). The Plan was developed in “close collaboration” and consultation with other local governments, professional associations, academic institutions, non-governmental agencies, energy utilities and the development industry – but no unions were included in the process. “The Plan was also shaped and informed by ongoing discussions with the cities of New York and Brussels.”

One of the new tools announced is a Centre of Zero Emission Building Excellence which will be a physical space, and “will partner with professional and industry associations to host training events, courses, panels, and exhibits. In addition, the Centre could administer mission-related programs on behalf of partner organizations, such as energy-efficiency incentive programs.” It is modelled on the examples of New York’s [Building Energy Exchange \(BEE\)](#), and [Wood Works B.C.](#) , hosted by the Canadian Wood Council .

Vancouver’s [Renewable City Strategy](#) , adopted in November 2015, targetted 100% of the city’s energy to come from renewable sources before 2050. Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia, is catching up to Vancouver with an [August announcement](#) of a 100% renewable energy target , and a goal to reduce carbon emissions 80% by 2050. Victoria has identified the priority areas of retrofitting buildings, developing new construction guidelines, encouraging renewable district energy systems, and facilitating a shift towards active transportation. [Next steps for Victoria](#): an action plan, task force, and community and stakeholder consultation.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Construction Industry](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Green skilling](#), [Municipal Government](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New B.C. Climate Leadership Plan leaves carbon tax untouched

Posted on [August 26, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Months later than scheduled, the Government of B.C. released its [Climate Leadership Plan](#) on August 19, claiming that it will create 66,000 green jobs and decrease carbon emissions by 25 MT by 2050. See the news release and backgrounders [here](#) . The Plan largely ignores the 2015 recommendations of the government’s own Climate Leadership Team (CLT) and does not increase the carbon tax, to allow other jurisdictions to “catch up”. It organizes its 21 “action items” into 6 areas —natural gas, transport, forestry and agriculture, the built environment, industry and utilities,

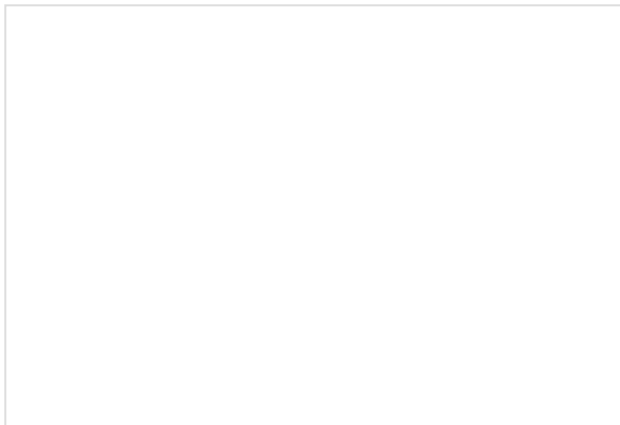
and the public sector, and focuses on electric vehicles, energy efficiency in buildings, carbon sequestration in the forestry industry, and promised emission reductions in natural gas production. The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) reviews each of these areas in its Initial Assessment: Part 1 [here](#) and Part 2 [here](#). In “3 Big Questions about British Columbia’s Climate Plan”, Clean Energy Canada states that carbon reduction measures “aren’t backed up by either the dollars or the regulations” – resulting in emissions reductions that are likely to be approximately 2 MT, rather than the 25 MT that the Leadership Plan promises.

The tone of reaction is summed up by Tzaporah Berman’s Facebook posting: “pathetic and cowardly”. For more detailed reactions, see “5 Things you need to know about B.C.’s new climate plan” from the Pembina Institute; “B.C.’s Climate Plan reaches Olympian heights of Political Cynicism”, an OpEd by Marc Jaccard in the *Globe and Mail*; “B.C. hesitates when it should lead” by the David Suzuki Foundation; “Christy Clark gives up the Climate Change Battle” in *The Tyee*; “B.C. Climate Plan leaves hard work for another day” by the Pembina Institute, and “B.C. Climate Plan full of holes” in the National Observer.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [British Columbia](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

50% Clean Power by 2025: 3 Amigos Summit sets tone of international cooperation

Posted on [August 12, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 29, 2016 the Three Amigos – the leaders of Canada, Mexico and the U.S., issued a “North American Climate, Clean Energy, and Environment Partnership Action Plan”, summarized by Clean Energy Canada [here](#). The Plan sets a target of 50 per cent clean power generation by 2025 for North America – with “clean” including energy from nuclear, fossil fuels if produced with carbon capture and storage technologies, and improvements in energy efficiency. The Plan also

calls for a shared vision for a clean North American automotive sector, including harmonized regulations, and for collaboration on cross-border electricity transmission projects, specifically naming the Great Northern Transmission Line, (Manitoba to Minnesota), and the New England Clean Power Link, (Quebec to Vermont). The recent Brexit vote loomed large over the leaders' meetings; as the Institute for Energy Economics & Financial Analysis [stated](#): "As Europe is disintegrating, North America is integrating, and it's integrating in a way that I think provides real and substantive and tangible benefits to the citizens of the three countries." In a similar vein, Inside Climate News [verdict](#) was, "Whatever their respective individual contributions, the three nations' vow to work in concert is what most excites advocates of strong climate action. And the possibility of a common price on carbon. "

What might excite advocates of Just Transition for workers is the final statement of the joint press release, which pledges to: "Invest strategically in communities to help them diversify economies, create and sustain quality jobs, and share in the benefits of a clean energy economy. This includes promoting decent work, sharing best practices, and collaborating with social partners such as workers' and employers' organizations and nongovernmental organizations on just transition strategies that will benefit workers and their communities....Protect the fundamental principles and rights at work of workers who extract and refine fossil fuels, and who manufacture, install, and operate energy technologies."

A group of economic think tanks, including Pembina Institute, Canada 2020, and the World Resources Institute collaborated on [Proposals for a North American Climate Strategy](#) in advance of the Summit meetings. Their recommendations are mostly recognized, if not resolved: "... the United States, Canada, and Mexico should consider the cost of carbon in long-term decision-making; commit to a methane reduction goal and cooperate to reduce black carbon; coordinate their leadership efforts in international forums; work to ensure effective carbon pricing throughout the continent; collaborate to accelerate the shift to clean energy; develop a North American strategy for sustainable transportation; work to strengthen resilience and equity in a changing climate; and develop a coordinated forest and land use strategy." For some reaction, see "[Dirty or Clean, politics drive cross-border energy deals](#)" in the *Globe and Mail* (July 4), or "[Steering toward a North American electric auto pact](#)" in *Policy Options* (August). And from the *Montreal Gazette*, an Opinion piece to bring things back to earth: "[After the Three Amigos summit, Canada has work to do on carbon pricing](#)".

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing industry](#), [Canada](#), [carbon capture and storage](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Mexico](#), [Nuclear energy industry](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Update: National Energy Board suspends Energy East hearings, Regulatory review process underway

On September 9, public outcry about the NEB “Charest Affair” became too strong to resist, and the [NEB announced](#) that the Energy East hearings are adjourned, that all three panelists have voluntarily recused themselves, and the hearings will be reconvened once a new panel can be constituted. In addition, the the Chair and Vice-Chair [are recusing themselves](#) from administrative functions related to the Energy East process, and will not be involved in the selection of the new panel. For [a recap](#) of this unexpected turn of events, and [the series of investigative reports](#) which led to the exposure of the entire “Charest Affair” , go to the *National Observer*. See also the [Environmental Defence blog](#) (Sept 9) and the *Energy Mix* coverage [here](#) and [here](#).

In mid-summer, WCR wrote: “Canada’s National Energy Board [was served a legal notice](#) on August 11, the latest fall-out from [news reports in July](#) which revealed that Jean Charest, former Premier of Quebec and a paid consultant to TransCanada at the time, met privately with NEB Board members to discuss the Energy East pipeline proposal. The panelists met privately with other registered intervenors, including the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal and Équiterre – a Quebec-based environmental group, despite NEB’s own rules that require it to review projects in public, keeping a full record of discussions, and to use a fair and transparent process. The revelations would not have come to light without the digging of a *National Observer* reporter and his Freedom of Information requests; the NEB has [now apologized for the meetings](#) and released some records and emails. According to a series of reports in the *Globe and Mail* in March 2016 ([here](#) and [here](#)) Jean Charest has also been investigated for his attempts to contact the Prime Minister’s Office about Energy East, but was cleared of breaking lobbying rules in March.

The NEB officials who conducted the “off-the-record” meetings are now panelists on the [NEB hearings on Energy East](#), currently underway in New Brunswick . The [legal letter](#) sent on August 11 demands that the Energy East hearings be suspended; a new panel be struck to conduct hearings into the private meetings; and two senior members of the NEB (the Chair and Vice-Chair) who both participated in the controversial meetings, must be excluded from any duties related to Energy East during the course of the investigation . The legal letter was sent on behalf of two Quebec advocacy groups: Stratégie Énergétiques and the Association Québécoise de la Lutte contre la Pollution Atmosphérique (AQPLA).

Reaction to the controversy is summarized in “[Charest pipeline controversy flares as May calls for resignation from federal panel](#)” in the *National Observer* (August 8). And Chantal Hebert sums it all up succinctly in “[National Energy Board’s credibility as an independent agency at stake: Hébert](#)” in the *Toronto Star*, (August 11). To date, the federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change hasn’t addressed the NEB controversy directly, but urged Canadians to have confidence in the system during a [news conference](#) in Halifax in August.

In September, environmental groups, including Greenpeace Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation, the Association québécoise de lutte contre la pollution atmosphérique, Nature Québec, and the Council of Canadians sent a [letter](#) to the Minister of Natural Resources, demanding a suspension of hearings and an investigation into the NEB. (See [a summary at the National Observer](#)) .

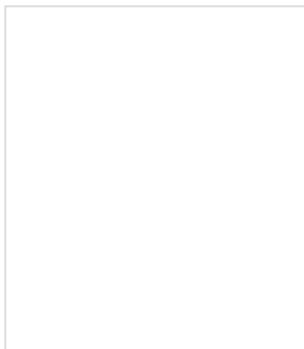
The National Energy Board controversy is part of the poisoned chalice passed down from the Stephen Harper government, which the current Liberal government is attempting to deal with through regulatory review. In June, the federal government [announced](#) a comprehensive review of environmental and regulatory processes – including “modernizing” the National Energy Board, and restoring protections in the *Fisheries Act*. On August 15, [a second announcement](#) described the creation of a four-member Expert Panel to undertake the review of federal environmental assessment processes, and stated that public consultation would begin in September. The Terms of Reference for the Panel are [here](#) ; the Review website is [here](#).

In anticipation of the Review, the West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation convened a [Summit of Experts in May 2016](#), and in August, published an [Executive Summary](#) of the proceedings, setting out twelve “pillars” of a next-generation environmental assessment, based on the key principles discussed. Amongst the pillars: a call for recognition of the rights of Indigenous people, improved consultation and information flow to the public, and the consideration of the impact on Canada’s GHG reduction targets as agreed to in the Paris agreement.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Energy East pipeline](#), [Jean Charest](#), [National Energy Board \(NEB\)](#), [Oil and Gas Lobby](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Summer’s heat can be deadly for workers

Posted on [August 9, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



We know all know this summer is hot, but what does it mean for workers? *In These Times* published an article by Elizabeth Grosman in July, “[As Temperatures Climb Across the Country, Workers Will Suffer](#)”. Her article examines the situation in the U.S., reporting that in 2015, “the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) received more than 200 reports of workers hospitalized because of heat-related illness and at least eight deaths associated with heat exposure. In 2014, 2,630 U.S. workers suffered from heat illness and 18 died on the job from heat stroke and related causes. Since 2003, an average of more than 30 workers a year have died of heat-related causes. The article also point out that 9 of the 30 deaths occurred to workers who had been on the job less than 3 days – making this an issue which might be improved by training

and stronger OHS contract language. In 2014, OSHA launched a “[Heat Rest Shade](#)” campaign to remind employers of their obligation to provide respite for workers , and with online [training materials](#) and [information resources](#) .

The Ontario Ministry of Labour updated their [guidance re Heat Stress](#) in 2014, and the [Heat Stress Awareness Guide](#) published by the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario in 2007 is still valuable. It too points out the risks to new employees and those who are not conditioned to heat. For Canada-wide information, see the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Fact Sheets [here](#) or see (from 2010) [Protecting Workers from Heat Stress: What are an Employer’s Legal Obligations?](#)

Being unemployed is also a factor in heat-related illness according to [an article](#) in *Environmental Health Perspectives* . Researchers led by Hung Chak Ho of Simon Fraser University in B.C. developed a block-by-block map of neighbourhoods in Vancouver and discovered that those blocks with a high proportion of low-income earners, a high proportion of renters and a high unemployment rate are at greater risk of mortality than the elderly. See “[Unemployed people, not the elderly, at highest risk](#)” for a summary.

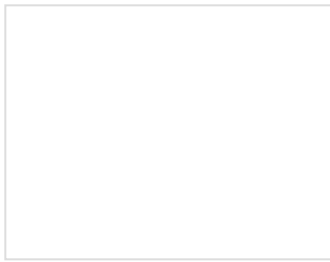
And amidst the high heat and drought that all of us are feeling in central Canada this summer comes scientific validation of our experience: the release of [State of the Climate 2015](#) , the 26th edition of the assessment released each summer as a supplement to the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*. Canada is profiled in [Chapter 7](#) : “The annual average temperature in 2015 for Canada was 1.3°C above the 1961–90 average, and was the 11th warmest year since nationwide records began in 1948.” (The warmest year on record for Canada to date has been 2010, at 3.0°C above average.) Globally, the report catalogues several symbolic mileposts: notably, it was 1.0°C warmer than preindustrial times, and the Mauna Loa observatory recorded its first annual mean carbon dioxide concentration greater than 400 ppm in 2015. A thorough [summary](#) appeared in *The Guardian* (August 2). (*State of the Climate* is compiled by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Center for Weather and Climate, from contributions from scientists from 62 countries, and is the recognized authority on global climate indicators and notable weather events).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Heat Stress](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Unemployed](#), [Younger workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil workers in Newfoundland training for wind and solar energy jobs

Posted on [August 9, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Iron and Earth](#), the worker-led group which helps oil and gas industry workers transition to clean energy jobs, [announced](#) a Memorandum of Understanding with [Beothuk](#)



[Energy](#) in mid-July 2016. Beothuk, headquartered in St. John's, Newfoundland, is proposing to build six offshore wind farms in Atlantic Canada with a combined capacity of 4000+ MW of energy, and estimates that it will create 10 jobs for each MW produced. The MOU is not available online, but is reported to encourage apprenticeships and retraining in wind energy.

On August 8, the Newfoundland and Labrador chapter of Iron and Earth began to crowdfund for a demonstration greenhouse project: to build a greenhouse incorporating solar and one other site-specific technology (micro-hydro, wind or geothermal) to power, heat and light a greenhouse year-round. Concurrently, the project will demonstrate a solution to food security issues by powering LED grow lights even in the winter months, and will offer a solar energy course to increase the region's renewable energy skill set. Iron and Earth states that Newfoundland has no training programs for renewable energy, and a goal of this project is to retrain oil and gas workers. Bullfrog Power, the leading Canadian green energy provider, has pledged to match any donations made to the Greenhouse crowdfunder until the goal is reached; click [here](#) for details or to donate.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Iron and Earth](#), [Newfoundland](#), [Offshore Wind](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Retraining](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Fossil fuel workers need early retirement, guaranteed pensions, and clean energy futures

Posted on [August 9, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A Just Transition program of income and pension-fund support for workers in fossil fuel-dependent communities could be provided for approximately \$500 million per year, according to the Just Transition proposals by Robert Pollin and Brian Callaci. "[A Just Transition for U.S. Fossil Fuel Industry Workers](#)" was published in *American Prospect* in July and re-posted to *Portside* on July 11. It estimates the numbers of jobs at risk in the fossil fuel industry, contrasting coal and the oil and gas industry, and assumes that displaced workers will be re-employed in a growing clean energy industry. The Just Transition proposals focus on: Retirements at age 64 with full compensation; Guaranteed fully-funded pensions; and Community transition. For coal workers, pension funds are managed through the United Mine Workers of America Health and Retirement Funds, which is currently underfunded by \$1.8 billion. The authors call for the federal government

to bridge that gap with funding from companies and the government. In the oil industry, the authors call on the U.S. Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to use its legislated power to prohibit the oil companies from paying dividends or financing share buybacks until the pension funds are fully funded, and to place liens on company assets if pension funds are underfunded. Acknowledging that the decline of the fossil fuel industry, already underway, will bring hardships to entire communities, they point to past experience: the Worker and Community Transition program operated by the Department of Energy from 1994 to 2004 to cushion the impact of nuclear decommissioning. One example from that program: a successful economic diversification program in Nevada, which repurposed a nuclear test site to what is now a solar proving ground. Another previous community assistance program, the Defense Reinvestment and Conversion Initiative, is deemed less successful. The authors conclude that a Just Transition program is eminently affordable at approximately 1 percent of the \$50 billion in overall public spending needed to build a U.S. clean energy economy. And they state, “It is also an imperative—both a moral and strategic imperative.”

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Job displacement](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Global Climate Alliance for the world's cities

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

More than 7,100 cities in 119 countries will be part of the [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#), a new group formed on June 22, 2016 by an alliance of the European Union's [Covenant of Mayors](#) and the U.N.-backed [Compact of Mayors](#). Canadian cities of Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and Windsor, are all members of the Compact of Mayors. The new Covenant will be co-chaired by Maros Sefcovic, from the European Commission and Michael Bloomberg of the Compact of Mayors. See the Covenant Fact Sheet [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

World Oceans Day a Good day for Fisheries and Arctic Conservation, but much more needs to be done

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On [World Oceans Day](#), June 8, [Greenpeace announced](#) that it had brokered an agreement between fishing companies, processors and retailers that will prevent fishing for cod in a part of the Arctic Ocean where it has not been fished previously. (Canada has also signed on to a 5-nation [Arctic Fisheries Declaration in July 2015](#), pledging to prevent unregulated commercial fishing in the central Arctic Ocean). However, the peril of the larger Canadian fishery is comprehensively described in [Here's the Catch: How to Restore Abundance to Canada's Oceans](#) released by Oceana Canada on June 23, and [summarized](#) at the *National Observer* . The National Observer has reported repeatedly on the difficulties of Canada's salmon fishery, and most recently, "[Dire warnings in the battle for Atlantic Canada's lucrative northern shrimp](#)" (June 10).

[Shell Canada](#) marked the World Oceans Day by transferring its 30 offshore exploration permits in Lancaster Sound, in the Eastern Arctic, to the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which will transfer them to the federal government, allowing the government to finalize creation of the Lancaster Sound National Marine Conservation Area, [one of the richest marine mammal areas in the world](#) . Although the company maintains it is not related, the World Wildlife Fund [had filed a lawsuit in Federal Court in Canada](#) in April, 2016 demanding that Shell's permits be declared invalid.

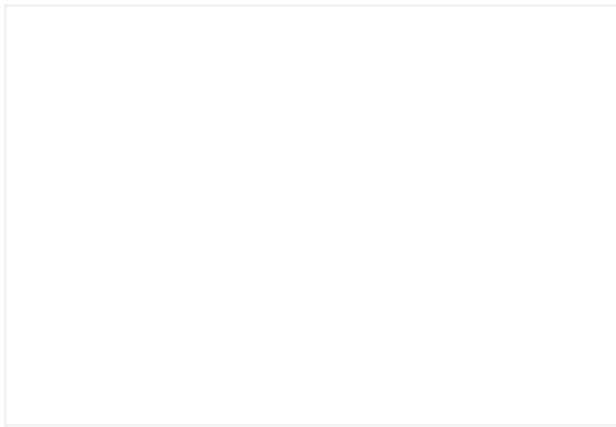
Also on June 8, [Spanish oil and gas company Repsol abandoned drilling](#) in the Chukchi Sea north of Alaska. According to ThinkProgress, "The Spanish company joins the rush of oil drillers — Shell, ConocoPhillips, Eni, and Iona Energy — departing the Arctic region after concluding that offshore drilling is not worth the expense or the risk." CBC reported about the start of this exodus in September 2015, in "[Oil companies give Arctic the cold shoulder](#)" .

The Brookings Institute provides a sober overview of the issues and some international research: "[On World Oceans Day, a reminder that climate change action must consider the oceans](#)" , but last word goes to Howard Breen, the Director of [Urgent Ocean and Climate Rapid Response](#) (UCORR) in "[We need tsunami of action to stop runaway ocean collapse](#)" (June 3) : "Given the dire prospect of runaway ocean collapse, we must immediately build an aggressive citizen consensus that fossil fuels have absolutely no moral justification, and their urgent abolition is now critical."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alaska](#), [Arctic Development](#), [Fisheries Industry](#), [Lancaster Sound](#), [Oceans](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Shell](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New York State Climate Law incorporates Environmental Justice

Posted on [June 27, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Power outages from Hurricane Sandy in New York City, 2012

The [New York State Climate and Community Protection Act](#) was passed in the State Assembly on June 1 , and *Inside Climate News* calls it “ the nation’s most ambitious climate change bill” . The Bill was supported by [NYC-Environmental Justice Alliance](#) , as well as the Service Employees International Union. It establishes aggressive mandates for ramping up the use of clean, renewable energy, and reducing climate pollution – and is most notable because it prioritizes environmental justice goals. From the preamble, it will: “-shape the ongoing transition in the State’s energy sector to ensure that it creates good jobs and protects workers and communities that may lose employment in the current transition. -Setting clear standards for job quality and training standards encourages not only high-quality work but positive economic impacts; -prioritize the safety and health of disadvantaged communities, control potential regressive impacts of future climate change mitigation and adaptation policies on these communities.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Just Transition](#), [New York City Environmental Justice Alliance](#), [New York State](#), [Service Employees International Union](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

News updates for June 2016: Quebec introduces bill to mandate electric vehicle sales

Posted on [June 27, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Government of Quebec introduced Bill 104, [An Act to increase the number of zero-emission motor vehicles in Québec](#) on June 2 2016 . Hearings will begin in August, and if passed, the bill would set a quota requiring that 15.5 percent of all cars sold in the province by 2025 be zero-emission vehicles. For commentary and context, read “Quebec, Ontario back different Approaches to drive Clean Vehicle Uptake” in the *PICS Climate Examiner* , and Marc Jaccard’s

essay in *Policy Options*, “Effective climate change regulation: Let’s transform Canadian cars” . An up to date report on [Volkswagen’s new shift to electric vehicle production](#) appears in the *PICS Climate Examiner* (June 22). The International Energy Association reports a global population of over million EV’s in its new *Global EV Outlook 2016: Beyond One Million Electric Cars* .

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

Ontario’s Green Energy Act: A job creation success

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An Environmental Defence report *Getting Fit: How Ontario Became A Green Energy Leader and Why It Needs to Stay the Course* counts the [Green Energy Act of 2009](#) as an overall success, estimating that it has created 91,000 direct and indirect solar sector jobs and 89,000 direct and indirect wind sector jobs. The report also provides results of an April 2016 opinion poll commissioned by Environmental Defence, showing that 81 per cent of Ontarians support further development of renewable energy; 56 per cent see renewable energy as having a positive impact on the provincial economy, with only 19 per cent believing green energy will harm economic growth. The report also relies on calculations done by Power Advisory LLC to refute the frequent complaint about green energy policies: it states that new renewable energy additions accounted for just 9 per cent of the average residential power bill in 2014, and that other generation sources (nuclear in particular) and costs for upgrading and expanding the province’s power transmission system represent a far larger proportion of the average monthly power bill.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [employment impacts](#), [Ontario](#), [Ontario Green Energy Act](#), [public opinion polls](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

News update for June 2016: Ontario rolls out details of its Climate Action Plan

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 8, 2016, a [press release](#) from the Premier’s Office summarized the Climate Change Action Plan; the detailed plan is [here](#) . A separate press release clarified the province’s position on [renewable natural gas](#) – a strong point of opposition to the [earlier announcement of the Plan](#). Unifor responded with a [press release stating](#) “Ontario industries must have support towards a

low-carbon future, including just-transition for workers,” “The Action Plan provides a down payment on that transition, but much more will be needed to ensure that climate action and industrial strategies work together.” For a compilation of other reactions, see “[What Ontarians think](#)” ; also, [Clean Energy Canada](#) (“Ontario is embarking on an energy transition, not a revolution.” “commendable”); [Greenpeace](#) (“a courageous decision not to take the path of least political resistance.”)

Other Ontario announcements supporting the province’s climate change objectives have been issued: May 25, the government announced that \$900 million over four years will be directed from the cap and trade proceeds for energy retrofits for social housing and residential apartment buildings.

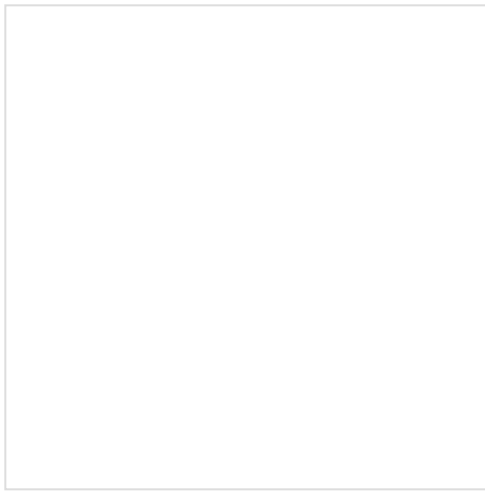
On June 1, the Ontario Legislature [passed the Waste-Free Ontario Act](#) which will encourage innovation in recycling processes and require producers to take full responsibility for their products and packaging. The new provisions will be overseen by Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority, replacing the Waste Diversion Ontario agency. For an update on European progress on waste and the circular economy , see The European Environmental Agency report [More from less – material resource efficiency in Europe](#) (June 9).

June 10: Ontario [announced new investment by GM Canada](#) which promises to create 700 new engineering and software development jobs – in Oshawa, developing “the next generation of connected, autonomous and alternative-fuel vehicles”; in Markham, software development, and in Kapuskasing, where it will upgrade its cold-weather testing facility. On June 16, Ontario [announced it will provide \\$85.8 million to Fiat Chrysler Canada](#) , to support advanced training and plant upgrades for the production of the Chrysler Pacifica in Windsor. The Pacifica will be the first plug-in hybrid electric minivan to be built in North America.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Auto Industry](#), [Circular Economy](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Ontario](#), [Ontario Climate Action Plan](#), [Renewable Natural Gas](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

What does Brexit mean for Climate goals?

Posted on [June 27, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



With Europe reeling from the results of the British referendum vote to leave the European Union on June 23 2016, most reports focus on the considerable [political](#) and [economic](#) upheaval to come. A sampling of insight into potential impacts on climate and energy policy: from Phil McKenna at *Inside Climate News* (June 24) , “[Brexit Sparks Worry About Fate of Global Climate Action](#)” – with a subtitle, “many fear the wave of nationalism will harm international efforts to halt global warming” ; from *The Guardian* on June 27, “[EU Out Votes Puts UK Commitment to Paris in Doubt](#)” ; also, “[UK votes to Leave EU: Fears grow for Climate Ambition](#)” , and “[5 Ways Brexit will transform Energy and Climate](#)” from *Politico Europe* . For European energy policy, [from Climate Change News](#), the “impact on the EU’s faltering carbon price would be ‘calamitous’”, and a considerable voice for low-carbon policies will be lost at the EU. Domestically, [there are also fears](#) that the government’s new Energy Policy, scheduled for Fall 2016, will be modelled on the energy manifesto of the “Fresh Start” conservative coalition, which includes eliminating the 2020 targets for renewables and investing in shale gas and new nuclear.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Brexit](#), [Climate change policy](#), [European Union](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

May 2016 News: New Brunswick and Newfoundland extend Fracking bans

Posted on [June 27, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

New Brunswick’s Minister of Energy announced an indefinite extension of the province’s fracking ban on May 27, based on the [February report](#) of its Hydraulic Fracturing Commission, according to a [CBC report](#) . Similarly, the Newfoundland and Labrador Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel released its [final Report](#) at the end of May, with a recommendation that the “pause” on fracking in Western Newfoundland continue. See the [Panel website](#), which includes [Submissions](#) and

Documents , as well as technical reports as appendices, which include research into the [economic and jobs impacts](#) of fracking, as well as impacts on human health and water resources.

New Brunswick has also released a discussion guide , [Building a Stronger New Brunswick Response to Climate Change](#) , in order to stimulate public input for the Select Committee on Climate Change, constituted in April 2016. There is no target date yet for its report.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Economic Impacts of Fracking](#), [Fracking](#), [Fracking Moratorium](#), [New Brunswick](#), [Newfoundland and Labrador](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

June 2016 News: British Columbia

Posted on [June 27, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Controversy in B.C. over the Pembina Institute report released on June 14, [How do B.C.'s Climate Action commitments stack up?](#) . The report uses modelling by the Canadian Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project Team to predict that B.C.'s emissions will rise 39 per cent above their 2014 level by 2030 following the current policies. Over 80 per cent of the emissions increase between 2014 and 2030 is projected to come from oil and gas development, including liquefied natural gas (LNG). See also the Pembina [Backgrounder](#) as well as “How B.C. became a Climate Laggard” in the *Globe and Mail* , a [review by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions \(PICS\)](#) and “How the B.C. Government responded” in *The National Observer* .

And public opinion continues to oppose current policies, including [Petronas' \\$36-billion Pacific Northwest LNG development](#), and the Kinder Morgan pipeline proposal, where both the [City of Vancouver](#) and the [Squamish First Nation](#) have filed appeals in B.C. courts. Even the academics at the normally apolitical Royal Society of Canada have issued an Open Letter [opposing the Site C Hydro Dam](#) on the Peace River. Against this backdrop, the government's updated Climate Change policy is expected at the end of June.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Climate change policy](#), [First Nations](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Site C Dam](#), [Transmountain Pipeline](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

June 2016 News: Alberta

Posted on [June 27, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

REVISITING THE CLIMATE LEADERSHIP PLAN: “The Economic Cost of Carbon Policy” was written by Andrew Leach, Chair of Alberta's [Climate Leadership Plan](#) , and appeared in *Maclean's* online on June 19th in response to a [controversial article in the Calgary Herald](#) on June 17th . The *Herald* article reported that a leaked memo from the government's Treasury Board staff had predicted that the Climate Leadership Plan would result in 15,000 fewer jobs, a \$4-billion drop in

household income, as well as lower corporate profits, oil exports and overall economic activity. Andrew Leach defends the Climate Leadership process and “sets things straight” in a thorough discussion of the economics and politics of carbon pricing . He concedes that the policy prescriptions come at a cost – which he estimates at 0.25 to 0.5 per cent cumulatively by 2022, but he concludes that Alberta cannot maintain a “business as usual” policy; “ We believe that our policy recommendations will be of net benefit to Alberta, yes in terms of the avoided costs of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, but also in terms of the avoided costs of discriminatory and punitive policies imposed upon Alberta.”

On May 26, The Premiers of Alberta and Ontario [announced](#) a Memorandum of Understanding pledging cooperation regarding GHG reduction in the production, transportation and use of natural resources in Alberta and Ontario, as well as development of renewable energy and energy storage, and fostering new and innovative uses of carbon dioxide.

On June 6, Alberta announced the new Energy Efficiency Agency, and an [Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel](#) , which will consult with the public, Indigenous people, and technical experts until September. A *Discussion Document* will guide consultations. The Panel ‘s report to the Minister is due in Fall 2016, with the goal that Energy Efficiency Alberta will launch programs by January 2017. Listed as “measures of success” for the Agency: “Economic impact: the number of stable green jobs associated with program options and the direct and indirect benefits to urban and rural economies associated with the implementation of programs.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [energy efficiency](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recent Research into Climate Policy questions

Posted on [June 27, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Trottier Energy Futures Project released a report, authored by the Canadian Academy of Engineering and the David Suzuki Foundation, in June 2016. [Canada’s Challenge & Opportunity: Transformations for Major Reductions in GHG emissions](#) uses systems analysis to discuss 11 separate scenarios with the goal of achieving the 80-per-cent GHG reduction by 2050. The paper casts doubt on the “timely availability of technology and associated infrastructure”, but considers the technical and economic barriers less important as the political and social/cultural – success will demand major change to a low-economy lifestyle. It concludes...“the project demonstrates that substantial progress can be made by 2030 using currently available systems to reduce GHG emissions. Key areas include significantly increasing the supply of electricity and biomass/biofuels in order to displace fossil fuels in all five end-use sectors, decarbonizing electricity production by switching to non-emitting sources, enabling transfers of electricity between provinces and territories, and implementing a comprehensive program of energy conservation and efficiency

measures. In addition, as several provinces and the federal government have already committed to implementing carbon pricing, a national climate strategy, along with regulations and incentives that support innovative GHG-reduction technologies and initiatives, may be within reach.” A detailed summary and analysis of the Trottier report from Canadian Energy Systems Analysis Research (University of Calgary) is [here](#) .

Top Asks for Climate Action: Ramping up Low carbon communities was released by the Columbia Institute in B.C. in June, and makes the case for local climate leadership. It itemizes what local governments need from federal, provincial and territorial governments to realize climate action, clustered in the themes of capacity building; smart growth; harnessing local energy; reducing carbon pollution from the building sector, and from the transportation sector. The policy actions highlighted in the report are the result of an extensive literature review and survey of more than 100 locally elected officials.

Sustainable Prosperity has released a series of blogs and papers arguing that environmental regulation, if well-designed and flexible, can stimulate clean innovation and boost corporate competitiveness. (The Porter Hypothesis). *Green Tape Measures Up* is an Issue Summary released in June 2016; the related Policy Brief *Environmental Regulation and Innovation: Select case studies of the Porter Hypothesis* (November 2015) reviews seven recent case studies from four industrial sectors in the EU and U.S. to support the argument.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Environmental regulation](#), [Green Innovation](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Porter Hypothesis](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

News updates for June 2016: Canada

Posted on [June 27, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

REVIEW OF THE NEB AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: On June 20, the Federal government [announced](#) a “Comprehensive Review of Environmental and Regulatory Processes” , involving six ministries: Fisheries and Oceans; Environment and Climate Change; Transport; Science and Innovation; Indigenous and Northern Affairs; and Natural Resources. A [dedicated website](#) houses consultation documents and allows for public input, since “Consultation will be at the core of this review”. An expert panel will review the National Energy Board and submit its findings in early 2017; similarly, another panel will review the Environmental Assessment Agency . The *Navigation Protection Act and the Fisheries Act* will be reviewed by parliamentary committees starting in the Fall 2016, with a report due January 2017. See the [CBC](#) or the [National Observer](#) for summaries.

CANADA AND G7 NATIONS PLEDGE TO END FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES: At the G7 Summit in Japan at the end of May, member nations, including Canada, set a deadline to end government support for coal, and oil and gas by 2025. The text of the [Final Leaders’ Declaration](#) doesn’t

define “subsidy” and leaves wiggle room by indicating “inefficient” subsidies (see page 7). And an [article in *The Guardian*](#) singles out Britain for new North Sea tax breaks, Japan for coal expansion, and Canada for extending subsidies for natural gas production in the February 2016 budget.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency \(CEAA\)](#), [Environmental regulation](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [G7](#), [National Energy Board \(NEB\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Justice through Litigation: What will be the impact of the Paris Agreement?

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Climate Justice: The International Momentum towards Climate Litigation offers a unique discussion of the intersection of climate litigation and climate negotiations, and whether the Paris Agreement will contribute to a growth in climate litigation. It also provides an up to date summary of past and current cases of climate litigation against companies and governments – focusing on the various grounds of human rights to a clean environment, liability for climate-change induced damages, climate refugees, and corporate deception in the U.S., Netherlands, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, and New Zealand. It examines past litigation in other sectors, including tobacco, asbestos and oil spills. Amongst the recommendations: the fossil fuel industry be removed from the climate negotiations process and banned from having a role or voice in setting climate change policy; introduce a levy on fossil fuel producers to partly fund the International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, which would provide compensation for individuals and communities. Another recent but much briefer note, “[Courts take on Climate Change](#)”, published in *Nature Climate Change* in June, addresses the issue of liability and quotes Andrew Gage, Staff Counsel at West Coast Environmental Law, who asks, “Can you really have a business model that costs the world trillions of dollars a year and not have a conversation about who should be paying for that?” ... “The question is, can such litigation play a role in accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels or is it only going to be bickering over who pays for the major damages we’re experiencing?” An example of such bickering is chronicled in a June 7 article in the *New York Times*, “[Regulators Fear \\$1 Billion Coal Cleanup Bill](#)”.

And who will be the lawyers who argue these cases? Tom Lininger, a professor at the University of Oregon School of Law, proposes a series of “green ethics” amendments to the American Bar Association rules in his paper “[Green Ethics for Lawyers](#)” in the *Boston College Law Review*.

Note that the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) website recently posted the 2015 presentation by Roger Cox, lead lawyer in the landmark Urgenda case.

See [The Urgenda Climate Case and its Consequences](#) .

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [Climate Change Liability](#), [Climate litigation](#), [environmental rights](#), [Lawyers](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [Roger Cox](#), [Urgenda Decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour unions disagree over NextGen Climate alliance

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On May 13, NextGen Climate [announced](#) the formation of the For Our Future Political Action Committee (PAC) , which includes labour unions and youth groups, to campaign for environmental justice issues. Subsequently, seven building trades unions send a letter to Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO, demanding that the AFL-CIO cut its ties with Tom Steyer, the billionaire who funds [NextGen Climate](#) . The Labourer's International Union (LIUNA) also sent its own letter, which characterized the AFL-CIO relationship as a “politically bankrupt betrayal” of union members. Both letters were reproduced in “[Rift Between Labor and Environmentalists Threatens Democratic Turnout Plan](#)” in the *New York Times* (May 16). The *New York Times* article prompted the [Labor Network for Sustainability](#) to write: “The *Times* characterized this as a “rift between labor and environmentalists.” It is much better understood, however, as an effort by a small group of unions to retain their veto power within the AFL-CIO.”... “The great majority of unions that accepted the alliance with NextGen Climate should proudly defend it as a way to express this historic tradition of meeting their members’ needs by addressing the most pressing needs of society.”

The AFL-CIO [officially endorsed](#) Hillary Clinton on June 16 ; LIUNA has also endorsed Hillary Clinton, and launched a campaign promoting natural gas as a bridging fuel and as an important fuel for the future on June 23; see their campaign website [Clean Power Progress](#) . The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) is not one of the NextGen PAC allies, but was [endorsed by Tom Steyer](#) when it recently voted to add environmental justice to the list of the union’s priorities. According to the SEIU, climate change disproportionately affects low-income and minority communities where many of its members live, so the union is committing resources to “broadening environmental justice”. See “[Leading US Union SEIU Makes Fighting Climate Change a Campaign Priority](#)” in *The Guardian* (May 24) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [AFL–CIO](#), [Laborers International Union \(LIUNA\)](#), [Labour and politics](#), [SEIU](#), [Service Employees International Union](#), [Tom Steyer](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Nuclear Shutdown in California includes Transition provisions for Workers

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

Pacific Gas and Electric company of California [announced](#) on June 21, 2016 that it will not renew licenses for its two nuclear reactors at Diablo Canyon, about halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco, set to expire by 2025. This is being hailed as a landmark because, unlike other U.S. closures which reverted to more polluting sources of energy, the Diablo Canyon agreement will replace the nuclear energy with renewable sources and energy efficiency. Further, the agreement, which included the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1245](#) and the Coalition of California Utility Employees, pledges incentives to retain employees until 2025, retraining of employees for the decommissioning process, and severance payments when their employment ends. See the IBEW *Letter to Members* [here](#). But James Hansen, amongst other greens and scientists, have lobbied to keep the plant open; see “[If Diablo Canyon does close, America will have lost 14 reactors since 2013, but is it a good idea?](#)” in Vox.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [California](#), [Diablo Canyon](#), [IBEW](#), [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#), [Nuclear energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers promotes Green Skills Training

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

“Green Skills Training and Certification” was the topic of the opening Plenary session of the [Training Conference of the National Electrical Trade Council \(NETCO\)](#) in Vancouver on June 4. The Green Skills session related to electrical vehicle infrastructure technology, photovoltaic solar energy technologies, and advanced energy-conserving lighting system controls. [NETCO](#) is a joint partnership of the Canadian Electrical Contractors Association (CECA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) of Canada, and is associated with The electrical training ALLIANCE™ of the U.S. Another IBEW initiative was highlighted in a May report from the Don Vial Center on the Green Economy at U of California, Berkeley. [Training for the Future II: Progress to Date](#) describes the Utility Pre-Craft Trainee (UPCT) program, a model program for entry-level disadvantaged workers in Los Angeles, jointly operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and IBEW Local 18. Since 2011, trainees “earn-and-learn” by working full time

weatherizing homes and small businesses while learning skills and preparing for civil service exams in the utility. The [first *Training for the Future*](#) report from 2013 is also available.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [disadvantaged workers](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green skills training](#), [IBEW](#), [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#), [Labour-sponsored training](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Human Face of Displacement in the Oil, Coal Industries

Posted on **June 27, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A June 17 article in *The Tyee*, “[Oil Sands Workers Fear Becoming Climate Change Casualties](#)” gives voice to a Unifor worker from Fort MacMurray, and his opinions about Just Transition. Also from the Canadian oil sands, the workers’ organization Iron and Earth has posted an online survey seeking such workers’ views; the group proposes a [Workers Plan](#) with 3 main goals:

Build up Canada’s renewable energy workforce capacity; Build up Canadian manufacturing of renewable energy technologies, and Position existing energy sector workers, developers, contractors, and unions within the renewable energy sector. The plight of coal workers is described in “[Alberta coal communities look at what future holds as age of coal comes to end](#)” in the *National Observer* (June 22); so far, the community stakes its hopes on promised “consultations”. For the U.S., see “[As Wind Power Lifts Wyoming’s Fortunes, Coal Miners are left in the Dust](#)” in the *New York Times* (June 20), which puts a personal face on the plight of laid-off workers from the Peabody coal bankruptcy. Although a nascent wind industry is being encouraged in Wyoming, it is not forecast to replace all of the estimated 10,000 jobs to be lost in the coal industry. And from Australia, a June paper from the Green Institute, [The End of coal: How should the next government respond?](#) states that rather than propping up the dying fossil fuel industry,.. “the most honest approach, and the one that will be best for people and the planet, is to immediately prepare for a staged transition, facilitate a dignified exit from the coal industry for workers and communities, and ensure that the corporations which have caused this mess cover the cost.” Further, the author proposes a trial of guaranteed basic income provided to coal workers in the worst affected coal areas.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Australia](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Job displacement](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Wyoming](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Energy Investment Slows in Canada; Canada ranks 11th in Clean

Energy Jobs

Posted on **June 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 2016 edition of *Tracking the Clean Energy Revolution: Canada* was released by Clean Energy Canada in June with an upbeat message, despite the fact that renewable energy investment and development slowed in some provinces (89% in Alberta, 52% in British Columbia, 15% in Ontario, and 9% in Quebec). At the same time, investment grew in Atlantic Canada, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, so that it was still Canada's second-best year on record for clean energy spending, and renewable generation capacity grew by 4 per cent. The main message of the report, however, is that a new spirit of cooperation and ambition has developed with the change of leadership in the federal government. The report lists the renewable projects, their size, and companies involved throughout the country, but doesn't report on employment impacts. For that, consult the latest survey by the International Renewable Energy Agency, *Renewable Energy and Jobs 2016* . Canada ranks 11th, with an estimated 36,000 clean energy jobs, well behind the top countries of China (with 3.5 million jobs!), Brazil, the United States, India, Japan and Germany. Solar Photovoltaics continues to be the largest renewable energy employer with 2.8 million jobs worldwide in 2015, an 11% increase over 2014. For the first time, IRENA published gender-based employment figures, based on their own online survey. Women represent 35% of the workforce in the 90 renewable energy companies surveyed from 40 countries – higher than the energy industry average of 20-25%. On average, women represent 46% of the administrative workforce, 28% of the technical workforce, and 32% of management roles. Earlier IRENA reports are [here](#) .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Clean Energy, IRENA, renewable energy, Solar energy industry, Solar PV Manufacturing, Women in Renewable Energy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Workers Acting in Climate-Friendly Ways: A Study of Union members, Synthesis of Academic Literature, and a Case Study of Pilots

Posted on **June 26, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A [post](#) in *Portside* on May 23 summarizes the research of Jeremy Brecher (of Labor Network for Sustainability) and Todd Vachon, which uses data from 2 national surveys in the U.S. to conclude that: “Union members, far from being only concerned with their immediate self-interest at the expense of a broader common interest in environmental protection, are often more concerned about the environment and more willing to act on that concern than either the public at large or non-union workers”. A fuller report, “[Are Union Members More or Less Likely to Be Environmentalists? Some Evidence from Two National Surveys](#)” was published as an article in

Labor Studies Journal in April (access restricted). The article also provides examples from the historical record of labour and environmental issues, with the goal of contributing to the development of labour-community and blue-green coalitions to work for social change.

Another study appeared in *Nature Climate Change* in June, regarding the determinants of translating climate change beliefs into actions . “[Meta-analyses of the determinants and outcomes of belief in climate change](#)” analyzed 27 variables, drawn from 25 polls and 171 academic studies from 56 nations (including 7 from Canada). The authors, from the University of Queensland in Australia, concluded that variables such as education, sex, subjective knowledge, and experience of extreme weather events were not as important in predicting behaviours as the variables of values, ideologies, worldviews and political orientation. Surprisingly, the study also concludes “belief in climate change has a solid relationship with the extent to which people aspire to behave in climate-friendly ways, but a small-to-moderate relationship with the extent to which people ‘walk the talk’.”

Finally, a practical example: As reported in the *Washington Post* on June 22, and by the *Company* in a detailed case study , Virgin Atlantic Airways conducted a large-scale experiment to try to influence its pilots to use less fuel and reduce GhG emissions. This was a controlled study, overseen by economists from the University of Chicago and London School of Economics, in which different behavioural interventions were used, including providing monthly feedback, setting targets, and setting targets plus making corporate charitable donations when targets were met. All pilots reduced their fuel consumption, and those that received targeted goals, or that received these goals plus charitable donations made, performed the best of all. The academic report of the study appears in *A New Approach to an Age-Old Problem: Solving Externalities by Incenting Workers Directly* , a working paper of the National Bureau of Economics (NBER), published in June.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [airline industry](#), [attitudes of union members](#), [attitudes to climate change](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [motivation](#), [pilots](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Christiana Figueres Steps Down, Patricia Espinosa Steps Up

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Patricia Espinosa of Mexico, nominated by U.N. head Ban Ki-moon, has been [formally confirmed](#) as the new Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), at the first meetings since the Paris Agreement, in [Bonn, Germany May 18 and 19](#) . See: her [first interview](#), with Reuters, on May 19 – in which she is asked about Donald Trump’s statement on the Paris Agreement; or “[Patricia Espinosa: Who is the UN’s incoming Climate Chief](#)”, including a copy of her CV from Climate Home (May 5) ; or “[A crucial handoff between UN Climate Chiefs](#) ” from the Brookings Institute .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [UN Framework Convention for Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#), [UNFCC](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Want to fact check climate change science in the media?

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new project, Climate Feedback, is currently [crowdfunding](#) to finance a website to offer an “effective and scalable way for scientists to share what they know with readers and journalists.” News articles will be reviewed and assigned a “credibility rating”. The project began at University of California at Merced; the [crowdfunding description](#) says it includes over 100 scientists and has been widely endorsed. Read the reports at the [Yale Climate Connections](#) or in [The Guardian](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change in the Media](#), [climate change science](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Millions of people, Trillions of dollars at risk from coastal floods

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report on May 16 from an agency of the World Bank, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery ([GFDRR](#)), says that cities around the world are failing to plan for fast-increasing risks from extreme weather and other hazards, and by 2050, 1.3 billion people and \$158 trillion in assets will be threatened by worsening river and coastal floods alone. Losses in 136 coastal cities are projected to rise from \$6 billion a year in 2010 to \$1 trillion a year by 2070. The report, *The Making of a Riskier Future: How Our Decisions are Shaping the Future of Disaster Risk* is [here](#); a summary from Thomson Reuters is [here](#). A separate report, also in May, from Christian Aid, ranks cities with the most to lose from coastal flooding. Topping their list: Calcutta (14 million people), Mumbai (11.4 million) and Dhaka (11.1 million). Miami, with 4.8 million people, ranks 9th in population but tops the ranking by exposed assets in 2070, with \$3.5 trillion. New York City ranks 3rd in exposed assets with \$2.1tn. The report also discusses the risks to the city of London, U.K. Read *Act Now or Pay Later: Protecting a billion people in climate-threatened coastal cities*.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Coastal Cities](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [India](#), [Miami](#), [New York City](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Air Pollution and Coal: A Public Health issue around the world

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

On May 18, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, along with the Canadian Public Health Association (**CPHA**), the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (**RNAO**), the Canadian Lung Association, the Ontario Public Health Association (**OPHA**) joined a [global call](#) for the G7 nations to accelerate the transition away from coal-fired electricity, to bring “immediate and significant air pollution-related health benefits and health care savings. A coal phase-out also slows climate change, thereby reducing current and future illnesses and deaths from heat waves, droughts, malnutrition, flooding, air pollution and wildfires.” The Lung Association of America [recently ranked air pollution in U.S. cities](#) and found that Bakersfield, California, was the most polluted city for both short-term and year-round particle pollution, while Los Angeles-Long Beach was the worst for ozone pollution. In the U.K., air pollution was cited as a “public health emergency” in [a report](#) published by a Select Committee of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Ministry. The World Health Organization (WHO) [ranked the world's most polluted cities](#) on May 12, with four of the five worst cities in India. WHO surveyed 3,000 urban areas; the data shows only 2 per cent of cities in developing countries have air quality that meets WHO standards, compared to 44 per cent in developed countries. A WHO official also stated, “Probably some of the worst cities ... are not included in our list, just because they are so bad that they do not even have a good system of monitoring of air quality, so it's unfair to compare or give a rank.”

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **air pollution, climate change and health, Coal Industry, coal-fired electricity** | [Leave a reply](#)

Retrofitting and Energy Efficiency in New York City

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

In April, 2016 New York City Mayor de Blasio [announced](#) a program of new energy efficiency initiatives, including a requirement for retrofitting, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the city's residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Details and testimonials are at the city's [Sustainability website](#). Also released in April from the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, *The NYC Climate Justice Agenda: Strengthening the Mayor's OneNYC Plan*, which assesses the City's earlier initiatives through the lens of community-based climate justice, and makes recommendations.

U.S. EPA sets new rules for Methane Emissions

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has taken what the *New York Times* calls “[A Much Needed Step on Methane Emissions](#)” on May 13, to significantly reduce methane emissions from new oil and gas facilities as well as those undergoing modifications (although existing sites remain unregulated) . Read *Inside Climate News* for a [thorough report](#), which reminds us that Prime Minister Trudeau and President Obama [committed in March 2016](#) to jointly pursue regulation of methane emissions at existing oil and gas facilities.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Methane Emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Forest Sector commits to a voluntary emissions reduction target

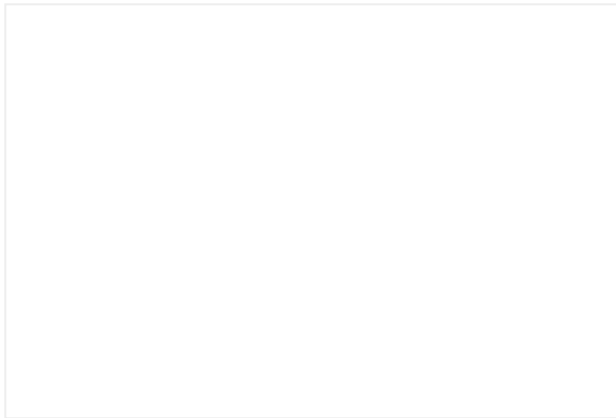
Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On May 2, 2016, the [Forest Products Association of Canada \(FPAC\)](#) announced its [30 by 30 Climate Change Challenge](#) – a pledge to remove 30 megatonnes (MT) of CO₂ per year by 2030. FPAC claims that the forest sector is the first to voluntarily contribute to the federal government's climate goals under the Paris agreement; the target is “more than 13% of the Canadian government’s emissions target” for 2030. The details are not yet clear, but FPAC states generally that it will rely on improved forest management, increasing “the use of innovative forest products and clean tech to displace materials made from fossil fuels, and by further efficiencies at mill sites.” [According to the *Globe and Mail*](#) , “the association endorsed the adoption of carbon pricing – either taxes or cap-and-trade systems”. See the *Vancouver Sun* coverage [here](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Forestry Industry](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

NEB Conditional approval for Kinder Morgan Pipeline is met with Determined Opposition

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**



— Enter a caption

On May 19, a National Energy Board [press release](#) stated, “Taking into account all the evidence, considering all relevant factors, and given that there are considerable benefits nationally, regionally and to some degree locally, the Board found that the benefits of the Project would outweigh the residual burdens.” The Kinder Morgan TransMountain Pipeline NEB approval, with 157 conditions , is subject to review by a [three-member federal panel, announced on May 17](#) , which has until November to report to the Minister of Natural Resources. The final decision will then be made by the federal Cabinet. See “ [Trudeau Declares Resource Promotion a PM’s ‘Fundamental Responsibility’](#) ”, and “[McKenna won’t give a straight answer about Enbridge pipeline](#)” (May 17) , summarizing the mixed messages and political manoeuvring over pipeline development. Also of interest, from DeSmog blog: “[Enbridge and Kinder Morgan lobby hard as Feds change tune on Pipelines](#)” .

The Kinder Morgan decision had been the focus of Canada’s [Break Free divestment protests](#) on May 14, and [Canada’s 350.org](#) states that the NEB decision doesn’t change “the simple fact that the Kinder Morgan pipeline will never be built.” EcoJustice reacted with: “[Ready to continue fight against Kinder Morgan](#)” in the courts, and citizens , local governments, and environmental groups also oppose Kinder Morgan: see “[Local Governments deeply disappointed](#)” , and “[NEB sides with Texas-based pipeline company against B.C. citizens, First Nations](#)” . Chances that First Nations will approve the pipelines are non-existent, according to a [National Observer report](#) (May 19) in which Rueben George, spokesperson for the local Tsleil-Waututh Nation, states “ First Nations have won 170 legal cases around resource extraction, that’s a 97 per cent victory rate. It’s

pretty clear to me that we have veto power over this company.” The [interactive map \(above\)](#) by the Wilderness Committee shows the Kinder Morgan route and summarizes the opposition by First Nations throughout the NEB consultations .

The Alberta Government [calls the NEB decision](#) “a responsible national approach to energy infrastructure. Canada is balancing the need for much stronger action on climate change with the need to pay for that action, by sustainably developing our natural resources – including our energy resources.” [From the British Columbia government](#): “ We will only support new heavy-oil pipelines in British Columbia if our five conditions can be met. These conditions include the successful completion of the environmental review process, ensuring world-leading marine and land-based spill response, prevention and recovery systems are in place, ensuring legal requirements regarding Aboriginal and treaty rights are addressed and First Nations are provided with the opportunities to participate in and benefit from a heavy-oil project, and, finally, that British Columbia receives a fair share of the fiscal and economic benefits from any proposed heavy-oil projects.... “The responsibility for meeting the five conditions is complex and will take a great deal of effort from both industry and governments....we will continue to work with the proponent and all stakeholders to address B.C.’s needs.” And indeed, the B.C. government [passed legislation](#) to alter the boundaries of Finn Creek Provincial Park in May, after a Kinder Morgan submission that requested changes to four park boundaries .

Unnoticed amidst the Kinder Morgan debate was a report released on April 28 by the Council of Canadian Academies(CCA). [*Commercial Marine Shipping Accidents: Understanding the Risks in Canada*](#) , explores the likelihood of commercial marine shipping accidents, including oil spills, and considers their potential social, economic, and environmental impacts. Noting significant gaps in the available data, and that there have been few such accidents, the report concludes that the Pacific Region has the highest level of shipping activity, but has a relatively low risk profile. The report concludes that Canada has a well-developed oil spill response regime overall, but identifies areas for improvement as “ the need for a hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) preparedness and response regime across Canada, as well as further research into how substances classified as HNS behave in a marine environment.” The report was commissioned by the [Clear Seas Centre for Responsible Marine Shipping](#), a not-for-profit based in Vancouver since 2014. Its goal is to provide unbiased, independent research; its funding comes from the governments of Canada, Alberta, and “industry groups represented by CAPP” (the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers).

Recent research on Carbon Taxes and Cap and Trade

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Before the May announcement of Ontario's *Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act*, a working paper released in April by the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity at the University of Toronto models the impact of Ontario's proposed cap-and-trade program on economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions, considers complementary policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and makes ten recommendations. Read *Towards a low Carbon Economy: The Costs and Benefits of Cap and Trade* [here](#). *The Effect of Environmental Policies on Jobs: Painting a More Complete Picture* explains a new general equilibrium model, developed by economists at Resources for the Future, which incorporates a job search requirement in the model. The subsequent Discussion Paper, *Unemployment and Environmental Regulation in General Equilibrium* concludes that "a modest economy-wide carbon tax would likely cause a substantial shift in employment between industries, but would have little overall effect on unemployment, even in the short run...An environmental performance standard causes a substantially smaller sectoral shift in employment than the emissions tax, with roughly similar net effects."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario's New Climate Change Legislation centres on Cap and Trade and Green Investment

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Bill 172, *Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016* passed 3rd reading in the Ontario Legislature on May 18th and will become law upon Royal Assent. The law sets GHG emission reduction targets of 15 per cent by the end of 2020; 37 per cent by the end of 2030; and 80 per cent by the end of 2050. The bill also sets out the framework for the Cap and Trade program: the official Ontario Regulation 144/16 (May 19) is [here](#); the government summary is [here](#); a summary by the *National Observer* is [here](#). The first year of the program, 2017, sets an economy-wide cap of 142 megatonnes per year, declining to 125 megatonnes per year by 2020. All proceeds from the cap and trade program will be deposited into a new Greenhouse Gas

Reduction Account, which will “be invested in a transparent way back into green projects that reduce greenhouse gas pollution and help homeowners and businesses save energy such as public transit, clean-tech innovation for industry, electric vehicle incentives, social housing retrofits.” The details of implementation will come in June when the government releases the first of the Climate Action Plans required under the legislation.

Key to the Government’s public relations battle is a report by EnviroEconomics, Navius Research and Dillon Construction: [Impact Modelling and Analysis of Ontario Cap and Trade Program](#), which analyses four alternate program structures and concludes that the proposed program will be least costly to households and have the lowest impact on provincial GDP (the proposed plan resulting in the equivalent to a drop in growth of 0.03% in 2020). The [Clean Economy Alliance](#), a multi-sector coalition of 90 green organizations, had called for explicit Just Transition language for workers in the legislation, according to a [Unifor press release](#), but the only “transition” changes in the final text of the legislation appear in section 2.1, regarding households: “The action plan must consider the impact of the regulatory scheme on low-income households and must include actions to assist those households with Ontario’s transition to a low-carbon economy.”

Nevertheless, reaction by environmental groups has been enthusiastic: the Clean Economy Alliance [press release](#) welcomes the legislation, and Keith Brooks, Director of Clean Economy, calls the legislation “a big deal”, “a huge step forward, and one worthy of celebration” [in his blog](#); the [Pembina Institute says](#) “it is laying the foundation for solid success”. In the mainstream media, pushback started with a story in the *Globe and Mail* on April 27, “[New Ontario agency will be given sweeping mandate to overhaul energy use](#)” – which summarized details of a leaked, preliminary draft of the the Climate Change Action Plan (still under discussion in Cabinet). More leaked details were revealed in “[Ontario to spend 7 Billion in sweeping climate change Plan](#)” (May 16), which states that the province will set lower carbon fuel standards for gas and diesel, change building codes to require all new homes by 2030 to be heated with electricity or geothermal systems (currently 76% of homes are heated with natural gas), and set a target for 12 per cent of all new vehicle sales to be electric by 2025. In “[Ontario passes bill to create cap and trade system](#)” on May 19, the *Globe* tempers the storm their reporting has created with: “The Liberals deny a published report claiming their climate change plan would include phasing out the use of natural gas for home heating, and point out they are expanding the gas grid to more rural areas of the province.” On May 20, Nic Rivers, Canada Research Chair in Climate and Energy Policy at the University of Ottawa, weighs in with “[The Ontario climate plan: Should provinces follow or flee?](#)”.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Is British Columbia losing its leadership position on

Climate Change?

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On May 10, the Chair of Canada's Ecofiscal Commission [wrote](#) in the *Globe and Mail* , urging Premier Clark to increase B.C.'s carbon tax and emulate the revenue transfers in the Alberta carbon tax structure. Some members of the government's own Advisory panel on Climate Leadership sent an [Open Letter to the Premier](#) on May 17 (one year after the panel had delivered its [recommendations](#)), urging action and questioning the delays on their recommended initiatives. The Open Letter coincided with an [Opinion piece](#) in the *Victoria Times Colonist*, and [an article by Tzeporah Berman](#) (one of the signatories) in the *National Observer* . For the best summary of the current state of climate progress in B.C., see the Pembina Institute/Clean Energy Canada backgrounder: [Evaluating Climate Leadership in British Columbia](#) .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [British Columbia](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Motivating people to act on Climate Change

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Joe Romm of Climate Progress recently compiled a good quick guide: [Here's what Science has to say about Convincing People to do Something about Climate Change](#) . Romm references a core academic article, "Improving Public Engagement with Climate Change: Five 'Best Practice' Insights from Psychological Science" (2015) and there have been many others. The *Washington Post* has been following the issue and summarizing other academic papers : "The vicious cycle that makes people afraid to talk about climate change" (May 12) in the *Washington Post* summarizes "Climate of Silence: Pluralistic ignorance as a barrier to climate change discussion" in *Journal of Environmental Psychology* , which states that people avoid talking about climate change if they feel that others are sceptical, for fear of being judged as "less competent". This leads to a vicious cycle, where no one is talking about climate change, so no one wants to be the first to raise the issue.

"Why even people who are very alarmed about climate change often take little action" in the *Washington Post* is based on "Social norms and efficacy beliefs drive the Alarmed segment's public-sphere climate actions" , which appeared in *Nature Climate Change* in May . This paper shows that people's willingness to vote, donate, volunteer, contact government officials, and protest about climate change can be encouraged if "alarmed individuals" (those already concerned about climate change) act as public role models and communicate their views. However, raising awareness without providing a path for action does not drive behaviour change amongst potential followers.

In practical terms, a recent paper published by the [Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation](#) contrasts the arguments used to advocate for clean energy – ecological arguments, job creation, self-sufficiency and community empowerment- in Germany vs. the United States. Read *Building Political Support for a Clean Energy Transition — How Arguments on Solar Power Affect Public Support in Germany and the US* [here](#) .

In Canada, a book to be launched in Vancouver on May 25, *I'm Right and You're an Idiot: the Toxic state of Public Discourse and How to Clean it Up* examines the broader issue of misinformation campaigns, including climate change, and offers suggestions on how to improve communications and advocacy strategies. Two encouraging recent examples of clear, factual public statements to counter fear-mongering by climate sceptics: “[Setting The Record Straight on Ontario's Green Energy Plan](#)” by Keith Brooks in the Huffington Post, which refutes “[Coming soon: Ontario's green energy fiasco, the sequel](#)”, an OpEd in the *Globe and Mail* (April 29) and “[What does the carbon levy really mean for me?](#)” published by the Pembina Institute (May 19), which sets the record straight on the benefits of Alberta's new policy.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [motivation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The State of Human Rights policies in the international Renewable Energy Industry

Posted on [May 24, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In May, 2016 the [Business and Human Rights Centre](#) , an international monitoring and advocacy group, released the results of their [survey of the human rights policies](#) of international wind, hydropower, and utility companies. Key issues identified by the 14 responding companies: local community rights, land rights, community health and safety, labour rights, and rights of Indigenous people. [Results](#) show that two thirds have human rights policy commitments, although only half refer to international standards. Two thirds of companies state a commitment to consultation with local communities, but only three companies (Engie (France), Lake Turkana Wind Power (Kenya) and Vestas (Denmark)) commit to the internationally recognised standard of free, prior and informed consent. Only 2 North American companies were included in the survey: Ontario Power Generation (Canada) and NextEra Energy (U.S); neither responded to the survey. Responses of participating companies are provided [here](#). Case studies are promised in future.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [First Nations](#), [Labour Standards](#), [Ontario Power Generation](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

85,000 Clean Jobs in New York State

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

Clean Jobs New York was released in May by E2 consultants and New Yorkers for Clean Power. The report, based on databases and survey responses from employers, shows that clean energy employs more than 85,000 workers at more than 7,500 business establishments across the state, with an anticipated growth rate of 6% for 2016. 80% of the clean energy workers are found in energy efficiency; other major sectors are alternative transportation and greenhouse gas (GHG) management and accounting. The report makes several policy recommendations, including “Governor Cuomo and NYSERDA must show continued leadership by finalizing and implementing a robust Clean Energy Standard, further strengthening RGGI post-2020, leveraging the Clean Energy Fund, and doubling down on energy efficiency by establishing clear, ambitious, binding targets.” *New Yorkers for Clean Power* is convened by the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Frack Action, Catskill Mountainkeeper, The Solutions Project, Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) and is partnering with many organizations, businesses and other groups across the state.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Clean energy industry, New York State, renewable energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

How can U.S. Labour recover from the Keystone XL Fight?

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

“Contested Futures: Labor after Keystone XL” was published in *New Labour Forum* and reproduced on the website of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, where author Sean Sweeney is Coordinator. His analysis begins with the considerable complexities of union positions in the Keystone XL pipeline debate in the U.S. between 2011 and 2015, and continues to the present, considering the divided approaches towards the Clean Power Plan and the upcoming U.S. election campaign. His vision: “Labor’s KXL fight could be the precursor to more disunity and acrimony in the labor movement in the years ahead, especially if the Black-Blue Alliance remains in place and “Saudi America” imaginings continue to shape labor’s discourse. Alternatively, unions in all sectors—the Trades, transport, health, and so on—can work together to support an approach to energy and climate that is needs-based, grounded in the facts, and independent of both industry interests and the mainstream environmental groups that support renewable energy “by any means necessary.” Sweeney calls for labour to unite behind an energy democracy agenda which would shift control over energy toward workers, communities, and municipalities.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Building trades unions, Keystone XL, labour union policies, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, United States** | **Leave a reply**

The U.S. Clean Energy Future: Jobs, Health, and Union involvement

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) launched [The Climate Jobs and Justice](#) project on May 18. It seeks to present “a credible, workable plan” for Just Transition at local, state, and national levels, and to provide organizers, activists and advocates with concrete objectives and examples for local action. The ultimate goal is to influence legislative proposals at the national level in the U.S. The first, overview report released, [The Clean Energy Future: Protecting the Climate, Creating Jobs and Saving Money](#), examines the electric system, light vehicle transportation (cars and light trucks), space heating and water heating, and waste management. Leveraging the current progress in energy efficiency and renewable energy, the plans outlined will result GHG emissions reductions of 80 percent by 2050 while adding half-a-million jobs – most in manufacturing and construction – and saving Americans billions of dollars on their electrical, heating, and transportation costs. The interventions are presented as “a floor, not a ceiling”.

The report states that “the most surprising part of the Clean Energy Future may be its projected expansion of the auto industry. We assume that it will be possible to expand renewable electricity production and electric vehicle production fast enough to convert 100 percent of gasoline-powered cars and light trucks to renewable electricity by 2050.” It projects increased employment in auto production, based on an assumption that 48 percent of the new demand for electric vehicles can be met by production within the United States. Regarding the need for Just Transition policies for workers, the report also states: “The deterioration in the quality of jobs is directly related to the reduction in the size and bargaining power of labor unions; reinforcing the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively should be an explicit part of public policy for climate protection.” The Clean Energy Future was written for LNS and 350.org by Synapse Energy Economics.

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

Low-wage workers, Women, and Migrant workers will suffer most from Climate change-induced heat

Posted on **May 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Climate Change and Labour: Impacts of Heat in the Workplace](#) identifies heavy labour and low-skill agricultural and manufacturing jobs as the most susceptible to heat changes caused by

climate change. India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Cambodia, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and part of West Africa are the countries most at risk. Quoting the IPCC's 5th Assessment Report, it states that "labour productivity impacts could result in output reductions in affected sectors exceeding 20% during the second half of the century—the global economic cost of reduced productivity may be more than 2 trillion USD by 2030." Even if countries meet their Paris emissions reductions targets, rising temperatures may cut up to 10 percent of the daytime working hours in developing countries.

On the human scale, the authors surveyed more than 100 studies in the last decade which document the health risks and labour productivity loss experienced by workers in hot locations—most recently, 2016 studies from India which concluded that 87% of workers experience health problems during the hottest 3 months, and which highlighted additional problems for pregnant women workers and migrant workers.

Several important indirect effects of heat stress include: alteration of work hours to avoid the heat of the day; the need to work longer hours to earn the same pay for those whose productivity falls due to heat stress, or suffer income loss; increased exposure to hazardous chemicals when workplace chemicals evaporate more quickly in higher temperatures; and possible exposure to new vector-borne diseases. The report calls for protection for workers, including low cost measures such as assured access to drinking water in workplaces, frequent rest breaks, and management of output targets, incorporating protection of income and other conditions of Decent Work.

At the regulatory level, the most relevant standard cited was adopted by the ILO in November 2015: "[Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#)", which includes occupational safety and health and social protection policies which call on social partners "to conduct assessments of increased or new OSH risks resulting from climate change; improve, adapt or develop and create awareness of OSH standards for technologies and work processes related to the transition; and review policies concerning the protection of workers."

The report was as a joint effort coordinated by the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Secretariat and in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNI Global Union (UNI), the International Organization of Employers (IOE), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the NGO network ACT Alliance. See *The Guardian* for a [summary](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Gender Differences](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Productivity](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Food Products Industry and their Supply Chains

Posted on **April 25, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

In the latest report of the Oxfam [Behind the Brands campaign](#) about the international food products industry, the Big 10 food and beverage companies are said to have made significant new commitments over the past three years to improve social and environmental standards in their supply chains, with progress most evident in the areas of protecting land rights, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling gender inequality. However, [The Journey to Sustainable Food](#) states that companies “must go much further and fundamentally re-write the business models in their supply chains to ensure that much more power and much more of the value their products generate reaches the farmers and workers who produce their ingredients.” Companies monitored are: Associated British Foods (ABF), Coca-Cola, Danone, General Mills, Kellogg, Mars, Mondelēz International, Nestlé, PepsiCo and Unilever.

A March 2016 study by Greenpeace International assesses 14 companies that committed to “no deforestation” to understand the impact of palm oil production on the plantations of Indonesia. The companies reviewed in [Cutting deforestation out of the palm oil supply chain – Company Scorecard](#) are: Colgate-Palmolive, Danone, Ferrero, General Mills, Ikea, Johnson & Johnson, Kellogg, Mars, Mondelēz International, Nestlé, Orkla, PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Unilever.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Behind the Brands, Farm workers, Farmers, Food products industry, Palm oil, Supply chains** | [Leave a reply](#)

Aviation Industry – the Pivotal Climate Change issue of 2016?

Posted on **April 25, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**



The global airline industry accounts for more GHG emissions than either South Korea or Canada – about 2% of global emissions, and expected to triple by 2050 without new policies. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) [has pledged to adopt](#) a proposed Global Market-Based Mechanism (GMBM) to curb emissions in September 2016. In light of the importance of the issue, an international alliance of environmental groups, including the International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation (ICSA) has launched [FlightPath 1.5](#), with the goal to make “aviation emissions the pivotal climate change issue of 2016.” Download their *Checklist for an Effective Plan to Cut Aviation Global Warming Pollution* [here](#). The *National Observer* (March 24) provides an [overview of the issue](#); for a comprehensive discussion, refer to [Raising Ambition to Reduce International Aviation and Maritime Emissions](#), published by New Climate Economy in 2015. See “How significant a source of emissions is air travel?” for background and progress in the U.S., and [Reducing emissions from Aviation website](#) for a European overview.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aviation Industry](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change and Health, including Mental Health

Posted on [April 25, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. Global Change Research Program released its landmark synthesis report, [The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment](#) in April 2016.

Chapter 8, “Mental Health and Well-being”, states that mental health risks can be caused by climate-related or weather-related disasters, as well as ongoing anxiety over climate change. Extreme heat exacerbates physical and mental problems. Groups at highest risk are “children, the elderly, women (especially pregnant and post-partum women), people with pre-existing mental illness, the economically disadvantaged, the homeless, and first responders.” Communities that rely on the natural environment for sustenance and livelihood or with direct exposure to climate change are also at high risk. For follow-up reading, consult the 13- page list of references at the end of the chapter. For an overview of the entire report, see [Fact Sheet: What Climate Change Means to your Health and Family](#).

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

Research funding dries up for Fracking and Water

Posted on [April 25, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The impacts of fracking on groundwater is one of the research areas of the [Program on Water Issues \(POWI\)](#) at University of Toronto's Munk Centre for Global Affairs, "one of the nation's most celebrated and effective water study programs " which brought together Canada's "best scientists and policy-makers ... in an independent, non-partisan forum". Now, after supporting the program for 15 years, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation have announced an end to their support. Although no official reason has been given for the decision, [a report](#) by Andrew Nikoforuk in *The Tyee* (April 19) suggests that research into fracking may have been a factor in the decision. Other research topics pursued at POWI included water withdrawals from the Athabasca River by the oil sands industry, groundwater monitoring, carbon capture and storage, climate change, the future of the Columbia River Treaty, and bulk water exports.

Also: An April report from Environment America, *Fracking by the Numbers: the Damage to Our Water, Land and Climate from a Decade of Dirty Drilling* catalogues a host of dangers, including contaminated drinking water, depletion of scarce water resources; and air pollution and methane leaks in the U.S. And speaking of contamination of water, see also a new report by Environmental Defence- *Energy East: A Risk to our Drinking Water* , which documents the nature and proximity of the proposed pipeline to major municipal and community drinking water supplies in four provinces.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Environmental Science](#), [Fracking](#), [Groundwater Contamination](#), [Science Funding](#), [Water Policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Three Canadian NGO's to cooperate for Climate Change Advocacy

Posted on **April 25, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canadian environmental advocacy groups [Environmental Defence](#) , [Équiterre](#) and the [Pembina Institute](#) announced their new partnership in a public event in Ottawa on April 14, 2016. The three organizations "will deploy their research, convening and public engagement capacities to build cross-sectoral support for ambitious policy reforms" to meet the challenge of Canada's climate change goals.

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Divestment decision at University of Toronto amid further

financial warnings

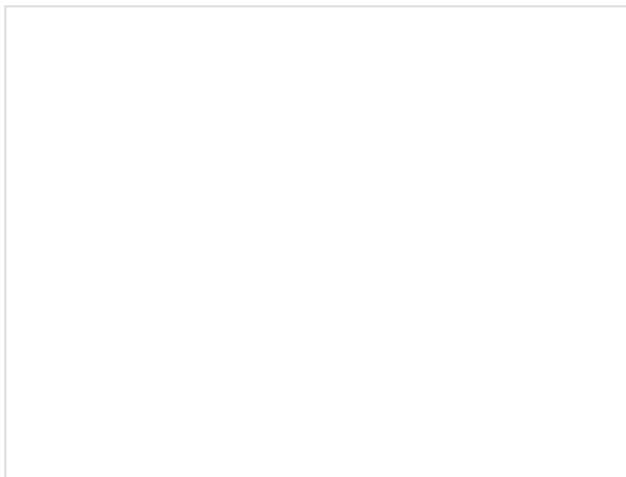
Posted on **April 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

At the end of March, the President of the University of Toronto [issued an official response](#) to the Advisory Committee on Divestment from Fossil Fuels, which had reported in December 2015. The University rejected a blanket divestment strategy and opted to pursue a targeted approach which will incorporate environmental, social, and governance-based factors (ESG) in investment decisions. It states that the core mission of the university, research and teaching, will be used as its main contribution to the fight against climate change. The statement is summarized in a [Globe and Mail article](#) (March 30) . On April 12, the *New York Times* [reported](#) that Yale University had also found a compromise position regarding investment strategies for its endowment fund, rather than outright divestment. Arguing against such approaches: from researchers at the London School of Economics, “[Climate value at risk’ of global financial assets](#)” in *Nature Climate Change online* (April 4) which uses models to estimate the impact of twenty-first-century climate change on the present market value of global financial assets, and concludes that “losses could soar to \$24tn, or 17% of the world’s assets, and wreck the global economy”. An [article in The Guardian](#) (April 4) summarizes this and other studies. Even the *Harvard Business Review* (April 14) is sounding the alarm, based on the latest research. An article in *Corporate Knights* magazine, “[Defending Divestment](#)” (April 6) considers the financial and moral arguments about divestment.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Divestment, Fossil Fuel Divestment, University of Toronto, Yale University** | [Leave a reply](#)

Progress in reducing Transportation emissions: Electric Busses and Biofuel

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**



While the world gawked and lined up to buy [the new Tesla Model 3](#) electric car in March, a report from Yale 360 describes the encouraging progress toward electric heavy duty vehicles. “[As Electric Cars Stall, A Move To Greener Trucks and Buses](#)” (March 24) suggests that the industrial sector may be quicker than individual consumers to pay for expensive new technologies because costs can be amortized and benefits such as fuel savings will multiply across equipment fleets. As proof, the article cites growth of electric bus fleets in the U.S. and Europe, and states that China, the world leader in manufacture and export of electric buses, already has 80,000 electric buses on the road ; Shanghai has announced plans to add 1,400 electric buses a year . In Canada, electric vehicles continue to attract [incentives](#) , for example with [Ontario’s new program](#) announced in February .

To measure how carbon pollution is improving under renewable fuel standards, Clean Energy Canada, Navius Research and Simon Fraser have produced a new report, [Biofuels in Canada: Tracking progress in Tackling Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transportation Fuels](#) . The analysis concludes that government policy is clearly driving biofuel adoption: renewable fuel standards and low-carbon fuel standards have reduced annual carbon pollution in 2014 by 4.3 megatonnes CO₂eq, (equivalent to taking one million cars off the road), and biofuel use has increased to 3.9 million m³, (equivalent to 5% of all gasoline and diesel use in Canada). However, the report calls for additional government policies in the future. Funding for the report was provided by Advanced Biofuels Canada; Clean Energy Canada maintained full control over research, analysis and editorial content.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Biofuels](#), [Electric Busses](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Quebec announces new Energy Policy to 2030

Posted on [April 24, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Quebec’s Energy Minister announced a [new energy strategy](#) , with legislation to be introduced before June, 2016. The strategy includes goals to reduce oil consumption by 40 per cent by 2030; eliminate the use of thermal coal; increase by 25% overall renewable energy output; and increase by 50% bioenergy production. Documentation in French is [here](#) . See the summary in the *Montreal Gazette* . For a summary of recent Quebec announcements, see “[The Quebec Premier just slammed future oil exploration in his province](#)” in *The National Observer* (April 11) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Quebec](#), [Quebec Energy Strategy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia holds off on a Carbon Tax

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

In advance of the Nova Scotia [Budget](#) on April 19, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, CCPA-Nova Scotia, and clean energy groups issued an [Open Letter](#) calling for made-in-Nova Scotia carbon pricing, stating “The Nova Scotia government should immediately create a multi-sectoral working group on this issue, including environmental, anti-poverty and fair economy groups.” Their concerns were not addressed in the Budget, as government policy focused mainly on protecting the small budget surplus reported. For a summary, see the CBC report [here](#) .

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

New Brunswick establishes a Select Committee on a Green Economy

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

The New Brunswick legislature [voted to establish](#) an all-party select committee on Climate Change on April 8 , to hold public consultations and produce a report . Read the summary by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick [here](#) . The Premier [held an “Opportunity Summit” meeting](#) on April 4 in Edmundston to consult on green economy issues.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [New Brunswick](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Plans for a carbon levy revealed with Alberta’s Budget

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

Faced with unprecedented economic challenges, the Alberta government delivered an April [Budget](#) with frequent references to its [Climate Leadership Plan](#), including plans for \$3.4 billion to be invested in large-scale renewable energy projects and technologies; \$25 million to be invested directly into new apprenticeship and training opportunities; \$25 million for startup companies with high job growth potential, such as clean energy and clean technology; and funding and training for workers in communities affected by the promised coal phase-out. See coverage in [The Globe and](#)

[Mail](#) and the [Calgary Herald](#) . Most attention went to the specifics of the [Climate Leadership Adjustment Rebate](#) , to help individual Albertans offset the costs of the carbon levy.

Academic research advice related to carbon pricing for Alberta appeared in *Policy Options* in March: “[Alberta’s Carrot and Stick approach to GHG Emission Reduction](#)” and from the University of Calgary School of Public Policy, [Make the Alberta Carbon Levy Revenue Neutral](#) .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

NDP and the Leap Manifesto

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Amidst the enormous media coverage of the role of the [Leap Manifesto](#) in the outcome of the NDP Convention in Edmonton in April, a few items which you may have missed: “[The Leap: Time for a Reality Check](#)” in *Rabble.ca*, in which Naomi Klein defends the Leap document and counters another *Rabble.ca* article, “[The federal NDP’s ‘Leap’ of faith advocates and Alberta’s right-wing opposition: Strange bedfellows?](#)” (April 13) by David Climenhaga. And after the dust has settled somewhat, Ed Broadbent and the Broadbent Institute issued “[Canada’s Left is having a Moment](#)” which appeared in the *Toronto Star* (April 22). The Leap website has compiled links to news coverage of the debate [here](#) . The CBC has also attempted an overview and compilation of links at “[The Leap Manifesto that is dividing the NDP](#)” (April 17).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Leap Manifesto](#), [NDP](#), [New Democratic Party \(NDP\)](#), [Political parties and policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ceremonial Signing of the Paris Climate Agreement, Earth Day 2016

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



As widely reported, over 170 national representatives took part in [a ceremonial signing of the Paris climate agreement](#) at the U.N. in New York on April 22, Earth Day. The Paris Agreement comes into force when countries representing at least 55% of total global greenhouse gasses, and

55% of the population, join the agreement. See [“US and China lead push to bring Paris climate deal into force early”](#) in *The Guardian* for details of each country’s proportion of emissions, and national ratification prospects. [“The Key Players in Climate Change”](#) in the *New York Times* (April 21) provides an overview of the major emitters: U.S., China, EU, Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia. Although Canada is one of the highest per capita emitters in the world, it represents approximately 1.6% of total global GHG emissions in 2012.

A brief press release from Canada’s PMO is [here](#). Prime Minister Trudeau pledged that Canada’s House of Commons would ratify the agreement by the end of 2016 – matching the date pledged by the U.S. and China, in [an article in the *Globe and Mail*](#). The Prime Minister spoke against a backdrop of two recent reports about Canada’s emissions. The [National Inventory of Report of GHG Emissions 1990 – 2014](#), released by Environment and Climate Change Canada, is an annual compilation of statistics mandated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It shows that total GHG emissions decreased overall between 2005 and 2014, but have increased by 5.2% from 2009 to 2014. Six provinces’ emissions have declined since 2005, but emissions in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Newfoundland have increased. 81% of Canada’s GHG emissions in 2014 originated in the energy sector (which the IPCC broadly defines to include the fossil fuel industry, electricity, industrial production, transportation, agriculture and more). Emission intensity for the entire economy (GHG per GDP) has declined by 32% since 1990, which the report attributes to “fuel switching, increases in efficiency, the modernization of industrial processes, and structural changes in the economy”. The French version of the *National Inventory Report* is [here](#).

The Conference Board gives Canada a “D” grade overall on three dimensions it measured in its April 21 report: [How Canada Performs: Environmental Report Card](#) : climate change, air pollution, and freshwater management. Canada ranks 14th among the 16 peer countries, with only the U.S. and Australia worse.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [COP21](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Demanding a Just Transition for Peabody Coal Workers

Posted on [April 24, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Peabody Energy, the world’s largest publicly-listed coal mining company, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the U.S. on April 13. This seemingly good news for the world’s GHG emissions raises human issues, as outlined in [“Why Peabody Energy, the world’s largest coal company, just went bankrupt”](#) in *Vox* (April 13) and [“How your taxes ended up enriching coal executives who are betraying their workers”](#) in *Vox* (March 18). [DeSmog Blog reports on protests](#) by activists (April 19) who demanded a \$14 billion Just Transition Fund be established as

part of the bankruptcy proceedings. DeSmog blog asks, “What would a more Just Bankruptcy look like?”, and lists: fully- fund worker pensions and health care plans; an immediate stop to the forcible relocation and harassment of Diné (Navajo) people in northern Arizona, and full reparations for cultural genocide caused by Peabody; Guaranteed full funding for clean-up and full reclamation of all mined lands and polluted and depleted aquifers used by Peabody; payouts to communities negatively impacted by Peabody’s practices in areas left stranded in the bankruptcy, as a priority before other shareholders; support for communities as they transition from coal-based economies toward renewable energy and self-sufficiency, including healthcare funds for communities in and adjacent to mining and coal-processing areas. Many of these issues were raised and explained in the 2012 report by Labor Network for Sustainability, *Jobs Beyond Coal: A Manual for Workers, Communities and Environmentalists* , which included a case study of Black Mesa and the Just Transition group.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Coal Industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [Peabody Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Benefits of Community Energy in Canada

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Community Energy Planning: the Value Proposition. Environmental, Health and Economic Benefits reports on Community Energy Planning activities and programs in Canada, with comprehensive economic analyses and case studies of six. The report states that more than 180 communities across Canada, representing over 50% of the population, live in communities with some community energy plan. The cities of Barrie and Hamilton, Ontario are given as examples: the study evaluated the long-term effects (over a period from 2008-2031) of maximizing cost-effective building energy efficiency retrofits and technologies and found that for every \$1 million invested in building energy efficiency retrofits, over 9 person-years of permanent employment would be created within the province of Ontario. The report is part of a collaborative initiative, *Getting to Implementation*, spearheaded by the Community Energy Association, QUEST – Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow, and Sustainable Prosperity, with the goal of improving efficiency, cutting emissions, and driving economic development, including local job creation. Sustainable Prosperity has also recently released the *Sustainability Alignment Manual*, detailing market-based incentives for local community sustainability efforts, and the University of Waterloo maintains a [library of research articles and studies](#) of community sustainability plans across Canada.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [community energy](#), [Distributed energy](#), [energy efficiency](#), [local job creation](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Setting the record straight on Economic Analysis of Energy Efficiency Programs

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

On April 16, the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) released a White Paper, *Critiques of Energy Efficiency Policies and Programs: Some Truth But Also Substantial Mistakes and Bias*. The paper examines recent U.S. studies of energy efficiency programs, “... pointing out a variety of recurring mistakes, such as misunderstanding the programs and markets they are examining or unreasonably extrapolating their findings to areas they did not study.” The [accompanying blog](#) provides additional links and highlights a new study about Ontario, by the Fraser Institute. *Demand-side Mismanagement: How Conservation became Waste* examines energy conservation programs in Ontario and concludes that they have not saved money for consumers, but according to the ACEEE, “Their conclusion is not based on data from Ontario, but cites previous critical studies of other programs, in particular a controversial study from 1992. Their analysis ignores or downplays other more recent studies that found much lower costs.”

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy also launched a new [website](#) in April, providing detailed energy efficiency metrics for the United States, as well as overview measures for the [international community](#), including [Canada](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [energy conservation](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Fraser Institute](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Employment in Canadian Clean Tech and U.S. Clean Energy

Posted on **April 24, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

On April 19, with Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna in attendance, Analytica Advisors held a press conference to release their 2016 *Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report*. This is the fifth report, based on the business results for 2014 and plans for 2015 reported by 107 companies – (the report is available in full only to the participants). Although it includes clean energy generation, the scope of the report also includes energy infrastructure and green buildings, transportation, recycling, water and waste water treatment, and others. From the publicly-available Synopsis, we learn that this broad Clean Technology sector in Canada includes 775 technology companies directly employing 55,600 people, an increase of 11% from 2013. The *Backgrounder* states that “More people are now directly employed in the clean technology industry than are employed in the aerospace manufacturing, forestry and logging or

pharmaceuticals and medical devices industries.” 21 percent of employees are under age 30; 20 percent of clean technology company employees are engineers.

The main focus of the report is on revenues and market share: “after Japan, Canada’s is the steepest decline in global market share among top exporters. For Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency manufactured environmental goods, Canada has lost 39 percent of its 2005 market share and is the biggest loser of market share among the top exporting countries.” The report advises: “To reverse this trajectory and get back to the spectacular growth of previous years will require a price on carbon as well as a rethink of innovation, regulation and green infrastructure policies. Equally important, it will require new models to finance the growth of companies including those with high capital requirements.” Industry associations BC Cleantech CEO Alliance, Écotech Québec, the Alberta Clean Technology Industry Alliance and Ontario’s MaRS Discovery District are co-ordinating their efforts to lobby the federal government for funding, according to a recent [Globe and Mail article](#) .

In the U.S., a March 2016 report from consultants Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2), found that 2.5 million Americans work in the clean energy industry. With 1.9 million workers, energy efficiency is the largest sector, followed by renewable energy generation, which employs nearly 414,000 people, and advanced vehicles with nearly 170,000 jobs. [Clean Jobs America](#) is based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Department of Energy data and a survey of tens of thousands of businesses across the country. It provides “ a comprehensive analysis of clean energy and clean transportation jobs” across the U.S., providing detailed statistics and an overview of the policies which have encouraged investment and growth, including the Clean Power Plan. The report was written in conjunction with the Clean Energy Trust, The Solar Foundation and Advanced Energy Economy. The [Wind Industry Annual Market Report](#), released by the American Wind Energy Association on April 12, showed a 20% increase in jobs in the past year, with 88,000 at the start of 2016. The national business association Advanced Energy Economy (AEE) [is quoted](#) as saying that California leads the U.S. in energy employment with an industry growth rate of 18% last year – six times the overall state employment growth rate . California also ranks first in installed solar capacity and number of jobs, according to the [Solar Energy Industries Association](#) , the national trade association.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Green Jobs](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Low Carbon Economy Future for Alberta

Posted on [April 24, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report from Greenpeace Canada projects that “Alberta has the potential to create over one hundred and forty-five thousand new jobs — 46,780 jobs in renewable energy, 68,400 jobs in

energy efficiency, and 30,000-40,000 jobs in mass transit.” [100,000+ Jobs: Getting Albertans back to Work by building a Low-Carbon Future](#) (April 22), aims to “spark a creative conversation” by providing very specific examples of job creation opportunities by sector and across sectors, and calls for policy changes and actions to diversify the economy. The Alberta Green Economy Network and Gridworks Energy Group also cooperated on the report. A [poll taken by the Alberta Green Economy Network](#) shows that 58% of Albertans want the carbon revenues announced in the recent budget to be directed toward green projects (28% want the money to be invested in research to reduce emissions from fossil fuel companies).

On the ground, a group of oil sands workers have banded together as “Iron and Earth”, to help laid-off workers transition to the renewable energy sector. Their [website](#) states : “ Together we can encourage more sustainable carbon-based extraction and build the renewable energy infrastructure we need to both meet the demands of consumers and diversify our energy economy so it isn’t so reliant on the boom and bust associated to a single resource.” Its first project is a “Solar Skills” campaign to retrain 1,000 laid-off electricians from Alberta’s oil industry, to help build 100 solar installations on public buildings throughout the province. The group, mostly in Alberta but also including members from Atlantic Canada, states that it is non-partisan; it seeks supporters, donations, and possible partnerships with unions, including the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, as well as corporations. See “[Amid Price Plunge, North American Oil and Gas Workers Seek Transition to Renewable Sector](#)” from *Truthout*; Iron and Earth and the dilemma of Alberta’s energy economy are presented in “[Does National Unity Have to be a Casualty of Canada’s Energy Debate?](#)” at DeSmog Blog (April 4).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Green Economy](#), [renewable energy](#), [Retraining](#), [Solar Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change, Natural Disasters, and Mental Health

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [WMO Statement on the Status of the Global Climate](#) presents a depressing catalogue of statistics, including that 2015 was the hottest year on record, with CO2 concentrations breaching the symbolic benchmark of 400 ppm. The Global Footprint Network released the [2016 edition of the National Footprint Accounts](#), reveals that the global Carbon Footprint is 16 percent higher than previously calculated. The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the Catholic University of Louvain Brussels, and the U.S. Agency for International Development released [analysis of the human cost of disasters](#), showing that 98.6 million people worldwide were affected in 2015, and that climate was a factor in 92% of those events. Canada’s [Parliamentary Budget Office estimates](#) that over the next five years, the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program can expect claims of \$229 million per year because of hurricanes, convective storms and

winter storms and \$673 million for floods, for a total of \$902 million in Canada. To this litany of bad news, add another cost: the mental health cost of climate change.

The issue is addressed in a recent three-part series of articles in the *Toronto Star* and raises the profile of the effects of climate change on the mental health of those most exposed and affected by it. “[Climate change is Wreaking Havoc on our Mental Health, Experts say](#)” (Feb. 28), discusses the mental health toll on environmental scientists and activists, provides links to studies, and applauds the American Psychological Association (APA) for taking the issue seriously (unlike the Canadian association). “[For Normally Stoic Farmers, The Stress of Climate Change can be too much to bear](#)” (Feb. 28) highlights the plight of farmers, already recognized as having one of the highest rates of occupation-related depression and suicide, and expected to worsen with increased frequency of weather disasters of flooding and drought. “[Aboriginal Leaders are Warning of the Mental Health Cost of Climate Change in the North](#)” (Feb 29) portrays Northerners as front line victims of climate change. The author of the series, Tyler Hamilton, calls on the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Psychological Association to acknowledge the issue and develop a position on the grounds that climate change stress is both a public health concern and a factor in economic productivity.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [Farmers](#), [mental health](#), [natural disasters](#), [scientists](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Where do unions stand on Carbon Markets?

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a Working Paper titled *Carbon Markets After Paris: Trading in Trouble*, Sean Sweeney, Coordinator of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), argues that it is time for unions to reevaluate their stance on emissions trading. He asserts a “Paris Contradiction” – that the INDC’s targets from COP21 in Paris in December 2015 are not sufficient to reduce GhG emissions, and are part of a “neo liberal fantasy”. Focusing on Europe and the problems of the European carbon market (the EU ETS), Sweeney criticizes the European Trade Union Confederation for its “defensive approach (prevention of carbon leakage and the protection of existing jobs)”, and its continued participation in the Social Partnership framework. In his [accompanying blog](#), he states: “Facing up to the failure of carbon markets will allow unions and their allies to better concentrate on developing and organizing around the kind of programmatic commitments that can seriously tackle climate change and the systemic roots of the crisis.... by extending social ownership of key sectors like energy, a genuine ‘just transition’ is possible and that unions can play an important role in making it happen.” Even outside the neo-liberal fold, Sweeney’s call to reject carbon markets is controversial. The European Trade Union Confederation, subject of Sweeney’s criticism, most recently issued its “[Position on the structural reform of the EU Emissions Trading System](#)” in December 2015, reflecting a concern for “carbon leakage” but demanding a Just

Transition Fund to protect workers. The ETUC claims to have consulted widely amongst European labour unions to reach its position. The Canadian Labour Congress, in the lead-up to COP21 [stated](#) (Nov. 2015) “The Canadian labour movement supports a national cap and trade carbon-pricing system”, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, in its [response to the 2016 Federal Budget](#) states, “CUPE supports putting a price on carbon, but it must be done in a progressive way that penalizes corporate polluters rather than low-income and working Canadians. Revenues raised from carbon pricing should be used to invest in complementary green investments, job retraining, create green jobs, and to mitigate negative impacts of climate change and carbon pricing measures on vulnerable Canadians.” See also Marc Lee, “[Don’t believe the Hype on B.C.’s Carbon Tax](#)” (March 4), and in the U.S., the [Center for American Progress](#) called for an integrated North American carbon market on March 17.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [European Emissions Trading System](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Low Carbon Economy: 2 Canadian proposals and International Evidence of Decoupling

Posted on [March 28, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Smart Prosperity](#) is a new Canadian group, launched at the [Globe 2016 conference](#) in Vancouver, and supported by a civil society groups including business, youth, Indigenous people, researchers, environmental groups (including WWF, Pembina Institute, Nature Conservancy), and labour organizations, notably the United Steelworkers. Its launch document, [New Thinking: Canada’s Roadmap to Smart Prosperity](#) outlines five action areas: 1. Accelerate clean innovation across the economy; 2: Boost energy and resource efficiency; 3: Price pollution and waste ; 4: Invest in advanced infrastructure and skills; 5: Conserve and value nature.

From the Broadbent Institute, which is also a member of the Smart Prosperity collaborative, comes [A Green Entrepreneurial State as Solution to Climate Federalism](#) by Brendan Haley. The author supports a uniform national carbon pricing system, but continues.. “ the government should also not limit itself to market-based approaches, since other policy actions are needed to create low-carbon economic and political momentum attuned to regional needs and catalyzing concrete low-carbon innovations.” Conclusion: “The federal government can support the development of low-carbon transition pathways by providing analytical tools in areas such as GHG accounting, energy systems analysis, and scenario development. The results can inform the allocation of federal R&D efforts, infrastructure funds, and green development bank investments.” Haley acknowledges a large debt to the work of [Mariana Mazzucato](#) and her widely-cited book, *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths* (2013) . Mazzucato has since published [The Green](#)

[Entrepreneurial State](#) (SPRU Working Paper October 2015) , and “[A State-powered Green Revolution](#)” in *The Syndicate* (March 10).

Two recent international reports add to the mounting evidence that a low carbon economy can be achieved within a healthy economy. The International Energy Agency in Paris titled its March 16 press release, “[Decoupling of Global Emissions and Economic Growth Confirmed](#)” , as it released data showing energy-related emissions of CO2 steady for the second year in a row, while renewable energy surged. And an OECD study, [Do Environmental Policies Affect Global Value Chains?](#) (March 10) concludes that regulations to curb pollution and energy use do not necessarily hurt businesses by creating new costs – challenging the theories of carbon leakage made by some. Based on historic trade data for developing and developed economies, the OECD report concludes that countries with stringent environmental laws suffer a very small disadvantage in pollution-intensive sectors such as steel-making, chemicals, plastics and fuel products, but that this is compensated for by advantages in cleaner industries like machinery or electronics. The study uses an “[OECD Environmental Policy Stringency indicator](#)”, is a composite index which assigns higher values to represent a more stringent policy. An interactive table shows Canada’s Stringency score at 2.8 in 2012, (which is the OECD average). The most stringent country is Denmark (4.2), followed by Netherlands (3.6); the U.S. and Japan rank 2.6.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Delivering Community Power through the Post Office

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



February 29, 2016, dubbed Leap Day, saw the launch of a campaign to transform Canada's postal system while creating a greener and more equitable economy. The "[Delivering Community Power](#)" campaign proposes to leverage Canada Post's unparalleled delivery and outlet network, including rural and Indigenous communities, by offering electric vehicle charging stations at post offices, and providing postal banking as a means of financial inclusion and green investment. It also proposes converting the postal fleet to made-in-Canada electric vehicles. In her [blog](#) at the Council of Canadians website, Andrea Harden-Donahue states, "This is a very useful concrete proposal that brings together the inter-sectionality at the heart of the Leap Manifesto, aimed at social justice, environmental and climate objectives." [Rabble.ca](#) describes the background for the campaign. Coalition members and supporters include the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, LEAP Manifesto, the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association, ACORN, Idle No More, Friends of Public Services, SmartChange.ca, and the Canadian Labour Congress; they are urging Canadians to actively participate in a public review of Canada Post, to resist cutbacks and reimagine future directions. The [Campaign website](#) offers a download of the full 20 page proposal: *Delivering Community Power: How Canada Post can be the Hub of our Next Economy*.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canada Post](#), [community action](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green Economy](#), [post office](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Considering Just Transition in an Australian Context

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

"[Why Work And Workers Matter In The Environmental Debate](#)" appeared in the March 19 issue of *Green Agenda*, an online forum hosted by the [Green Institute](#), a think tank associated with Australia's Green Party. It provides an introduction to the prevailing arguments about a green transition, with Australian examples and context, and argues 1) that the world of work is a critical element in a successful shift to a green economy, and 2) that political parties and environmental organizations in Australia need to engage more deeply with the concerns and interests of workers in the face of labour market and job disruptions. Pointing to the "more nuanced" positions of the Leap Manifesto, the 350 movement, and Australia's Earthworker Co-operative, the author challenges leaders in politics, business, the environmental movement, and the labour movement, to craft and implement Just Transition policies which re-imagine work and society, providing North American and Australian examples of what is at risk for communities and workers. The author, Caleb Goods, is a Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia, and this essay draws on his work as a Co-Investigator in the Adapting Canadian Work & Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project at York University.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Climate Change Policy: The Vancouver Declaration and Subsequent Federal budget

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [First Ministers meeting in Vancouver](#) raised enormous expectations, culminating on March 3 with the release of an 8-page [Vancouver Declaration on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), (in French [here](#)). The *Declaration* pledged immediate federal investment in green infrastructure, public transit infrastructure and energy efficient social infrastructure; investing in clean energy and clean tech R & D, as well as electric vehicles and clean electricity. It creates working groups to report by October 2016, in four areas: Clean Technology, Innovation and Jobs; Carbon Pricing Mechanisms; Specific Mitigation Opportunities; and Adaptation and Climate Resilience.

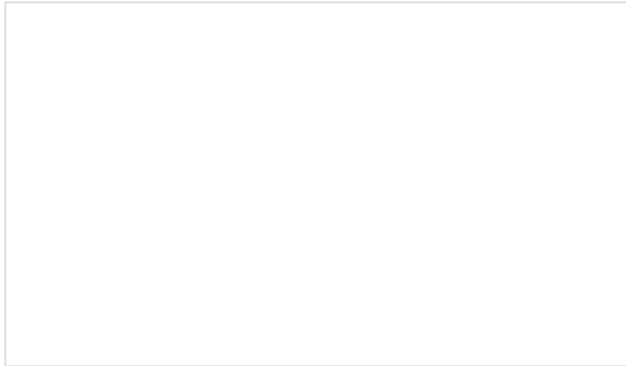
Acknowledging that ANY federal-provincial discussion represents progress from the Harper years, reaction to the meetings was generally optimistic – for example, [Four Reasons the First Ministers Meeting on Climate Matters](#) from Clean Energy Canada, and [Vancouver Declaration Moves Canada Closer To A National Climate Plan](#) from DeSmog Blog. The Council of Canadians disappointment is explained in “[Council of Canadians protest as first ministers fail to take needed action on climate change](#)”, and the outrage of some Indigenous leaders marred the meetings, see “[Indigenous leaders shocked at exclusion from climate change meeting](#)” in *The National Observer*. For a simple, balanced overview, read “[From Paris to Vancouver: What happened at the First Ministers meeting on climate](#)” by Marc Lee at Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, who rightly points out that achieving a clean economy is a political problem, not a technical problem, and who advises us to “watch the budget”.

Action on climate change is listed as one of the top 10 things Canadian unions want to see in the federal budget, according to the [Canadian Labour Congress](#). And the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives included a call for a national carbon price of \$30 per tonne in their [Alternative Budget](#). When the actual [federal Budget](#) was delivered on March 22 by Finance Minister Morneau, he characterized the new government as a “champion of clean growth and a speedy transition to a low-carbon economy.” Spending allocations include: \$2.5-billion for public transit; \$1.8-billion on green infrastructure; \$574-million for energy and water efficiency upgrades in social housing; \$401-million for a variety of clean-tech development efforts; \$1.7-billion for climate and environmental protection, and an additional \$1-billion in each of 2018 and 2019 to establish a low-carbon economy fund for provinces and territories that sign on to a national climate agreement. The Budget did NOT eliminate fossil fuel subsidies, and DID include a provision to allow LNG producers to write off their capital investments at an accelerated pace for the next 10 years. For an overview, see “[Liberals unveil spending as ‘Champion of Clean Growth’](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (March 22). Read CUPE’s response [here](#).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Vancouver Declaration 2016](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada- U.S. Climate Agreement to regulate Methane Emissions

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**



On March 10, 2016, following star-powered meetings between President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau in Washington, the [U.S.-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership](#) (in French [here](#)) was released. Again, there were optimistic and positive reactions, mainly centred on the provisions to work collaboratively on federal measures to reduce methane emissions. Environment and Climate Change Canada has pledged “to publish an initial phase of proposed regulations by early 2017.” Summaries of the agreement appear in “[Trudeau vows to Clamp Down on Methane Emissions](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (March 10) and “[Obama and Canada’s Justin Trudeau Promote Ties and Climate Plan](#)” in *New York Times* (March 10). For reaction, read “[How big a deal is Trudeau and Obama’s methane pact?](#)” from the UVic PICS Newsletter ; “[Why Closer Canadian-American collaboration on clean energy is a good thing](#)” at the Institute for Research in Public Policy ; and “[Celebrating Crucial climate progress in Canada’s oil and gas sector](#)” , from the Pembina Institute. For a U.S. point of view, read “[Sea Change: U.S. and Canada Announce Common Goals on Climate, Energy and the Arctic](#)” from *Inside Climate News*, which summarizes the recent activity of the EPA regarding methane emissions. The Natural Resources Defense Council calls for a commitment to end fossil fuel subsidies in [From Dialogue to Results: Blueprint for Joint Climate Action and Clean Energy Deployment between Canada and the United States](#) , which the joint agreement did not do.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada-U.S agreement, Emissions Regulations, Energy policy, Methane Emissions** | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta starts Coal Phase-out planning, makes Low-Carbon pact

with U.K.

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 6, 2016, the [Speech from the Throne](#) announced intentions to reinvest revenues from the carbon levy into creating jobs and economic diversification, to enact a [Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act](#), and to appoint an Energy Diversification Advisory Committee which will include Labour. On March 15, Alberta and the United Kingdom [announced](#) a Low-Carbon Innovation and Growth Framework agreement. On March 16, the press release “[Alberta takes next steps to phase-out coal pollution under Climate Leadership Plan](#)” explains the process underway.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **coal-fired electricity**, **international agreements** | [Leave a reply](#)

Updates: British Columbia's New Climate Bureaucrat and LNG

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Activists in B.C. are dismayed by the March 22 appointment of the person who will lead B.C.'s upcoming Climate Leadership Plan: see “[Fazil Mihlar, former Fraser Institute director, tapped as B.C.'s Deputy Climate Minister](#)” in the *National Observer*. Despite widespread public opposition – especially from the local group [My Sea to Sky](#) – the [Woodfibre LNG project](#) was awarded federal approval, with conditions, on March 18. And in what is seen as a serious test of Canada's [climate commitment](#), Federal Minister McKenna has [delayed the decision](#) on the Pacific Northwest LNG project; see “[Tensions tighten as Ottawa Prepares Decision on Pacific Northwest LNG](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* or “[Decision time for Trudeau: Climate Commitments or LNG legacy](#)” in the *National Observer*. See also the *Policy Note* from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, “[B.C. government spin cycle on LNG](#)” (March 15), summarizing the results of freedom of information requests regarding natural gas supplies, environmental impacts, and economic benefits of developing LNG. On a more positive note, Premier Clark [announced funding](#) of \$11.9 million from the Province's Innovative Clean Energy (ICE) Fund for three programs aimed at promoting clean-energy vehicles, clean air and clean water. Details of the Clean Energy Vehicle Program are [here](#).

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **BC LNG**, **British Columbia**, **Environmental Assessment**, **LNG** | [Leave a reply](#)

Manitoba introduces Environmental Rights Act with Whistleblower rights

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 2, 2016, the Government of Manitoba introduced Bill 20, the *Environmental Rights Act*, summarized at the Environmental Law Centre (Alberta) [blog](#). The Act incorporates fundamental environmental law principles: precautionary principle; polluter pays principle; principle of sustainable development; principle of intergenerational equity; and principle of environmental justice. The Bill also includes Employee Protection from Reprisals, which states that “An employee who uses a measure set out in the Bill to protect the environment is protected from any reprisal from their employer.”

Update: The EcoJustice blog, [A Tale of Two Provinces](#) highlights the many strengths of the Manitoba legislation, and compares the reforms with Ontario’s Environmental Bill of Rights. However, with the election call in Manitoba, Bill 20 died on the Order Paper. The Manitoba election will take place on April 19 – see CBC coverage [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change Law](#), [employee rights](#), [environmental rights](#), [Manitoba](#), [whistleblower protection](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario reveals its proposals for Cap and Trade

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Ontario government [introduced](#) Bill 172, the *Climate Change Mitigation and Low Carbon Economy Act* to the Legislature on February 24, 2016; a summary is available [here](#); the Bill and status is available [here](#). It proposes to establish greenhouse gas emissions targets in statute for 2020, 2030 and 2050, with the option to establish interim or more stringent targets through a regulation. Most notably, it establishes the expected cap and trade program, with requirements for greenhouse gas emissions quantification and calculation, reporting and verification, the submission of allowances and credits to match greenhouse gas emissions, the creation, distribution and trading of allowances and credits, and an offset program. The full and detailed outline of the Regulatory proposals re the Cap and Trade program are available [at the Ontario Environmental Registry](#), open for public comment until April 10, 2016. . Other announcements: [\\$5 million from the Green Investment Fund to provide Indigenous communities](#) with training, tools and infrastructure to address climate change, with additional \$8 million to develop advanced microgrid solutions in First Nations communities(March 17); provincial investment and partnership

with a Japanese company [Mitsui High-tec](#) to build the first manufacturing facility in Ontario, in Brantford, to produce motor cores for electric and hybrid vehicles.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [First Nations](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fossil Fuel Investment Risk: Losses, and Pressure to disclose Risks to Investors

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A March 2 article in *The Tyee*, "[How a B.C. union dumped fossil fuels and cashed in](#)" highlights the profitable decision of the B.C. Government Employees Union to move \$20 million in its strike fund and general reserves from equities (and fossil fuels) into cash in 2014. The article then discusses the more complex issues of climate risk in pension fund investing (B.C.GEU did not divest its pension fund). A March 1 article in *Grist*, "[New York lost Billions with Fossil Fuel Investments](#)" estimates that the New York State Common Retirement Fund, the third largest pension fund in the U.S., lost \$5 billion over three years through its investments in fossil fuel companies. The estimate is based on the analysis of Toronto-based *Corporate Knights*, using its [Decarbonizer](#) calculator. Another [Corporate Knights analysis](#) of the performance of 14 major funds, including Harvard's endowment, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the pension plans of Canada and the Netherlands, estimated that the combined losses of the 14 funds since 2012 was \$23 billion.

In early March, the investment committee for the largest pension fund in the U.S., [California Public Employees' Retirement System \(CalPERS\)](#) voted to require that the corporations it invests in must include people on their boards who have expertise in climate change risk management strategies.

On March 24, [CBC reported](#) that the U.S. Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) has ordered Exxon to put to a vote at its shareholders' meeting in May a resolution which would require Exxon to make annual disclosure of risks to company's operations from climate change or legislation designed to control carbon pollution.

These are all evidence that the investment community is paying attention to the investment risks of fossil fuels, particularly stranded assets. At COP21, a global [Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures \(TCFD\)](#) was established, with Michael Bloomberg at the head, to "consider the physical, liability and transition risks associated with climate change and what constitutes effective financial disclosures across industries"... and to "develop voluntary, consistent climate-related financial risk disclosures for use by companies in providing information to investors, lenders, insurers, and other stakeholders". In January, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, proposals for risk reporting by fossil fuel companies were set out in [Considerations](#)

for Reporting Disclosure in a Carbon-constrained world from Carbon Tracker Initiative and the Climate Disclosure Standards Board . *Too Late, Too Sudden: Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy and Systemic Risk* (Feb. 2016) from the European Systemic Risk Board in February recommends that policymakers increase disclosure of the carbon intensity of non-financial firms (that would include the fossil fuel industry), noting that “Fossil-fuel firms and electricity utilities are substantially debt financed, exacerbating the potential financial stability impact of a sudden revaluation of stranded assets.” For a Canadian context, see an October 2015 working paper from SHARE, *Integrating the Economy and the Environment: An Overview of Canadian Capital Markets* .

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Business positions on climate change](#), [Climate change risks](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s investment in Clean Energy decreased in 2015

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Clean Energy Canada released the 2016 edition of its *Tracking the Energy Revolution: Global Survey* on February 29, subtitled: *A Year for the Record Books* because 2015 was the first year in which more money was invested in clean energy in developing countries than in developed ones. Further, investment in renewable power totalled a record US\$367 billion, a 7% increase over 2014. More than half of that amount was invested in China, the United States and Japan. For specific examples of U.S. progress, read the White House briefing, *America is Building a Clean-Energy Economy with Unprecedented Momentum* , which summarizes the accomplishments of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) in promoting clean energy investment and research.

At a total investment of \$4 billion, Canada ranked 8th globally in the Clean Energy survey – and investment decreased by 46%. Yet consider the projections of the [Solutions Project](#) , led by Marc Jacobsen at Stanford University, which has developed plans for 100 percent renewable energy for 139 countries around the world, including all U.S. states and Canada .

Also of interest, the International Energy Agency released its review of [Canada’s energy policies](#) , on March 3 – the first update since 2009. It states that Canada was the fifth-largest crude oil and fourth-largest natural gas producer in the world in 2014; in 2014, the energy sector contributed 10 per cent of gross domestic product, employed about 280,000 people and accounted for about 30 per cent of Canada’s exports.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Energy policy](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to start a Workplace Environment Committee

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Canadian Union of Public Employees released a practical guide, [How to form a Workplace Environment Committee](#) on March 7, stating “CUPE recommends that its members set up either a workers-only environment committee or a joint worker/employer environment committee. Sometimes, joint health and safety committees extend their mandate to take on environmental issues. However, a separate environment committee that focuses only on green issues is the better way to go to ensure that workplace environmental issues are front and centre for the committee.” The Guide suggests starting with an [EcoAudit](#) , which CUPE also supplies online , as well as examples of existing committees in CUPE workplaces. For a catalogue of collective bargaining language related to workplace environment committees, visit [the database](#) compiled by York University’s *Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change project*.

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Australia announces Clean Energy Investment Fund

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A March 22 [announcement](#) establishes a A\$1 billion clean-energy innovation fund to invest in clean-energy technologies and businesses in Australia; the [Australian Renewable Energy Agency](#) will also be retained. Yet a controversy continues over the Australian government’s cut-backs on climate change science – see “[Grim prospects: the shake-up of Australia’s climate science](#)” from the *Sydney Morning Herald* (March 11). Another current controversy is highlighted in *The Guardian*: “[Australia’s emissions rising and vastly underestimated, says report](#)” (March 18).

Posted in **Energy Policy, Government Policy** | Tagged **Australia, Clean Energy Investment, Muzzled Scientists** | [Leave a reply](#)

What impact for Coal Workers from China's new 5-Year Plan?

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

China's Official 5-Year Plan for 2016 – 2020 was released on March 5, and for the first time, China has set a limit on energy consumption, to 5 billion tons of standard coal equivalent. Kate Gordon of the Paulson Institute considers the impact on coal workers in “[The Fate of Industrial Workers in China's Proposed Green\(er\) Economy](#)” (March 22) . For a general overview of the Plan, see the World Resources Institute analysis ; or “China's New Five-year Plan is out and it doesn't Sacrifice the Environment for the Economy” in *Grist* (March 18) .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **China, Coal Industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Oregon Senate votes to phase out Coal generation

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Oregon passed “precedent-setting” legislation in March with the passage of [Senate Bill 1547](#), which will eliminate coal from the state's energy supply by 2030, and provide half of all customers' power with renewable sources by 2040. The state's one existing coal plant is its largest source of GhG emissions, [according to Yale 360](#) .

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **coal-fired electricity, Oregon** | [Leave a reply](#)

Electricity Industry in the U.K. Sees the Green Light

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Reported in *The Guardian* on February 28 as a “watershed moment”, the biggest energy lobbying group in the country, Energy UK, has shifted its position on green energy and will start campaigning for low-carbon alternatives. The shift in policy follows the publication of [Pathways for the GB Electricity Sector to 2030](#) , commissioned by Energy UK and written by consultants KPMG. (For comparison purposes, see the [Canadian Electricity Association documents Vision 2050](#) (2014) , and [Adapting to Climate Change](#) (2016).

The [U.K. Budget](#) delivered on March 16 initially imposed a VAT increase from 5 – 20% on solar panels and other energy-saving products, but Chancellor George Osborne [was forced to backtrack](#) by political opposition. Small comfort when the Petroleum Revenue Tax [was effectively abolished](#) and a supplementary charge on oil and gas extraction dramatically reduced – the government claims that it has provided tax support worth 1 billion pounds to the oil and gas industry.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Business positions on climate change](#), [Canada](#), [Electricity industry](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour Practices and Sustainability in the Seafood Industry

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In early March, the [Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions](#) released the first update since 2008 to its [Common Vision for Sustainable Seafood](#), a widely-used best-practices guide used by the North American food industry. New in the 2016 edition are strong prescriptions for labour rights and traceability of the supply chain. From the preamble: “...socially responsible seafood ensures that sourcing does not impact the food security of vulnerable communities, provides a living wage for workers in seafood supply chains, and supports the sustainable livelihoods and cultural heritage of communities.” Specific steps are outlined, including: “Establish effective grievance mechanisms for labor abuses and worker safety that meet the minimum standards set forth in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and include a meaningful role for workers themselves in the monitoring of workplace conditions and resolving disputes.” • Develop corrective action plans with suppliers found to violate human or labor rights. • Include requirements in purchasing agreements and contracts that suppliers will respect fundamental labor rights, including freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, and will pay workers a living wage.” The Association website also includes a [Social Resource Centre](#), with links to all the major organizations and documents relating to sustainability and core labour standards in the fisheries industry.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Fisheries Industry](#), [Labour Standards](#), [Supply chains](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Has a “Climate Insurgency” Begun?

Posted on **March 28, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“[Environmental Activists Take to Local Protests for Global Results](#)” in the *New York Times* (March 19) features the arrest of Bill McKibben at a protest at Seneca Lake, New York, and illustrates the growing climate protest movement. Case in point: [Breakfree 2016](#) is scheduled for May 4 – 15,

and will coordinate a “global wave of mass actions will target the world’s most dangerous fossil fuel projects, in order to keep coal, oil and gas in the ground and accelerate the just transition to 100% renewable energy.” In [“A New Wave of Climate Insurgents Defines Itself as Law-Enforcers”](#), Jeremy Brecher of Labor for Sustainability characterizes the Breakfree protests as part of a “climate insurgency”, which is seen “not only as a moral but as a legal right and duty, necessary to protect the Constitution and the public trust for ourselves and our posterity”. Brecher catalogues other U.S. examples, including the [court challenges led by Our Children’s Trust](#) . In an [article in *Rolling Stone*](#) , (March 12), the children’s case is described as part of an emerging legal strategy dubbed “Atmospheric Trust Litigation”.

In contrast to the right to protest that many North American activists enjoy, there stands the murder on March 3 of [Berta Cáceres](#) , the Honduran Indigenous and environmental rights campaigner and winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015. A website for Berta <http://bertacaceres.org/> tells her story and that of other environmental activists worldwide, and compiles the calls from around the world of outrage and for an independent inquiry. In Canada, [a rally was held](#) at the Honduran embassy in Ottawa on International Women’s Day.

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [Climate change Law](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [public trust doctrine](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

First Nations crafting an Indigenous Climate Action Plan

Posted on **February 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At a January 2016 [meeting of First Nations representatives](#), led by women from tar sands-impacted communities , a series of future educational, networking, and planning meetings was proposed, as a way of achieving an [Indigenous Climate Change Action Plan](#) . Sure to be on the agenda at the March 2 climate change discussions with the Prime Minister in Vancouver: the Site C hydropower dam on the Peace River, [vehemently opposed by First Nations and environmental groups](#). The February 11,2016 [Open Letter to the Prime Minister](#) concludes: “The people of Treaty 8 have said no to Site C. Any government that is truly committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, to respecting human rights, and to promoting truly clean energy must listen.” The B.C. Supreme Court [will rule on February 22](#) on an application by B.C. Hydro for an injunction against protesters at the construction site.

Unions continue to support Indigenous rights. Most recently, [as reported at *Rabble.ca*](#) (Feb. 9), the B.C. Government and Service Employees’ Union (BCGEU) pledged to support the Save the Fraser Declaration, which states that ” we will not allow the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, or similar Tar Sands projects, to cross our lands, territories and watersheds, or the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon.”

North American Memorandum of Understanding on Energy; U.S. Governors sign Accord for a “New Energy Future”

Posted on **February 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On February 12, 2016, Canada, the U.S. and Mexico [signed a Memorandum of Understanding](#) establishing a formal process for sharing energy data and collaborating on climate change, energy, and innovation, including low-carbon grids, renewables and efficiency standards. A [blog by Clean Energy Canada](#) dubbed the MOU “Clean-XL” and describes what the trilateral cooperation could look like on the ground; CBC [described it as the first step to “Green NAFTA”](#). In February, [governors of seventeen states](#) representing 40% of the U.S. population, (including California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania) signed the [Governors Accord for a New Energy Future](#), to reduce emissions and expand renewable energy, energy efficiency, and to integrate solar and wind generation into electricity grids.

Powering Climate Prosperity: Canada’s Renewable Electricity Advantage, released by the [Canadian Council on Renewable Electricity](#) in February, provides a snapshot of renewable energy in Canada today, and concludes that for Canada to meet its GHG reduction targets, we must reduce energy waste, more than double renewable electricity generation capacity, and make electricity the “clean fuel of choice”. The Council report draws heavily on the analysis and prescriptions of the [Canadian report of the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project](#). The DDPP states: “By more than doubling the use of electricity for industrial activity, the carbon intensity of the sector can drop by 85 percent between 2010 and 2050, even as output continues to grow apace.”

For a statistical update to the U.S. renewables scene, see the [Sustainable Energy in America Factbook 2016](#), produced for the Business Council for Sustainable Energy by Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Clean Energy](#), [international agreements](#), [Low-Carbon Electricity](#), [Mexico](#), [renewable energy](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Does Homeworking reduce Carbon Emissions? Yes, Toronto Star, It Does

Posted on **February 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“Working at Home Not So Good for the Planet”, appeared in the *Toronto Star* newspaper on February 5, 2016, largely based on a 2014 report from U.K. based Carbon Trust, *Homeworking: Helping Businesses Cut Costs and Reduce their Carbon Footprint* . That 2014 document highlighted the issue of “rebound effects that result in increased carbon emissions, particularly from increased home energy consumption” – for example, the less-efficient heating of workers’ individual homes rather than common, energy efficient offices. By focusing on the “rebound effects”, the *Toronto Star* article missed some important points: the 13% increase of U.K. homeworkers between 2007 and 2012, as well as the report’s conclusion that “if adopted and encouraged by employers across the country, homeworking could result in annual savings of over 3 million tonnes of carbon and cut costs by £3 billion.”

A far more informative, detailed report was released by Carbon Tracker in December 2015, *GESI Mobile Carbon Impact: How Mobile Communications Technology is Enabling Carbon Emissions Reduction* . The report claims that “Use of mobile communications technology is currently enabling a total reduction of 180 million tonnes of CO2 a year across the USA and Europe, and is expected to grow at least three times larger in the next 5 years.” 7% of carbon reduction relates to “connected working”, measured through reduced emissions from commuting and by use of audio or video connectivity in place of meetings. Further savings are made through reducing building energy consumption, by rationalising office space or reducing occupancy levels. The report notes that “nervousness” of employers is a barrier to homeworking, but cites studies which found no loss of productivity or quality from homeworking, and suggest that the “nervousness” issue might be resolved by new approaches to supervision or management, such as monitoring practical outcomes rather than supervising process and attendance. A larger part of the report is devoted to the 70% of emissions abatement that is the result of machine-to-machine communications technologies in the buildings, transport and energy sectors, where devices are able to communicate automatically with each other, without human intervention.” (e.g. building management, route planning, smart grids in electricity distribution).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **emission reductions, Homeworking, Information Technology, Telework** | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Neutral Government Operations pay off in Jobs in B.C.

Posted on **February 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Since 2010, public service organizations in British Columbia (hospitals, schools, universities) have been required to achieve carbon neutral operations, documented each year in annual [Carbon Neutral Action Reports](#), which provide statistics, case studies of initiatives, and details of their purchases of carbon offsets. A new report, *Leading by Example: The First Five Years of Carbon Neutral Government in British Columbia* cumulates and analyses five years' experience; one highlight is that 77% of public sector carbon emissions are facility-related, suggesting great potential for reduction through retrofitting and energy technologies. A companion report, *The Economic Analysis of British Columbia's Carbon Offset Projects*, analyses the capital and operating expenditures of the 23 emission offset projects purchased by the public sector in 2013 and 2014. It estimates that the \$24 million expenditure in offsets contributed \$28.9 million to provincial GDP, and created 221 jobs in 2013 and 2014. The report also builds on the findings of a Price Waterhouse Coopers [analysis done in 2012](#), and concludes that carbon offset capital expenditures have resulted in 2,903 jobs, and operating expenditures resulted in an additional 1,535 jobs for the period 2008 to the end of 2014.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Carbon Offsets](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Government operations](#), [Hospitals](#), [Public schools](#), [Universities](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Green Building Industry employs more workers than Oil and Gas, Mining, and Forestry Combined

Posted on **February 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A [press release](#) on February 3 reported on the growth of the green building industry in Canada: a total of 527 LEED projects were certified in 2015, bringing the total of certified projects in Canada to 2,576. On February 10, the Canada Green Building Council released *Green Building in Canada: Assessing the Market Impacts & Opportunities* ([Executive summary only available](#)), which states that it has generated \$23.45 billion in GDP and supported 297,890 full-time jobs in 2014, exceeding the 270,450 jobs found in Canada's oil and gas extraction, mining and forestry industries combined. Ontario (at 2.1% of total labour force) and British Columbia (at 1.6%) led green building employment, "due in part to greater market leadership, progressive building code requirements and green building policies". The report suggests four pathways to accelerate industry growth and maximize economic opportunities, including "Supporting Industry Training and Continuing Education". "What is currently lacking is a multi-pronged approach to training that supports all of the different programs to help the construction industry understand, design, and build greener buildings. More investment in this space is required to support structured and modernized internship, mentorship, or apprenticeship programs, as well as recognized credentials for professions such as building operators." In January 2016, CAGBC also released *National Energy Benchmarking Framework: Report on Preliminary Working Group Findings*, with proposals for a Benchmarking Framework, to encourage consistency across the country and streamline the

application process for building owners and managers. Stakeholders consulted in the working group included federal, provincial and municipal government departments, as well as the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, and industry associations such as the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA). No unions were represented.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Green Building](#), [Job Creation](#), [Skilled Workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Engineers Lead International Climate Change Initiatives for the profession

Posted on **February 22, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Engineers Canada, the national professional association, has led the Engineering and the Environment Committee of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations since 2007, [ending in December 2015](#). Under its strong leadership, [WFEO](#), which represents 20 million engineers in 90 countries, adopted a [Model Code of Practice: Principles of Climate Change Adaptation for Engineers](#), modelled on Canada's national [Code](#), adopted in 2014. Leadership of the Committee now passes to the Institution of Civil Engineers, of the U.K., but the momentum seems to be established, according to the November 2015 Committee [Newsletter](#), which offers an impressive overview of the actions and aspirations of the engineering profession. Stated goals include "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all...Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all;... Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;... Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts ." And in its [Summit Statement](#) from Paris in December, "COP-21 Engineers Climate Change Summit: Turning Words Into Action – A Sectoral Approach", the organization focused on the sectors of Agriculture and Food Security, Infrastructure and Urbanization, and Energy and Transport, and pledged, amongst other actions, to undertake climate risk assessments as part of normal practice, and include social, economic and environmental impacts in their considerations.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Engineers](#), [Engineers Canada](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Professional standards](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Climate Change policy: Trudeau needs Unions

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In an OpEd in *The Hill Times* , (February 1) Carla Lipsig Mumme argues that “[Trudeau Needs Unions to Achieve his Ambitious Climate Agenda](#)” – pointing out that unions can identify opportunities for GHG reductions in work processes , bargain collectively for change, and educate members in climate literacy. Canada’s [Climate Action Network](#) , which includes the Canadian Labour Congress, as well as CUPE, NUPGE, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation, [called on all governments](#) to make job creation the priority for Canada’s climate action plan and released a backgrounder: [One Million Climate Jobs: A Challenge for Canada](#) . With a similar message, BlueGreen Canada published “[Just Transition Needed for Canada’s Climate Change Plans](#)” . Formal discussions by Federal and Provincial-Territorial Environment ministers on January 29 launched the post COP21 process to achieve Canada’s new national framework to fight climate change. On March 2, Prime Minister Trudeau will discuss climate change with First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders, followed by another meeting with the Premiers on March 3; both meetings will be in Vancouver. An overview of provincial positions, especially on carbon pricing, appeared in *The Globe and Mail* (Feb. 17) “[Ottawa seeks to set National Minimum on Carbon Pricing](#)” .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Feds issue Interim Rules for Environmental Assessment, including Climate considerations

Posted on [February 19, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In one of the first concrete actions of the Trudeau government, interim changes to the environmental assessment process [were announced](#) on January 27, 2016 . [Interim Measures for Pipeline Reviews](#) applies specifically to the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain and Energy East Pipeline projects, extending the deadlines for the National Energy Board reviews to allow for greater consultation with First Nations and the public, and to “Assess the upstream greenhouse gas emissions associated with this project and make this information public”. Some reaction was favourable, for example, [Environmental Defence](#) . Ecojustice states “[Liberals’ Interim Pipeline Measures fall Short](#)” ; the Pembina Institute is supportive but asks “[4 Key Questions for the Canadian Government’s New Climate Test](#)” , as it might apply to Petronas’s Pacific NorthWest LNG project in British Columbia. And David Suzuki asks, “[Paris changed everything, so why are we still talking pipelines?](#)” .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act](#), [Energy East pipeline](#), [Environmental Assessment](#), [Kinder Morgan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal Grants and loans to Municipalities for Green Projects

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Speaking at a meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on February 10, 2016, Environment and Climate Change Minister McKenna [announced \\$31.5 million](#) in funding for capital and planning expenses for green projects. The [FCM Budget Submission](#) makes specific proposals regarding housing, transit, infrastructure and public safety; it calls for an expansion in the \$550 million federally-funded Green Municipal Fund, and a new Green Infrastructure Fund, with dedicated, predictable funding for projects designed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and make other green improvements related to drinking water, stormwater and wastewater infrastructure.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [Municipal Government](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta News: Royalty Review, Economic Diversification funding, Incentives for Small-Scale Renewables

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new [Royalty Review Framework](#) was announced on January 29, 2016 along with the *Final Report of the Advisory Panel* . The Panel recommended that existing royalty structures be maintained for 10 years on wells drilled before 2017, and that the current oil sands regime remain unchanged. Although the government states that it will create a “simpler, more transparent and efficient system that encourages job creation and investment”, Andrew Nikoforuk calls the result a “disaster” in a detailed review [published in The Tyee](#) (Feb. 2) . The Alberta Federation of Labour participated in the Royalty Review meetings and roundtables; its submission, *Royalty Policy is the Biggest Decision any Alberta Government has to Make* advocated Lougheed-era royalty rates equivalent to 30 per cent of market value, promotion of in-province upgrading and refining, and creation of an Alberta crown energy corporation for direct investment and equity participation in the industry. AFL President Gil McGowan reflects on his disappointment with the process in an [article in The Tyee](#) , (Feb. 10) .

On February 1, 2016 Alberta [announced](#) a new “Petrochemicals Diversification Program”, providing up to \$500 million in incentives through royalty credits to encourage investment in

energy processing facilities. The Government projects a job creation benefit of up to 3,000 new jobs during construction, and more than 1,000 jobs operational jobs. On February 5, 2016 the Alberta government [announced](#) \$5 million for the Alberta Municipal Solar Program, to provide rebates up to a maximum of \$300,000 per project, to encourage solar installations on municipal buildings. A similar program, the [On-Farm Solar Management program](#), will provide \$500,000 in provincial and federal funding to encourage farmers to install solar energy systems . A [Greenpeace blog](#) on February 9 reacts to these programs and argues for the benefits of distributed, small-scale renewable energy.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Distributed energy](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Royalties](#), [Solar Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

British Columbia Climate Leadership Consultations, Round 2

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The government published a new [Consultation Guide](#) to launch its second public [consultation period on climate change issues](#), running from January 26 to March 25, 2016. The Pembina Institute has announced [its own public input mechanisms](#) to expand participation. The Pembina also calls for, at a minimum, implementation of all the [Climate Leadership Team recommendations](#) , released in November 2015 .

A Pembina Institute OpEd, [Budget 2016 missed opportunity to prepare BC for low-carbon world](#) and [Clean Energy Canada](#) both reacted with disappointment to the 2016 Budget priorities announced on February 16.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario rolls out Green Bonds, and incentives for Green Vehicles, Retrofitting, and Cleantech

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A series of press releases from the Ontario government signal the determination of the province to move towards a low-carbon economy. On February 2, 2016 Ontario [announced its second green bond issue](#), raising \$750 million to finance low-carbon infrastructure projects. On February

10,2016 new incentives for green vehicles [were announced](#) . The February 12 [announcement of \\$92 million for social housing retrofits](#) received [favourable reaction](#) from Blue Green Canada, and the Heat and Frost Insulators Local 95 said “ Smart initiatives like the one announced today are proof that improving the environment and creating skilled jobs go hand in hand.” Finally, on February 17, Ontario [announced a \\$74 million cleantech innovation initiative](#), to encourage large industrial plants to adopt leading-edge technologies, and \$25 million in a Green Smart energy efficiency program for small and medium-sized businesses. Details of the new cap and trade program are promised within weeks.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Technology](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green Bonds](#), [Ontario](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Upcoming Nova Scotia budget: another forum for the carbon tax question

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With a large deficit projected, the government of Nova Scotia has been holding [budget consultations](#) , which run until February 26, 2016. In December, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives contributed [Stronger Together: the Nova Scotia Alternative Provincial Budget 2016](#) . It calls for a carbon tax, with half the revenue directed to income support programs, and the other half used to set up a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to enable low-carbon investment, green job growth, and poverty reduction. A [February 3 Editorial](#) in the *Halifax Chronical-Herald* endorsed the idea of a carbon tax. In February 2015, Brendan Haley wrote [Will Nova Scotia Implement a Carbon Tax?](#) which explained the context of the on-going debate.

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

Great Bear Forest Agreement hailed as a Model for Forest Protection

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

First Nations, [environmental groups](#), the forest industry, and the government of British Columbia [announced](#) on February 1, 2016 that, after years of negotiations, they had reached agreement to establish “ecosystem-based management in the Great Bear Rainforest.” Under the new agreement, a greater proportion of old growth forest within the 6.4 million hectares will be protected; 85% of the total forest will be protected and 15% will be available for logging. Forest

Ethics [hailed the announcement](#) calling it “a ground-breaking model for other forest regions of the world”. David Miller of WWF calls the forest agreement “momentous”, but writes in *Policy Options* “[Job Only half Done to protect Great Bear Region](#)” . The WWF have been part of efforts to protect the adjacent Great Bear Sea from the threats of oil and gas pipelines. For detail, see the earlier *Policy Options* article, “[MaPP: A Big Plan for the Great Bear Sea](#)” .

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New International Standards for CO2 Emissions in Aviation

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On February 8, 2016 members of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) [voted to recommend the first ever](#) standards to impose binding energy efficiency and CO₂ reduction targets for the aviation sector, requiring an average 4% reduction in fuel consumption for new commercial and business aircraft delivered after January 2028. Reductions for larger commercial plans will range up to 11%. The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) [provides details](#) ; an article in *The Guardian* [describes the political battles by the U.S. and EU](#) behind the negotiated standards. In a *New York Times* [article](#), (Feb. 8) , a lawyer for the Center for Biological Diversity calls the standards “deplorable” and compares them to the more stringent restrictions on the auto industry.

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Does the U.S. Supreme Court Decision threaten U.S. Climate Goals?

Posted on **February 19, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

By a 5-4 majority, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on February 9, 2016 that implementation of the Clean Power Plan rules must be delayed until all litigation against them has been decided. With a 29 states and industry groups all lining up to challenge the Plan, the delay will extend beyond the end of President Obama’s term of office, threatening his climate change legacy. The *New York Times* [calls](#) the decision “stunning” and “unprecedented”; *Inside Climate News* [says](#) it is a, “surprising decision of staggering proportions, with repercussions that go far beyond the U.S. electrical grid, threatening the credibility of the Paris Agreement on climate change reached by the

world's nations in December.” [The Guardian](#) reflects the more optimistic tone from the White House, that this is just “a bump in the road”. The *Washington Post* (Feb. 10) argues that the economic forces behind clean energy cannot be stopped in “[Move to Cleaner Power is Proceeding Regardless of Supreme Court’s Ruling](#)” . For commentary on the impact of the death of Justice Scalia, see “ [The Supreme Courts Action threaten Vital Climate Policies](#)” from Yale Environment 360, and “[What does Justice Scalia’s Death mean for the Clean Power Plan?](#)” from Legal Planet (UCLA).

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A Moratorium On New Coal Development in the U.S. And China; U.S. Clean Power Plan Survives its First Major Court Challenge

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On January 15, 2016, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior [announced a halt to licenses for new coal development](#) on federal lands for 3 years while the department conducts the first comprehensive review of the federal coal program in 30 years. Calling it “an historic day” the [Natural Resources Defense Council summarizes the details](#) of the announcement, including that the review “will also include an accounting of the carbon emissions of all fossil fuel production on federal lands”. *Inside Climate News* [sums up reaction of environmental groups](#) to the announcement and the *New York Times* offers a [compilation of articles about the coal industry](#) . On January 21, the *New York Times* reported “[Court Rejects a Bid to Block Coal Plant Regulations](#)” , saying that a “federal appeals panel .. rejected an effort by 27 states and dozens of corporations and industry groups to block the administration’s signature regulation on emissions from coal-fired power plants while a lawsuit moves through the courts.” Further court challenges are expected, with a likely ruling by the Supreme Court in 2017. And in December 2015, [Bloomberg News reported](#) that China will suspend the approval of new coal mines in 2016, pledging to reduce coal’s share of its energy consumption by almost 2% , to approximately 60 percent in 2016. Read more at [Climate Progress](#) and [The Guardian](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [China, Coal Industry, United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Northern Gateway Supreme Court Decision, and Kinder Morgan Pipeline battles in British Columbia; NEB improvements promised

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On January 13, the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that the B.C. government breached its duty to consult the Gitga'at and neighbouring First Nations on the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline. The decision is seen as a major victory for Coastal First Nations , effectively nullifying the federal government's initial approval of Northern Gateway , and also providing a precedent protecting First Nations rights in the Trans Mountain pipeline hearings. “ [First Nations win court challenge against B.C. over Enbridge pipeline](#)” includes a copy of the Court's decision. The West Coast Environmental Law group provides a history of the Northern Gateway case, and its implications for the Kinder Morgan NEB review in [Province Can't Pass the Buck on Oil Pipelines: BC Supreme Court](#).

The B.C. government formally submitted its [letter of opposition](#) to the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline to the National Energy Board on January 11 , citing the grounds of safety and the risks of an oil spill. [Unifor has also consistently opposed](#) the project, seeing it as a exporter of energy jobs, and a threat to its members in the fisheries industry. (Alberta submitted its [letter of support](#) on January 12). Even U.S. Aboriginal tribes have filed complaints before the NEB regarding the threat of Kinder Morgan, according to [a report in The Guardian](#) . Read an [overview of the arguments against KinderMorgan](#) from EcoJustice . The Tar Sands Reporting project of the *National Observer*, based in Vancouver, has [compiled a series of articles](#) documenting the NEB hearings and the many public protests.

The Kinder Morgan NEB hearings have developed as a symbol of the new Liberal government's intention to live up to its campaign promises to review the NEB process and restore transparency and evidence-based decision making in environmental assessments, [according to DeSmog Blog](#).

The [Report](#) of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development was tabled in the House of Commons on January 26, and was strongly critical of the National Energy Board's regulation of pipeline projects. (The CBC summary is [here](#)) . In response, the government has promised additional climate tests and First Nations' consultations for the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline, Energy East pipeline, and Pacific NorthWest's planned LNG export terminal in B.C., according to the *Globe and Mail* on January 25. (“[Ottawa to mandate climate tests for proposed pipelines, LNG terminal](#) ”)

Context for Alberta Climate Change Policy “After the Sands”, and Energy East

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two recent sources provide context for the new climate change policies of the Alberta government under Rachel Notley: “[The Path to Alberta’s Climate Deal](#)” (Jan. 7) in the *National Observer*, and “[Alberta: Fossil fuel Belt or Green Powerhouse](#)” in the *CCPA Monitor* (Nov/Dec 2015 issue, pages 26 – 32). The *Monitor* article is an excerpt from the recently released book by Gordon Laxer, [After the Sands](#). The governments of Alberta and Manitoba [announced](#) a *Memorandum of Understanding* on January 8, committing to share information and develop co-operative measures related to energy conservation programs, renewable energy development and greenhouse-gas reduction policies, as well as recognizing the importance of improving integration of electrical grids in western Canada.

On January 21, the mayors of the Montreal Metropolitan Community announced their [opposition to the Energy East pipeline](#). A rapidly-convened meeting of the premiers of Alberta and Ontario on January 22 illustrates the east-west politics of Energy East, with a [press release](#) which states “the people of Ontario care a great deal about the national economy and the potential jobs this proposed pipeline project could create in our province and across the country.”

For a summary of the national political reaction, see the CBC, “[Trudeau, Coderre meet after Tories blast Energy East comments](#)”. Prime Minister Trudeau, seeking to calm the waters, is promising a thorough, neutral environmental review. Read the *Globe and Mail* article: “[Trudeau says Ottawa will be ‘responsible mediator’ in energy debate](#)”. (January 26) or another [CBC report](#) of Trudeau’s meeting with the mayor of Montreal, when he states that he will not be a “cheerleader” for the pipelines.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Energy East pipeline](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Reports from Davos: Climate Change, Circular Economy, Ethical

Supply Chains

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

The annual [World Economic Forum in Davos](#), Switzerland, brings together the corporate and political elites – this year’s theme from January 20 – 23rd is “The Fourth Industrial Revolution”. Yet climate change ranks high on the agenda and several reports relevant to climate change and labour have been released. Notably, the [Global Challenge Initiative on Environment and Natural Resource Security project](#) produced *The Global Risks Report 2016*, which ranks global risks, in terms of likelihood as : 1. Large-scale Involuntary migration; 2. Extreme weather events 3. Failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation. A project about the Circular Economy released a report commissioned by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and conducted by McKinsey & Company: *The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of Plastics*. ([press release](#) here). The new report addresses the problems identified in a 2014 report from the UNEP [Plastics Disclosure Project](#), *Valuing Plastic: The Business Case for Measuring, Managing and Disclosing Plastic Use in the Consumer Goods Industry*, which projected that, “ in a business-as-usual scenario, by 2050 oceans are expected to contain more plastics than fish (by weight), and the entire plastics industry will consume 20% of total oil production, and 15% of the annual carbon budget. ”

Regarding supply chains, a report by an Accenture consulting firm, *Beyond Supply Chain: Empowering Responsible Value Chains* discusses the “triple advantage” of ethical supply chains which include environmental goals. The Accenture report paints a favourable picture of corporate behaviour, in contrast to *Scandal: Inside the Global Supply Chains of 50 Top Global Companies*, a hard-hitting report from the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The ITUC focuses mainly on working conditions and wages, as well as health and safety of workers. Bringing it all together and released in advance of Davos, research from the University of Sheffield concludes that “ Audits are ineffective tools for detecting, reporting, or correcting environmental and labour problems in supply chains. They reinforce existing business models and preserve the global production status quo.... The growth of the audit regime is carving out an ever greater role for corporations in global corporate governance and enforcing an ever smaller role for states.” A [summary of the Sheffield research](#) appeared in *The Guardian* on January 14; the full report is *Ethical Audits and Supply Chains of Global Corporations* (registration required to download). A related article, focusing on the coffee industry, appeared in *The Conversation* (December 1): “[Why corporate sustainability won’t solve climate change](#) ” .

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [Environmental audits](#), [International](#), [Plastics Industry](#), [Supply chains](#), [World Economic Forum](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Further Canadian Reactions to Paris COP21

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

The December *Work and Climate Change Report* compiled [early responses to the COP 21 Agreement](#). Other Canadian reaction since then include: Tides Canada, in cooperation with the *Toronto Star*, with a [compilation of articles re COP21](#), including “What’s next after the historic Paris climate change agreement?” by Tyler Hamilton ; *The Real test of Paris Climate Agreement will be how Markets and Regulators react* (by Marc Lee) ; *Success of the Paris Agreement will be measured by Policy progress here at home* (Pembina Institute) ; *Collaborative approach will be key to realizing Canada’s climate change obligations* (Canadian Labour Congress). The Executive of the Toronto and District Labour Council published their [Response](#), which announces their intention to publish and promote a “Greenprint for Greater Toronto” as part of Labour’s contribution to the fight against climate change, and also holds up model of the role of Environmental Representatives in unions in the U.K..

For business reaction, read “Canadian business leaders say COP21 agreement a good start, but only that” in the *Globe and Mail* (Dec. 21), based on the [4th Quarter C-Suite Survey](#) by consultants KPMG . 56% of executives agreed that “Canada should be part of any global agreement to reduce greenhouse gases if it includes most of the world’s major economic powers”. When asked, in regard to your own company, “what policies would you most like to see the new Canadian government implement?”, only 8% included “address climate change”. The survey also surveyed attitudes to the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Business attitudes](#), [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [Climate change policy](#), [COP21](#), [labour union policies](#), [Toronto and District Labour Council](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A New tool for Responsible Investing and Divesting in Canada

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

As it does every year to coincide with the World Economic Fund Meetings, Canadian magazine *Corporate Knights* released its rankings of the [100 Most Sustainable Corporations in the World](#) in January 2016 . Perhaps surprisingly given the current VW emissions scandal, a German automaker, BMW, is ranked #1 in sustainability, based on its energy, waste and water reduction performance and for linking the salary of its senior executives to their sustainability performance. *Corporate Knights* also introduces its [Eco Fund ratings](#), along with a discussion of responsible investing, “to make it easy for Canadian investors to see which funds provide the best combination of economic and environmental performance.” [Canadian mutual funds are ranked](#), with calculations of their 3-year annualized returns, weighted carbon intensity, and exposure to green companies. Such ranking may prove useful to the financial managers at the University of Toronto, who are currently considering the recommendations of a Presidential Advisory committee on divestment from fossil fuels . The committee has recommended that the university determine a

method to evaluate whether a given fossil fuels company's actions blatantly disregard the 1.5-degree threshold, and then proceed with "targeted and principled divestment from specific companies in the fossil fuels industry". *Alternatives Journal* puts this in context of the wider university divestment movement in "[U of T could make Divestment History](#)" (Dec. 2015) . Disappointingly, the *Globe and Mail* reported on December 23 "[Ontario Teachers, CPPIB opt to maintain fossil-fuel assets](#)". The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and Canada Pension Plan Investment Board say they are committed to their roles as "engaged investors", seeking transparency from companies regarding risk. On January 1, 2016, Marc Lee summarized the issues in *The Tyee* and asked, "[Is your Pension Fund in Climate Denial?](#)"

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [compensation policies](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Green Investment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#), [University of Toronto](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Wind and Solar Energy in Canada, U.S., and Renewables in 2030

Posted on [January 25, 2016](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a [press release](#) on January 12, 2016, the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) announced a five year annual average growth rate of 23 per cent per year for the industry, led by investments in [Ontario](#) and [Quebec](#) . The Association anticipates continued growth, especially with the policy announcement in 2015 from [Alberta](#) (already the 3rd largest wind market) to replace two-thirds of coal generation with renewable generation. CanWEA also released a report by Compass Renewable Energy Consulting in December 2015. *[Wind Dividends: An Analysis of the Economic Impacts from Ontario's Wind Procurements](#)* forecasts that from 2006-2030, wind energy in Ontario will have stimulated more than \$14 billion in economic activity, including 73,000 full-time equivalent jobs and \$5 billion in wages and benefits. The report warns, however, that Ontario "currently has no plans for new wind energy purchases, and risks losing many of the good-paying, wind-related jobs it has created."

Canada ranks 7th in the world for the installed wind generation capacity, which meets 5% of Canada's electricity demand. In contrast, [Denmark announced](#) on January 19th, that it has set a new world record for wind energy generation with nearly 40 % of the country's overall electricity consumption in 2014). For a thorough statistical overview of the wind energy industry and employment in the U.S., see *[Wind Vision](#)*, released by the U.S. Department of Energy in March 2015. According to the *[6th annual U.S. Solar Jobs Census](#)* (January 2016) by industry-group The Solar Foundation, the industry created 1.2 percent of all new jobs in the U.S. in 2015, nearly 12 times faster than the national rate. Total solar industry employment was 208,859 , with installation as the single largest solar employment sector. Women in solar jobs increased by 2% and now represent 24% of the solar workforce. Prospects for growth in U.S. wind and solar are greatly improved after the [renewal of the renewable energy tax credit system](#) in December 2015 , with

spillover benefits expected for Canadian manufacturers as well: see [“U.S. tax move brightens picture for Canadian wind, solar firms”](#) in the *Globe and Mail* (Dec. 21).

A January report from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (NREL) and the U.S. Department of Energy updates the [on-going NREL analysis of clean energy policy](#) impacts in the U.S. . Examining state-level Renewable Portfolio Standards policies in 2013, the authors found an average of \$2.2 billion in economic benefits from reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and another \$5.2 billion in benefits from reductions in sulfur dioxide and other air pollutants. Further, the report estimates nearly 200,000 jobs were created in the renewable energy sector, with over \$20 billion in gross domestic product. Read [A Retrospective Analysis of the Benefits and Impacts of U.S. Renewable Portfolio Standards](#) .

A new report released at the sixth Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Abu Dhabi on January 17 quantifies the macroeconomic impacts of doubling the global share of renewables in the energy mix by 2030. [Renewable Energy Benefits: Measuring the Economic Impact](#) states: “Doubling the share of renewables increases direct and indirect employment in the sector to 24.4 million by 2030. Renewable energy jobs will grow across all technologies, with a high concentration in the same technologies that account for a majority of the employment today, namely bioenergy, hydropower and solar.” ...“The jobs created are likely to offset job losses in sectors such as fossil fuels because the sectors involved in the renewables supply chain are usually more distributed and labour-intensive than the conventional energy sector. For instance, solar PV creates at least twice the number of jobs per unit of electricity generated compared with coal or natural gas. As a result, substituting fossil fuels for renewables could lead to a higher number of jobs overall.” (p. 16-17). The report also states that “training is essential to support the expansion of the renewable energy sector. This requires systematic access across all layers of the society to education and training in relevant fields, including engineering, economics, science, environmental management, finance, business and commerce. Professional training, as well as school or university curricula must evolve adequately to cover renewable energy, sustainability and climate change. Vocational training programmes can also offer opportunities to acquire specialisation and take advantage of the growing renewable energy job market. The elaboration of specific, certified skills and the categorisation of trainees based on their level of experience and training is recommended.” (p. 79).

Posted in [Energy Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Canada, Clean Energy, Ontario, Quebec, renewable energy, Solar Energy, United States, wind energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Manitoba Social Enterprise Program Trains Disadvantaged Workers for Jobs in Clean Energy, Retrofitting

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Manitoba Research Alliance, part of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, recently released a report which summarizes the activities of three Manitoba social enterprises: Aki Energy (training geothermal energy installers); Meechim Foods (a food sovereignty project northwest of Winnipeg), and the Brandon Energy Efficiency Program (BEEP) (training for green retrofitting at public housing). Most of the workers involved in training and job placements are disadvantaged Aboriginal workers. The report, [*Government Support for Social Enterprise Can Reduce Poverty and Green House Gases*](#) also examines the legislation and policies that support these initiatives, and the important role that Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba Housing play in providing work opportunities for trainees. Considering the future after the next provincial election in April 2016, the author states: “If Manitoba were to follow Ontario’s example and privatize Hydro the damage would be considerable”. The report is summarized in a [January 13 article](#) in *Rabble.ca*.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal workers](#), [Clean Energy](#), [disadvantaged workers](#), [Education and Training](#), [Manitoba](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Building Workers as the Engine of a Just Transition to a Low Carbon Society

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“[Construction Labour, Work and Climate Change](#)” appeared as a special issue of *Construction Labour News*, published by the European Institute for Construction Research in December 2015. Against the backdrop of the COP21 negotiations, the need for Just Transition policies is the overriding theme of the issue. In their introduction, editors Colin Gleeson and John Calvert highlight the importance of the building sector: ‘which employs at least 110 million construction workers worldwide, has the highest potential for improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions in both industrialized and developing countries’ (ILO, 2013), and ‘emissions reductions in the building sector provide the greatest savings per unit cost’ (UNFCCC 2007). Further, they state: “Construction trade unions and their allies must transform the image of construction to celebrate the building worker as the engine of a just transition to a low carbon society.” The editors propose four elements of a broad-based strategy to achieve that goal. Subject Articles include: “British Columbia Insulators Low Carbon Building Campaign” (by John Calvert); “On the Energy [R]evolution: Sustainable world energy outlook” (by Colin Gleeson); “Climate Protection Policy of IG BA” (by Dietmar Schäfers); “Just Transitions: Origins and Dimensions” (by Dimitris Stevis and Romain Felli), and “Low-carbon skills development in UK construction” (by Gavin Killip).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Construction Industry](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Germany](#), [Green Building](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Just Transition](#), [retrofitting](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The State of Climate Change Litigation: Can Canada and the U.S. follow Urgenda?

Posted on **January 25, 2016** by **elizabethperry493**

The landmark [Urgenda decision](#) in the Netherlands in June 2015 has ignited and re-ignited activity around the world, around the prospect of using litigation to fight climate change. “[Unlawful or Above the Law?](#)” in the *CCPA Monitor* (Nov/Dec. 2015) reviews the Urgenda decision in detail, and puts it in the context of Canadian policy and historical legal cases which have challenged Canada’s withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol. A fuller treatment of the article, titled [Canada’s Failure to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) (October 31, 2015) appears on the Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada website. The authors advocate a legal challenge to Canada’s GHG emissions reduction policies. Much of the legal argument is based on the concept of environmental rights as human rights; a Canadian pioneer on this issue is David R. Boyd, whose article “[The Constitutional Right to a Healthy Environment](#)” appeared in *Environment Magazine* in 2012. (a fuller treatment appears in his book *The Environmental Rights Revolution: A Global Study of Constitutions, Human Rights and the Environment* (2012)). A more recent publication by Ecojustice, [The Right to a Healthy Environment: Canada’s Time to Act](#) (2015), acknowledges a large debt to Boyd’s work, and the [BlueDot movement](#) of the David Suzuki Foundation works in practical ways towards the goal. In December 2015, Toronto became the 100th municipality in Canada to [pass a declaration](#) supporting its residents’ right to a healthy environment. [Climate Change: Tackling the Greatest Human Rights Challenge of our Time](#) (Feb. 2015) by the Center for International Environmental Law and CARE considers how to address the issue within the UNFCCC process.

Regarding liability for climate change damages, West Coast Environmental Law in B.C. and the Vanuatu Environmental Law Association released [Taking Climate Justice into our own Hands](#) on December 8, 2015 “which explains the legal basis for climate-impacted countries to set the rules for climate damages lawsuits and how those rules can be enforced against international fossil fuel polluters.” Further, the authors propose language for a *Climate Compensation Act*, based on common law and thus adaptable to in any country in the world. (Vanuatu released a [Statement for Climate Justice](#) in June 2015). A [newly-launched blog series by the Alberta Environmental Law Centre](#) promises “to provide updates on climate change law developments and include insights from our related law reform research.”

The Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at the Columbia Law School, New York, publishes [compendium of cases](#) in the U.S. and non-U.S., and maintains a database called [Climate Change Laws of the World](#). In 2015, the Center published [Climate Change in the Courts: An Assessment of non-U.S. climate litigation](#), as well as [Climate Change and Human Rights 2015](#) (in cooperation with UNEP). The introduction states: “The question is no longer whether human rights law has anything to say about climate change, but rather what it says and how it can best be brought to

bear. This report is the most detailed and comprehensive study yet undertaken of those questions”.

In a November 2015 blog, [“Failure to take climate action is not only morally wrong, it’s illegal”](#) Michael Burger discusses the Urgenda and Ashgar Legari case in Pakistan, and links them to current climate change cases in the United States. Most high profile of these have been led by Our Children’s Trust, arguing for the right of children to live in a healthy environment. In November in [Washington State](#), [Judge Hollis Hill ruled](#) in favour of youth, stating that “[t]he state has a constitutional obligation to protect the public’s interest in natural resources held in trust for the common benefit of the people.” Other cases are being pursued by Our Children’s Trust in [Massachusetts](#), North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Colorado. In August 2015, Our Children’s Trust filed a [landmark constitutional climate change lawsuit against the federal government](#) in the U.S. District Court of Oregon; plaintiffs include 21 young people and climate scientist Dr. James E. Hansen, serving as guardian for his granddaughter and for future generations. The complaint document is [here](#); the plaintiffs request a court order requiring the President to implement a national plan to decrease CO2 to a safe level, defined as 350 ppm by the year 2100. In January 2016, [a judge granted intervenor status](#) in the case to the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, the American Petroleum Institute, and other energy industry groups. **To watch for:** March 9, 2016: [the first oral arguments will be heard](#) in a Eugene Oregon court.

Internationally, cases claiming damages from climate changes are underway in the [Philippines](#) and [Peru](#). To keep up to date internationally, follow [eLaws News](#) by the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW), who have also published [Holding Corporations Accountable for Damaging the Climate](#) (2014). The [Center for International Environmental Law](#) also focuses on climate liability and climate justice.

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [Blue Dot Movement](#), [Climate change Law](#), [Climate Change Liability](#), [Climate Rights](#), [Human Rights](#), [Our Children's Trust](#), [Peru](#), [Philippines](#), [Urgenda Decision](#), [Vanuatu](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Work and Climate Change Report

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

YEARLY ARCHIVES: 2015

COP21, Just Transition, and Canadian Reaction

Posted on **December 18, 2015** by **elizabethperry493**



The [UNFCCC official website](#) includes the [Official Text of the Conference of the Parties](#). For one of the best summaries, see “[Paris Climate Deal: Key Points at a Glance](#)” in *The Guardian* (Dec. 12). Although [Equiterre acknowledged](#) that Canada had pushed for the inclusion of indigenous rights and just transition, these issues did not appear in Article 2 of the formal articles, but rather in the non-binding Annex, on page 21, amongst a list of considerations:

“...Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities, Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity...”

Most reaction in Canada and around the world acknowledges the imperfections of the agreement but express the importance and potential of what was achieved.

Some Examples:

“[Climate change Met Its Match in the Will of a United World](#)” in the National Observer (Dec. 12), summarizing reaction from National Resources Defence Canada, Clean Energy Canada, and Pembina Institute.

[“Global Climate Deal is an Historic Moment”](#) from the Climate Action Network Canada.

[“Paris Climate Accord Marks Shift Toward Low-Carbon Economy”](#) in *The Globe and Mail* (Dec. 12) (which paints a flattering picture of Minister McKenna).

[First Thoughts on the Climate Deal](#) by Professor Kathryn Harrison, University of British Columbia, who states, “I see the commitment to revisit targets and progress every 5 years as the heart of the Paris agreement”.

[Did Canada Show up at the Paris Climate Talks with its Pants on?](#) (Dec. 11), despite the playful title provides a serious overview of the major issues, including indigenous rights, common but differentiated responsibility, and loss and damage. Author Andrew Gage of West Coast Environmental Law says, “Canada’s position on loss and damage is extremely aggressive and unhelpful”.

[“Paris Climate Change Agreement: The World’s Greatest Diplomatic Success”](#) in The Guardian (Dec. 14), and [“World Leaders Hail Paris Climate Deal”](#)(Dec. 13).

[The Road to a Paris Climate Deal](#), a compilation of reporting from the New York Times, includes an Opinion Piece by Bill McKibben, [“Falling Short on Climate in Paris”](#) (Dec. 13) which can act as the last word: “That we have any agreement at all, of course, is testament to the mighty movement that activists around the world have built over the last five years. But what this means is that we need to build the movement even bigger in the coming years, so that the Paris agreement turns into a floor and not a ceiling for action. We’ll be blocking pipelines, fighting new coal mines, urging divestment from fossil fuels – trying, in short, to keep weakening the mighty industry that still stands in the way of real progress. With every major world leader now on the record saying they at least theoretically support bold action to make the transition to renewable energy, we’ve got a new tool to work with”.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [COP21](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

COP21: Labour union actions and Reactions

Posted on **December 18, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On December 3, the Canadian Labour Congress, along with the Climate Action Network, and the Green Economy Network, convened the One Million Climate Jobs event, bringing together Canadian labour and green groups. The background discussion document, [One Million Climate Jobs: A Challenge for Canadians](#), estimates costs and job creation in a new economy, where public investment supports four strategic priorities: clean/renewable energy; energy efficiency/green buildings; public transit; and higher speed rail. Also at the December 3 event, the National Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) spoke, arguing that [“Public Services are at the Heart of a Just Transition”](#). And Ken Smith, a heavy equipment operator from Fort McMurray and the head of [Unifor Local 707A](#) told the audience that oil sands

workers “get” climate change, concluding with “We want to be full partners because we have no choice”. See [“At COP21, Oil Sands Worker Urges Smooth Transition Off Fossil Fuels”](#) in *The National Observer*.



Labour’s responses to the final COP21 agreement were mainly disappointed but constructive. In [“Collaborative Approach will be Key to Realizing Canada’s Climate Change Obligations”](#) (Dec. 12), the Canadian Labour Congress expressed disappointment that the sections protecting human rights – including indigenous rights – and the right to a just transition for workers appeared only in the non-binding preamble of the agreement. But President Hassan Yussuff states “Canadian unions are committed to doing their part to fight climate change; and we will work with governments and employers to ensure a just transition to a carbon-free economy that supports displaced workers and creates millions of decent, green jobs”.

Similar sentiments came from the U.S., in [“BlueGreen Alliance Lauds International Climate Agreement”](#), which states “we will continue to fight for just transition-along with human rights, gender equality and the other core social issues that were in the text going into COP21-to become an operational item within the structures created in the Agreement and the UNFCCC. Still, the inclusion in the preamble is without a doubt a call to action to all nations to take on climate change in accordance with the needs of their people, and we plan to hold them accountable”.

From the U.K., Philip Pearson, Senior Policy Advisor at the Trades Union Congress wrote [a blog](#) on December 11 which reproduced a Joint Letter to the French Presidency, protesting that “civil society is highly disappointed that references to the protection of rights, equality and ecosystems have been removed from the core of the climate agreement”. And in a [December 12 blog](#), Pearson summarizes the overall deal, and concludes that “it’s up to us to make sure that union voice, just transition and decent work are central to the transformation that lies ahead”.



The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) had issued a [Call for Dialogue: Climate Action Demands Just Transition](#) (Nov. 26), which was signed by representatives from ITUC, environmental groups (Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, WWF), faith groups and charities (Actionaid International, Oxfam, ChristianAid), and, unusually, businesses (We Mean Business, the B Team). The ITUC response to the final [COP agreement](#) states that the commitment to securing a just transition for workers and communities is just a first step, requiring further work. ITUC states that another of its goals, to raise ambition and realize the job potential of climate action, is missing in the final agreement.

And from Philip Jennings, General Secretary, UNI Global Union, in [Saving people and the Planet in a World of Unprecedented Changes](#) (Dec. 14), “after this new global climate deal, unions will advance progress in the millions of workplaces around the world through all the negotiating

platforms we have from local to national and global levels. We will make it happen. This is our human right to a safe planet". UNI hosted a dedicated [website for Climate Change](#) which includes a [brief assessment](#) of strengths and weaknesses.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [labour union policies](#), [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), [UNI Global Union](#) | [1 Reply](#)

COP21: Actions of the provincial and federal governments

Posted on **December 18, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 27, on the eve of COP 21, the Government of British Columbia released the [recommendations](#) of its appointed Climate Leadership Team, summarized in a press [release](#). The recommendations centred on increases to the carbon tax and a 2030 target to reduce emissions across three broad sectors: Built Environment, Industry and Transportation, by 40%, compared to 2007. In a Nov. 30 interview with the [CBC](#), Premier Clark's response was non-committal and dependent on public consultations in 2016; in an interview with the [Globe and Mail](#) on December 9, she stated that B.C.'s position will now depend on national targets. On December 8, [British Columbia](#) became the first Canadian jurisdiction to sign on to the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF) – a subnational collaboration between 29 states and provinces from Brazil, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Spain and the United States.

On November 27, Quebec [announced](#) an ambitious GHG emissions reduction target of 37.5% below 1990 levels by 2030, and launched a new social campaign to inspire its citizens. The campaign, [Let's do it for them](#) or [Faisons-le pour eux](#) includes further news.

On December 3, on the way to COP21, Manitoba released *Manitoba's Climate Change and Green Economy Action Plan*, as well as *Green and Growing: Manitoba's Commitment to Green Jobs*, both available [here](#). The plan is wide-ranging, including targets for emissions reductions through enhanced green building standards, green infrastructure investment, greener government operations, and cooperation with Indigenous people. It promises to create 6,000 green jobs in the next five years. Most attention however, focused on the announcement of a cap-and-trade system. Read the [CBC News report](#) (Dec. 3) or a [summary at the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions](#). On December 7, the Premiers of Ontario, Québec, and Manitoba signed a [new memorandum of understanding](#) signalling their intent to link their respective cap and trade programs under the Western Climate Initiative, the North American carbon market which also includes California. Both Quebec and British Columbia joined the [International Zero-Emission Vehicle \(ZEV\) Alliance](#) – [Quebec](#) on December 3, and [B.C.](#) on December 10. Members of the Alliance agree to strive to make all new passenger vehicles in their jurisdictions ZEVs by no later than 2050. Also at COP21,

the Alliance released a paper by the International Coalition for Clean Transportation, [Global Climate Change Mitigation Potential from a Transition to Electric Vehicles](#).

The first [Compact of States and Regions Disclosure Report](#) was released at COP21 on December 7, listing GHG reduction targets for 2020, 2030 and 2050, as well as progress to date on the targets, and renewable energy and energy efficiency targets. According to the [summary press release](#), the collective goal is to reduce GHG emissions by 12.4 GtCO₂e by 2030 – greater than China's current annual output, and 47.4 GtCO₂e by 2050 – equal to total world GHG emissions in 2012. [The Compact of States and Regions](#), formed in 2014, now includes Alberta, B.C. Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Ontario, and Quebec among its 44 members.

On the national level, the greatest surprise came when Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna announced support for the 1.5C target; see the [Globe and Mail](#) (Dec. 6) or “Canada shocks COP21 with Big New Climate Goal” in [The National Observer](#).

Canada also joined 36 other countries including the U.S., Germany, France, Mexico and the UK, in a December 1 [communiqué](#) committing to the reform of fossil-fuel subsidies. The communiqué calls for three key principles: transparency on subsidy policies and reform timetables, ambition in scale and timetable for reforms, and supports to assist in the transition away from subsidies. In November, [Oil Change International](#) released [Empty Promises: G20 Subsidies to Oil Gas and Coal Production](#) which estimates that 8 countries – Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States – spend a combined \$80 billion a year on public support for fossil fuel production.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [COP21](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Zero Emission Vehicles](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Mapping the power of the Oil and Gas Industry in Canada

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (B.C.) announced a new initiative, funded by a \$2.5 million partnership grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada on November 12, 2015. [Mapping the Power of the Carbon-Extractive Corporate Resource Sector](#) will bring together “researchers, civil society organizations, and Indigenous participants to study the oil, gas and coal industries in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.” The goal of the 6-year project is to identify the major corporate interests in the fossil fuel sector, and uncover their influence in policy decisions.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and Gas Lobby](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

7.7 Million Jobs in Renewable Energy Employment Worldwide

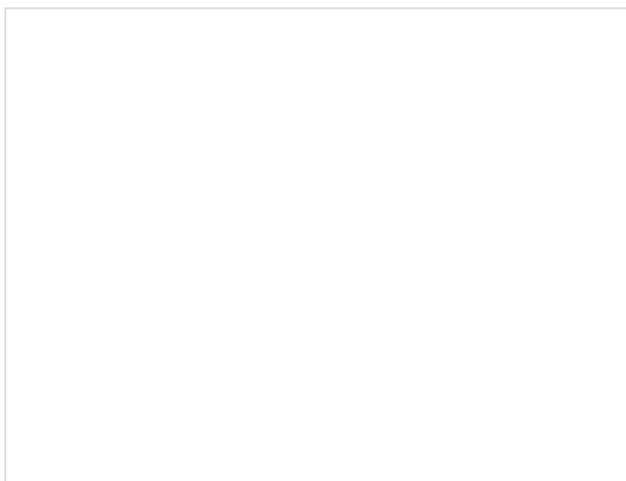
Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Fact Sheet: Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Jobs , released in November 2015 by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), is described as “a best effort to survey the status of renewable energy and energy efficiency jobs from the data that is publicly available.” The employment statistics are sourced from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), as well as international organizations, national non-profits, think tanks and national trade associations . Most of the international statistics are taken from the IRENA *Renewable Energy and Jobs Annual Review 2015* , which estimates that there are 7.7 million jobs worldwide in renewable energy employment. The EESI acknowledges that the statistics are not directly comparable because of the different definitions and methodologies of the sources, and further acknowledges that some statistics are dated because of a lack of more current information.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Green Jobs](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Life Cycle Analysis of Battery Electric Vehicles

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Union of Concerned Scientists has released *Cleaner Cars from Cradle to Grave* , a comprehensive, two-year review of the climate emissions from vehicle production, operation, and disposal. It concludes that battery electric cars generate *half* the emissions of the average comparable gasoline car, even when pollution from battery manufacturing is accounted for. One

chapter discusses the emissions of the manufacturing process, with estimates based on the Nissan LEAF and Tesla Model S. The study concludes that emissions from manufacturing a full-size BEV are about 33 percent of its lifetime global warming emissions; the remaining 67 percent come from driving it.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [Lithium Ion Batteries](#), [Tesla](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Capture and Storage – Canadian case studies, and a Labour view

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The recent report *Global Status of CCS 2015* by the Global CCS Institute provides a glowing overview of the technology, and profiles the [Quest project near Edmonton](#) , as well as a link to an [August 2015 report](#) about the Boundary Dam in Saskatchewan . In October, the B.C. government [introduced](#) Bill 40, the *Natural Gas Development Statutes Amendment Act, 2015*, amending legislation which allows carbon capture and storage “as a permanent solution for disposing of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in British Columbia”. Reference materials from the 2014 public consultations on CCS in B.C. are [here](#) .

In a working paper published by [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy](#), author Sean Sweeney writes that “CCS may have a place in the transition to a post-carbon world, but this place must be determined democratically, and by public need.” *Hard Facts about Coal: Why Why Trade Unions Should Re-evaluate their support for Carbon Capture and Storage* states that, whether intended or not, CCS can provide political cover for the ongoing and increasing use for coal.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Boundary Dam](#), [Carbon capture and storage \(CCS\)](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Quest](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Pricing: Provincial differences and the risk of Carbon Leakage

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the second of two reports it has published on carbon pricing, the EcoFiscal Commission concludes that “In the context of a \$30 per tonne carbon price, only a small number of sectors, representing less than 5 per cent of Canada’s economy, are likely to experience significant competitive pressures. Even with a \$120 per tonne carbon price ... 90 per cent of Canada’s economy would still be virtually unaffected by competitiveness challenges.” [*Provincial Carbon Pricing & Competitiveness Pressures: Guidelines for Business and Policy Makers*](#) examines the economies of British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, and states that impacts will differ across sectors and provinces. In Alberta, 18 % of the economy is potentially exposed, compared to 2% in B.C., Ontario, and Nova Scotia. The report recommends targeted, transparent, and temporary support measures for genuinely vulnerable industries, in the form of free permits (under a cap and trade system) or carbon tax rebates. Other recent reports related to carbon pricing: [*Implementing Effective Carbon Pricing*](#) from the New Climate Economy; “The Path to Carbon Pricing” by Christine Lagarde (IMF) and Jim Yong Kim (World Bank) in Project Syndicate; and [*Uses of Revenue from Carbon Pricing*](#) in which the Climate Markets and Investment Association forecasts that globally, governments will raise \$22 billion in climate revenue in 2015. From Resources for the Future, [*Lessons Learned from Three Decades of Experience with Cap-and-Trade*](#) examines U.S. programs and the European ETS.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Leakage](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [European Emissions Trading System](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

CUPE’S STRATEGIC PLAN INCLUDES NEW INITIATIVES TO “PROTECT THE PLANET”

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) held their national convention in Vancouver from November 2 – 6, 2015 . Delegates heard Naomi Klein, [attended a rally](#) in support of the LEAP Manifesto , and supported a [*Strategic Planning Document*](#) which includes new initiatives under the heading “Protect the Planet”. Previous resolutions had included commitments to lobby the government, collaborate with environmental and civil society allies, and develop policies, action plans, and tools for member education. Amongst the new commitments in the 2015 document: “We will offer concrete support to First Nations and others taking action on the front lines to prevent further environmental degradation resulting from oil and gas extraction....Attend COP21 as part of the union delegation.... Educate CUPE pension trustees about the risks of

climate change to pension investments... Help locals undertake workplace initiatives that reduce pollution and the use of toxins, and that tackle global warming.”

On November 17, CUPE [issued a press release](#) concerning their participation and goals for COP21 in Paris.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal people](#), [Canadian Union of Public Employees \(CUPE\)](#), [COP21](#), [labour union policies](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Quebec releases Sustainable Development Strategy to 2020

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 28, 2015, the Quebec government's *Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2020* was released . Full documentation is available only in French, [here](#) . The [3-page English summary](#), Appendix 4 states that the province will support the development of green business practices and models; support green industries; foster investment and funding to support the transition to a green and responsible economy; develop and showcase skills that support the transition to a green and responsible economy; support the electrification of transportation and improve the sector's energy efficiency; and foster the production and use of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Further, in *Initiatives to Enable the Necessary Shift* the government undertakes to update its practices in order to increase the size of ecoresponsible procurement within the public service and foster the use of clean technology; and foster the improved use of green taxation to achieve sustainable development and climate change objectives.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Green procurement](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario releases Climate Change Strategy and Cap and Trade Discussion Paper

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 24, 2015 the government of Ontario released its *Climate Change Strategy* , a broad document that sets out Ontario's vision for achieving the GHG reduction target of 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050. A separate five-year action plan is promised for 2016, which will include specific commitments for meeting the 2020 emissions reduction target, as well as establish

the necessary framework for the 2030 and 2050 targets. The government has also released a discussion paper: [Cap and Trade Program Design Options](#), (summarized in the *Globe and Mail*). Comments about the cap and trade design can be submitted until December 15. A draft regulatory proposal will be tabled early in 2016, triggering another public comment period. The Clean Economy Alliance released [Getting it Right: Design Recommendations for Ontario's Cap and Trade System](#), which recommends policies to make polluters pay for the pollution they generate, while being “fair to workers, families and industries that are disproportionately affected”. The Climate Action Network Canada surveyed 857 Ontarians in September 2015 regarding carbon pricing and cap and trade systems. Results are [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia Moving away from Coal-fired Electricity

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In [Our Electricity Future: Nova Scotia's Electricity Plan](#), released on November 9, 2015 the government pledges to be a “green powerhouse” by 2040. Coal will be phased out in favour of renewable electricity so that “By 2050 or before, Nova Scotia's electricity utilities may be nearly carbon free”. According to the [press release](#), the plan also commits \$1.5 million over the next three years to support pilot projects to research technologies related to electricity use, management, and storage, as well as solar and tidal energy. Amendments to the *Public Utilities Act* and *Electricity Act* are promised “this fall” to support the electricity plan. [Commentary](#) appears in [Rabble.ca](#), and a [summary](#) appears in [CleanTech Letter](#) (Nov. 10).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [coal-fired electricity](#), [Electric power generation](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [tidal energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

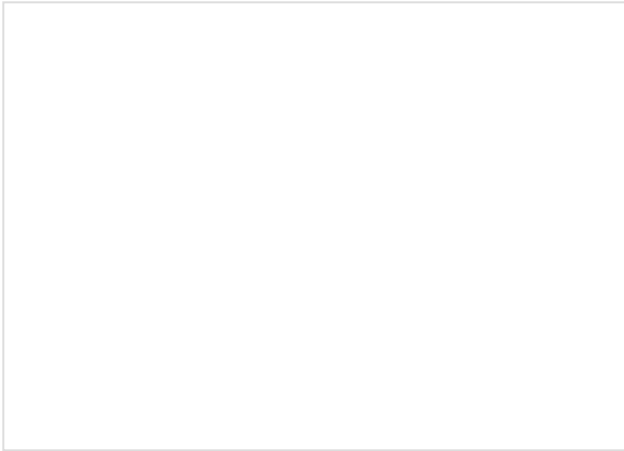
Manitoba commits to Environmental Bill of Rights in Throne Speech

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Manitoba's [Throne Speech](#), delivered on November 16, has committed the government to a new law which will enshrine “the right of every Manitoban to a healthy environment”. An [Ecojustice blog](#) provides context. The Premier had also [announced in October](#) that the province will invest \$400,000 over the next two years in a new research centre, the Prairie Climate Centre, at the University of Winnipeg.

Trudeau's "Sunny Ways" on the Climate file

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Since taking office as Canada's Prime Minister on November 4, Justin Trudeau has taken steps towards what Elizabeth May of the Green Party called "[fixing what Harper broke](#)". An [interview](#) with Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion in the *Globe and Mail* (Nov. 12) makes clear that climate change issues are to be woven into decision-making in all ministries, and Dion also states that the government is committed to slashing fossil fuel subsidies, building green infrastructure and mass transit, and providing green investment funding. On November 13, the [Ministerial Mandate Letters](#) were made publicly available, outlining the cross-Ministry priorities of climate change: for example, the [Letter to the Minister of Finance](#) includes "Work with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in creating a new Low Carbon Economy Trust to help fund projects that materially reduce carbon emissions under the new pan-Canadian framework". Also on November 13th, Trudeau [called for a moratorium](#) on crude oil tanker traffic for B.C.'s North Coast. This is generally seen as the end of the Northern Gateway pipeline, as explained in [The Tyee](#). And for the first time since 1958, the Prime Minister of Canada addressed labour leaders at [a meeting at the Canadian Labour Congress](#) on November 10; climate change was one of the topics discussed.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Justin Trudeau](#), [Northern Gateway pipeline](#), [Oil Spills](#), [Oil Transportation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition in the U.S.

Posted on **November 24, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Labor Network for Sustainability addresses the jobs vs. the environment debate by considering the role of Just Transition policies. In [How to Promote a Just Transition and Break Out of the Jobs vs. Environment Trap](#), author Jeremy Brecher asks, “what might a Superfund for workers legislation look like?”. He states that, surprisingly, “some of the best ideas for protecting workers and communities hit by the side effects of public policy decisions were embodied in legislation championed in 1988 by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) to protect tobacco working people and farmers from tobacco control policy.”

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

U.S. Job creation benefits of Clean Energy Policies

Posted on **November 24, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 9, 2015, NextGen Climate America released [Economic Analysis of U.S. Decarbonization Pathways](#). Written by ICF International and using data from [Pathways to Deep Decarbonization in the United States \(2014\)](#), the report concludes that by investing in clean energy and reducing GHG emissions, the United States could add more than 1 million jobs by 2030 and nearly 2 million by 2050. Nationally, employment gains in manufacturing, construction and other sectors outweigh losses in the fossil fuel sector. Modelling is provided for a Reference case, High renewables, and Mixed case scenarios; results are provided by sector and by region, as well as nationally.

[The Clean Energy Future: Protecting the Climate, Creating Jobs and Saving Money](#) by Synapse Energy Economics, Labor Network for Sustainability, and 350.org, aims to refute the jobs vs. environment argument. It recommends policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, including transforming the electric system by cutting coal-fired power in half by 2030 and eliminating it by 2050; building no new nuclear plants; and reducing the use of natural gas far below business-as-usual levels. Under these policies, the cost of electricity, heating, and transportation would be \$78 billion less than current projections to 2050, and new job creation would be 500,000 more per year over business as usual projections through 2050. The report is based on a [Technical Appendix](#) by Synapse Energy Economics explains and documents the calculations; it models employment impacts for direct, indirect and induced jobs, and finds the greatest job activity in energy efficiency (over 500,000 average jobs per year), followed by automobile production, wind and solar.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Climate change policy](#), [employment impacts](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Banking Executive Compensation should measure Performance in GHG reduction

Posted on **November 24, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report from Vancouver-based SHARE (Shareholder Association for Research and Education) examines the impacts that climate change-related risks could have for the banking sector, including their exposure to carbon-intensive assets, but also considering their own administration and operation as corporations. *Banking on 2°: The Hidden Risks of Climate Change for Canadian Banks* focused on Canada's five largest banks: Bank of Montreal, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Royal Bank, Scotiabank and Toronto-Dominion Bank. Amongst the recommendations: banks should have a climate change statement which delineates the steps being taken to reduce the climate impacts of its operations and its financing activities; performance targets to reduce operational and financed GHG emissions should be established and aligned with IPCC models to limit warming to 2°Celsius; and executive compensation and incentive packages should include performance in reducing GHG emissions from operational and financed sources.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Banking Industry, Canada, compensation policies, Performance measurement, Stranded Assets** | [Leave a reply](#)

Pension funds and Divestment: What Canadian Trustees and Workers should know

Posted on **November 24, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Pension Funds and Fossil Fuels: The Economic Case for Divestment, released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in November, examines the top 20 public pension funds in Canada and estimates that their fossil fuel holdings put them at risk of losses of approximately \$5.8 billion, because of the potential for new regulations, carbon pricing, emission caps, and stranded assets. The report, aimed at pension fund trustees and concerned workers, argues for divestment of fossil fuel holdings and briefly reviews some of the alternative financial instruments and clean energy projects that could benefit from the divested capital. The analysis is supported by an October report by the Carbon Tracker Initiative, *Lost in Transition*, which warns that "Coal, oil and gas companies are misleading shareholders with overly optimistic future demand projections" and "these scenarios are potentially underestimating the pace and scale of the transformation of the energy sector". And *Unhedgeable Risk: How Climate Change Sentiment Impacts Investment* concludes that that investors should concern themselves not only with the long-term fundamentals

of climate change, but also with the immediate risks of “sentiment shifts” (such as oil price panic and sell-off).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Clean Energy and Jobs Plan for B.C., based on more stringent Regulations

Posted on **November 24, 2015** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The government of British Columbia is scheduled to release its updated Climate Leadership Plan in December 2015. In November, Clean Energy Canada released [A Clean Economy and Jobs Plan for British Columbia](#) to contribute to those discussions. It characterizes the future as “not a revolution, but an evolution”, and summarizes its policy recommendations as having two core fundamentals: “Introduce and expand clean standards for vehicles, buildings and industry, and “Create a clean economy investment and tax rebate program.” The Jobs Plan document is based on commissioned research by Navius Research, [A Plan for Climate Leadership in British Columbia: Forecasting the Benefits and Costs of Strengthening British Columbia’s Greenhouse Gas Policies](#). The Navius report provides the details of both the economic modelling, and the policy prescriptions. Those deep decarbonization policies include a carbon tax of at least \$80 per tonne and stronger sector-specific regulations on buildings, transportation, energy supply, and industry – especially LNG production. Under such policies, Navius forecasts that BC will miss its 2020 emission target, (33% reduction in GHG emissions relative to 2007 levels), but can achieve its 2050 target (80% reduction in emissions relative to 2007). The resource sectors are forecast to grow at 2% annually and remain important to BC’s economy, but more than 70% of future growth will occur in the service sector, (including healthcare, education, and technical and professional services). Because of the diversity of the economy, approximately 250,000 new jobs are predicted in the next ten years, with total jobs growing by 900,000 between 2015 and 2050.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [British Columbia](#), [Climate change policy](#), [employment impacts](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#), [Green Economy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta’s NDP Government includes Just Transition in its Climate

Leadership Plan

Posted on **November 24, 2015** by **elizabethperry493**

The policies [released](#) by the Alberta government on November 22 2015 are being hailed as a turning point in Alberta, including a plan to replace two-thirds of [coal-generated electricity with renewables](#) by 2030 , and [to phase in carbon pricing](#), starting at \$20 a tonne in January 2017 and reaching \$30 a tonne by January 2018 . Emissions from the be oil sands [will be capped at 100-megatons](#) – representing a drastic reduction from the 267 megatons produced in 2013, although no date is attached to the proposal. Reaction is generally positive, even from business, according to the [Calgary Herald](#) and the [Toronto Globe and Mail](#) . [Rabble.ca sums it up](#) in “Rachel Notley builds a coalition of big business, environmentalists and civil society” The proposals are based upon the recommendations of the provincial [Climate Change Advisory Panel Report](#) , chaired by Andrew Leach, and made public on November 20. In the “Labour Context” section (page 26) , the report states that revenue from carbon pricing must be reinvested in Alberta, including “To support transition needs of workers and communities and to enable full inclusion of Aboriginal communities in climate change mitigation and adaptation ... Just transition programs need to be tailored to the circumstances of workers and their communities, and their selection, design and implementation will require participation of all those involved. Workers, unions, communities and firms will need to be engaged by government to develop specific programs that can include skills development and training, income support and relocation assistance, as well as working with the federal government on pension bridging and benefits programs for displaced workers.”

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Carbon Pricing, Climate change policy, coal-fired electricity, Just Transition, Oil Sands** | [Leave a reply](#)

CANADA AT COP21: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS AND CIVIL SOCIETY:

Posted on **November 24, 2015** by **elizabethperry493**

With Canada’s new political climate coinciding with the run-up to the Paris COP21 meetings from November 30 to December 11, there has been a flood of energy and climate policy documents from Canada’s think tanks and advocacy groups. Some examples: Broadbent Institute and Mowat Centre, [Step Change: Federal Policy Ideas towards a Low-Carbon Canada](#) ; Climate Action Network (CAN), [A Paris Package that shows Canada Cares](#) ; the David Suzuki Foundation [statement](#) , which endorses the CAN priorities; [Powering Climate Prosperity](#) from the Canadian Council on Renewable Electricity, and “A Clean Energy Agenda for Canada” in IRPP’s [Policy](#)

Options (October), written by Dan Woynillowicz of Clean Energy Canada. Resource economist Marc Jaccard also writes in *Policy Options* (November), with [his views](#) that emissions targets are not as important as the right policies, and “ Everything else is fluff, including government spending programs.”

On November 18, the Canadian Labour Congress released [CLC's COP21 Statement](#) which inserts workers' needs in this climate discussion. The statement includes a thorough statement of why Labour cares, and what the CLC demands: “The CLC will strongly advocate for compensation, retraining, re-employment and relocation for affected workers and their communities, and demands Just Transition commitments to support those workers who risk being displaced by climate change or by climate change policies and mitigation measures. Carbon reduction policies must be combined with progressive tax and expenditure policies and the establishment of Just Transition funds. These funds should be governed by an independent Just Transition board with labour representation..... The CLC calls on Canada to commit to a legally binding target to cut our domestic carbon pollution by 17% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 38% by 2030, returning it to the trajectory of achieving 80% reductions by 2050. ...The Canadian labour movement supports a national cap and trade carbon-pricing system, which will serve to set a maximum emission level, in line with the overall national targets. In many cases, emission reduction activities would result in modernizing plants and improving workers' health and safety..... The CLC calls on Canada to commit \$400 million annually to the Green Climate Fund, and recognize the legitimacy of developing country calls for additional funding, not through the Green Climate Fund, for losses and damage resulting from climate change.”

BlueGreen Canada also sent a [specific request](#) to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change stating, “... we urge you to keep Just Transition and Decent Work language in the preamble and operational Articles of the future Paris Agreement, as stated in the bracketed section of Article 2, Option 1 of the draft agreement and decision from October 23, 2015.”

Other avenues for civil society input: the [100% Possible March](#) in Ottawa on November 29 , planned and organized by a “[Who's Who](#)” of [Canadian environmental advocacy](#) , including many labour organizations – CAPE,CLC, CSN, CSQ, FTQ, IATSE,OSSTF, PIPSC, and PSAC. An international [Virtual People's Climate March](#) is also being organized for November 29, especially important in light of the restrictions on demonstrations in Paris.

In the first such meeting in seven years, Canada's Premiers [met with Canada's Prime Minister](#) in Ottawa on November 23 . Two topics are on the agenda: Syrian refugees, and the Canadian position at the UN negotiations at COP21 in Paris, to which the Premiers were invited. To follow developments at COP21 from a Canadian perspective, see Simon Fraser University's [Clean Energy Canada](#) analysis , or the National Observer “[Road to Paris](#)” series . The official UNFCCC COP21 website is [here](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [COP21](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Landmark Guidance Document for Pension Managers released by UNEP

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On October 8, at the Annual Meetings of the Boards of Governors of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group in Lima, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) released the final report of the Design of a Sustainable Financial System Inquiry, titled *The Financial System We Need*, capping UNEP research stream that dates back to 2005. The [documents](#) produced include *Fiduciary Responsibility in the 21st Century* (September) , an analysis of investment practice and fiduciary duty in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Japan, South Africa, the UK and the US. “This report is a landmark piece in the global dialogue...By clearly defining the full remit of fiduciary duty and providing recommendations for how it should be implemented, this work serves as a definitive guide for any fiduciary unsure of the role that sustainability should play in their decision-making process”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Pension management](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Sustainability in the corner office: Business and Climate Change

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Corporate Knights magazine released the results of its annual ranking of MBA programs in October – unlike most surveys, it includes measures of social and environmental responsibility in the teaching and research at MBA programs around the world . As in previous years, the [2015 Better World MBA survey](#) ranks Canadian universities at the top: for the 12th year, York University’s Schulich School of Business ranked #1, followed by Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University, and Copenhagen School of Business as #3. And the latest Harvard Business Review ranks the “[Best Performing CEO’s in the World](#)” using a changed system: in 2015, long-term financial results achieved by the CEO are weighted at 80%, rather than 100% as before. The remaining 20% goes to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance.

Most telling: business leaders are making sure that their viewpoint is part of climate change policy discussions, especially leading up to and including COP21. Earlier this year, Citigroup bank [announced](#) that it would lend, invest, and/or facilitate \$100 billion towards climate and environmental solutions, and more recently renounced investments in coal, led by its [Environmental and Social Policy Framework document](#). Coordinated by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES), six major U.S. banks issued a [Climate Action Statement](#) in October, as did the CEO’s of ten major food companies, including Mars, General Mills, Unilever, and Kellogg, who issued a [joint letter](#) to world leaders. C2ES also released [Weathering the Next Storm: A](#)

Closer Look at Business Resilience. More businesses signed on to [RE100](#), a global business campaign committed to 100% renewable electricity. And on October 19, the White House [announced](#) that 81 U.S. companies, with combined revenue of \$5 trillion, have now signed the “American Business Act on Climate Pledge”, launched in July 2015.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [350.org](#), [Banking Industry](#), [Business positions on climate change](#), [Business schools](#), [CEO's](#), [Food Industry](#), [Green Business](#), [Management attitudes](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Landmark Clean Energy Legislation passed in California

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The [Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015](#), (Senate Bill 350) was signed into law on October 7th, 2015, requiring the state to generate half of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030, as well as double energy efficiency in homes, offices and factories. It also sets up a framework for an integrated electricity grid, and encourages utilities to install more charging stations for electric vehicles. [The Natural Resources Defense Council](#) called it “one of the most significant climate and energy bills in California’s history”. An earlier version of Bill 350 had been defeated – see the *New York Times* (Sept. 10) “[California Democrats Drop Plan for 50 Percent Oil Cut](#)”. Using regulatory authority instead, on September 25, the California Air Resources Board approved the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, which requires reduction of the amount of carbon generated by gas and diesel fuels by at least 10 percent by 2020. See “[California Says ‘Yes!’ to Clean Fuels and ‘No!’ to Oil Industry Lobbyists](#)”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [California](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Electricity](#), [Fuel Emissions Standards](#), [Low Carbon Fuel Standard](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Deep Decarbonization Pathways Reports released

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS FOR A DECARBONIZED ECONOMY

The [Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project](#) is a consortium of energy researchers from the 16 countries which are the world’s largest GHG emitters. In mid-September, the DDPP released a [Synthesis Report](#) and 16 country studies, outlining policy directions for long-term (to 2050). [The Canadian report](#) identifies six decarbonization pathways under three main themes: Deepening

Current Trends, Encouraging next generation technologies; and Structural Economic Pathways, for which the report simulated oil price scenarios of \$114, \$80 and \$40 per barrel in current dollars in 2050. The Canada report recommends “regulations that strengthen existing policies for buildings and transport sectors, a cap and trade system to drive abatement in heavy industry, and finally a complementary carbon price on the rest of the economy that returns revenues to reduced income and corporate taxes”. All DDPP reports will be tabled at the COP21 meetings in Paris in December.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Green Economy](#), [Low-Carbon Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Brazil and India submit INDC statements before COP21

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

All the major emitters have now submitted their [Intended Nationally Determined Contributions statements](#) to the UNFCCC: [Brazil](#) on September 28, with a commitment to reduce GHG emissions 37% by 2025 and 43% by 2030, and a goal to eliminate illegal deforestation and restore 12 million hectares of land.

[India](#), on October 2, pledged to reduce the intensity of its fossil fuel emissions 33 percent to 35 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, and to produce 40 percent of its electricity from non-fossil-fuel sources by 2030. India stated that \$2.5 trillion U.S. would be required between now and 2030 to meet its goals; in a softening of its position, India did not make emission cuts conditional on aid, according to the [New York Times](#), although a government official quoted by [Inside Climate News](#) quotes states that its efforts will be tied to the “availability and level of international financing and technology transfer”. On October 5th, Reuters [reported](#) “Germany offers India \$2.25 billion for solar, clean energy”; Reuters also [reported](#) that India is opening one coal mine a month in a drive to double its coal production by 2020.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Brazil](#), [COP21](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [INDC](#), [India](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

China-U.S. Announcements include a National Cap and Trade program for China

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On an official state visit to the U.S. on September 25, China’s president, Xi Jinping, announced that China would establish a national cap and trade program in 2017 covering power generation,

iron and steel, chemicals and building materials industries. He also committed \$3.1 billion in climate financing to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to climate change, capping off a series of recent announcements. The Rocky Mountain Institute summarizes the full slate of pledges made by the U.S. and China on September 25, “[Today’s U.S.-China Announcement is the Most Significant Milestone to Date for Battling Global Climate Change](#)”. *Inside Climate News* summarizes the Chinese announcement. In the New Yorker (September 25) “[What can China achieve with Cap-and-Trade?](#)” cites the irony of a market-based system from a communist country, in contrast to the U.S. approach of regulation from a centralized bureaucracy.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [China](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Following in Urgenda’s Footsteps – another Landmark climate change decision by Pakistani Court

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

FOLLOWING IN URGENDA’S FOOTSTEPS – ANOTHER LANDMARK CLIMATE CHANGE DECISION BY PAKISTANI COURT

According to the Climate [Law Blog](#) of the Columbia Law School, “*Leghari v. Federation of Pakistan* now joins the [Urgenda decision in the Netherlands](#) as an important judicial decision directing a national government to take action on climate change based on fundamental legal principles”. When a farmer in Pakistan sued his government for failing to carry out the country’s National Climate Policy and Framework, the High Court of Lahore ruled in September that “Climate Change is a defining challenge of our time...On a legal and constitutional plane this is clarion call for the protection of fundamental rights of the citizens of Pakistan, in particular, the vulnerable and weak segments of the society who are unable to approach this Court”. Citing the life-threatening dangers of drought and flooding in the country, the judge directed several government ministries to ensure the implementation of the Framework, with a deadline of December 31, 2015 for action plans. The court also created a Climate Change Commission with representatives from government, NGOs, and technical experts. An article in the [Toronto Star](#) (Oct. 3) quotes Canadian legal experts on the decision. See the [text of the decision](#) at the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide website.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change Law](#), [Pakistan](#), [Urgenda Decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Public Opinion about Climate Change policies: Alberta and Canada

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by **workinawarmingworld**

In September, 2015 Pembina Institute released an [opinion poll of Albertans](#), conducted by EKOS Research. Of the 1,885 respondents, 50% would support an economy-wide carbon tax, rising to 72% if the proceeds were invested in low-carbon projects; 70% want stricter enforcement of the existing environmental rules and safeguards in the oilsands; 70% support investing in renewables to reduce coal use, and 86% want the province to increase support for clean energy and clean technology.

Other opinions were expressed at the [2015 Alberta Climate Summit](#), convened on September 9 by Pembina Institute. Discussions centred on the economy and jobs, carbon pricing, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.

The [Climate Change Advisory Panel](#) of the Alberta government invited submissions from Albertans in August and September. Views of individuals, companies, academics, advocacy groups and associations, and three labour unions are available: A [list](#) by name helps to locate items of interest amongst over 400 documents. The union submissions are: [#94](#), by the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Local 110 (Alberta); [#387](#), by the Alberta Federation of Labour and [#494](#), a 1-page statement by the Business Agent of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 955.

[Environics Institute](#), partnered with the David Suzuki Foundation, released [Canadian Public Opinion about Climate Change](#), showing that support for the B.C. carbon tax is at an all time high in that province, and has increased to 60% in other provinces – notably Atlantic Canada, and amongst women. 74% of Canadians say they believe it is possible for their province to shift most of its energy requirements from fossil fuels to clean renewable forms of energy.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [Canada](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [public opinion polls](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Enbridge Line 9 Given Green Light

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by **workinawarmingworld**

According to a brief Enbridge [press release](#) on September 30, 2015 , the National Energy Board (NEB) has approved the results of required hydro-static tests on Line 9, removing the last safety test required before the pipeline can begin transporting crude oil from Sarnia to Montreal. The *Globe and Mail* reported the decision, “[Canadian Regulators give Enbridge’s Line 9 the Green Light](#)” (Sept. 30), yet the official [NEB website](#) for Line 9 did not post a press release . As reported by the *Globe and Mail*, “[Approval of Enbridge’s Line 9 applauded by Quebec Refineries](#)” (Oct. 1), but CBC reports that “[Montreal protesters denounce Energy East, Enbridge Line 9 pipelines](#)”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Enbridge](#), [Line 9](#), [Pipelines](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Unifor joins First Nations and Environmental Groups in Court against the Northern Gateway Pipeline decision

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

[Eighteen lawsuits](#) were consolidated and heard in a Federal Court of Appeal in Vancouver, from October 1 to 8, as eight First Nations, four environmental groups and Unifor [challenged](#) the decision of the Federal Joint Review Panel on Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline. Lawyers representing Unifor [argued](#) that the Joint Review Panel erred by focusing on the economic benefits of oil sands development and refusing to consider greenhouse gas emissions produced by upstream development (see Unifor's detailed Memorandum of Fact and Law [here](#)). West Coast Environmental Law provides a Legal Backgrounder with [official documents](#), a day by day [summary](#) of proceedings and will cover the decision when it is announced in the coming months. "How Harper triggered a First Nations legal war over Northern Gateway" in the *National Observer* (Oct. 1) provides background.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal Peoples](#), [First Nations](#), [Northern Gateway](#), [Pipelines](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Chronicling the Destruction of Canadian Environmental Laws

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Canada's Track Record on Environmental Laws 2011 – 2015 was released by West Coast Environmental Law on October 14. On the same day, Centre Québécois du droit de l'environnement released the french language version, *Bilan des changements apportés aux lois environnementales fédérales*. The report catalogues "the repeal or amendment of most of Canada's foundational environmental laws since 2011", beginning with Bills C-38 and C-45 in 2012. It notes that socio-economic considerations can now be more easily ignored or excluded under the new *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, damaging Canadian livelihoods. A summary at [Desmog Blog](#) and the website [Environmental Laws Matter](#) complement the report.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change Law](#), [Environmental law](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement may threaten Environmental Regulation and Labour Standards

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Completion of the Trans Pacific Partnership was announced on October 5th 2015, though the text will only be revealed to the Canadian public when it is debated in the new Parliament. Although environmentalists take comfort in some [concessions](#) regarding wildlife protection, the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis says “[Trans-Pacific Partnership a big win for Corporate Interests](#)” (Oct. 5) especially because of the investor protection rules (ISDS). The Council of Canadians furthers the CCPA discussion in “[ISDS and the Paris Climate Agreement](#)”, as does a detailed paper by Gus Van Harten of Osgoode Hall Law School in [An ISDS Carve-out to Support Action on Climate Change](#), which aims to “identify language for an ISDS carve-out that is reliable and clear considering the importance of climate change action”. As Maude Barlow states in the introduction to the Van Harten paper: the ISDS “gives foreign corporations the right to directly sue governments for financial compensation if those governments introduce new laws or practices – be they environmental, health or human rights – that negatively affect corporations’ bottom line”. Another paper released by the Centre for International Governance (in Waterloo, Ont.), [Investor-State Arbitration Between Developed Democratic Countries](#) is the first in a planned series reviewing and assessing ISDS from a global and legal perspective, without a focus on climate change aspects.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Environmental regulation](#), [International trade agreements](#), [ISDS](#), [Labour Standards](#), [TPP](#), [Trans-Pacific Partnership](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s new Liberal government: What lies ahead for climate change policy?

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)



According to the CBC at “[New Liberal Government: Where does it get started?](#)”, Prime Minister-elect Justin Trudeau’s first order of business is to meet with the Premiers to discuss climate change policy before COP 21. For slightly more detailed information, we can also refer to the Liberal [platform statement](#), or a [very complete analysis](#) by West Coast Environmental Law (Oct. 22) . Read reactions, ranging from the positive and optimistic by [Environmental Defence](#); to the factual “[What Your New Liberal Majority Government Means for Climate, Environment, Science and Transparency](#)” by DeSmog Canada; to the pessimistic “[After Harper: Confronting the Liberals](#)” at RankandFile.ca. Internationally, see reaction from *The Guardian*: “[Trudeau victory may not signal a U-turn in Canada's climate policy](#)”; *Politico*; and the *New York Times*. In Canada, optimism is tempered, and [350.org](#) is organizing [Climate Welcome](#) demonstrations, from November 5 – 8 in Ottawa, to remind the new Prime Minister of the urgency of climate change policy reforms. Justin Trudeau will be sworn into office on November 4th.

Posted in [Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [COP21](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

What’s the best way to Motivate Action about Climate Change?

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

News Media and Climate Politics: Civic Engagement and Political Efficacy in a Climate of Reluctant Cynicism was released by the B.C. Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in September 2015. It reports the results of seven focus groups from Vancouver who were selected for high levels of awareness about climate change but relatively low levels of political engagement. The responses indicate that positive, optimistic attitudes result from news of success stories, especially concrete examples which illustrate the connection between individual and collective actions. Local information is more engaging; description is more powerful than prescription; and providing information about how to engage politically is just as important as motivating the desire to do so. In addition to the empirical results, this report provides valuable context about other climate change communications research, especially the [Yale Project on Climate Change Communication](#). For an easy-to-read summary of some of Yale’s insights, see the September interview of the Director, Anthony Leiserowitz, in *Grist* – “[What's the Best way to communicate about Climate Change: This Expert offers some Answers](#)”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [attitudes to climate change](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [community action](#), [motivation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

TUC Report calls for a Just Transition with “Skilled work at its heart”

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)



The [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#) and Greenpeace released a joint report on October 19, [Green Collar Nation: A Just Transition to a Low Carbon Economy](#). Acknowledging that the TUC and the environment movement have had their differences in the past, this report looks to a future which identifies “the shared agenda of managing the costs and reaping the benefits of the move towards a cleaner and stronger economy”. The report cites several U.K. economic studies of the potential of clean energy and new technologies such as carbon capture and storage, discusses the differences between TUC and Greenpeace policies re the aviation industry, and makes practical recommendations for energy and climate policy. The spirit of the paper lies in a concluding statement: “Drawing on the key pillars proposed by the International Trades Union Congress (ITUC) for a just transition, we have argued in this paper for a transition that puts skilled work at its heart. Achieving this transition cannot rely on a political narrative of guilt, debt and punishment, either at an individual or national level. Instead it should build on the politics of the common good, seeking active co-operation in solving a shared problem, developed through strong relationships, robust institutions and the harnessing of technological innovation and optimism wherever it can”.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Greenpeace](#), [Just Transition](#), [Labour and Greens](#), [Labour Policy](#), [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Job creation impacts of Energy Efficiency Programs: Best practices for measurement

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A September 2015 report from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy reviews the current methodologies used in studying the job creation impacts of energy efficiency programs, with a view to establishing best practice and a model framework for future analyses. [Verifying Energy Efficiency Job Creation: Current Practices and Recommendations](#) classifies, explains, and compares the methodologies currently in use in North America, as either top-down (modelling) or bottom-up (head-count). It then examines several exemplary studies, including two from Canada: the [Ontario Power Authority \(OPA\) study](#) of its Industrial Accelerator Program (IAP), a financial incentive and resource acquisition program started in 2010, and a [study of Efficiency Nova Scotia](#),

which measured the economic impact (in employment, payroll, and GDP) of organizations in the province's energy efficiency sector.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Economic impacts](#), [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Job Creation](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Ontario Power Authority](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Boom in Green Construction, and Energy Efficient Buildings

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

According to a report prepared for the [U.S. Green Building Council](#) by consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton, the green construction industry is currently outpacing traditional construction, and will be responsible for 38% of all construction jobs in the U.S. by 2018. The [2015 Green Building Economic Impact Study](#) measures gross domestic product (GDP), jobs, labour earnings, individual states' tax contributions and environmental indicators for green building and LEED construction, at the state and national level. The report is free, but requires registration to download.

Pembina Institute released a series of [reports](#) about energy efficiency and net-zero buildings over the summer of 2015, to contribute to B.C.'s Climate Leadership consultations. The most recent, concerning passive houses, were presented at the *North American Passive House Network conference* in Vancouver in October. *Barriers and solutions to near Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) and High Performance envelope in Europe and North America* notes the role of work practices, lack of training, and regulatory barriers. *Programs or Policies in North America that have Encouraged Passive Houses* lists examples of changes to procurement policies, building codes, and permitting practices which have encouraged the growth of passive houses; most examples are for Vancouver and the west coast of the U.S.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Construction Industry](#), [Green Building](#), [Passive Houses](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Employment Impacts of Reinstating annual increases to B.C. Carbon Tax

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A [proposal](#) made at the September 2015 convention of the Union of B.C. Municipalities called for a reinstatement of an annual increase to the provincial carbon tax, at the rate of \$5 per tonne, with

new revenues invested in local climate programs such as transit and infrastructure. The carbon tax had been structured with this annual \$5 per tonne increase when it was introduced in 2008, but has been frozen at 2012 levels. Although the resolution was defeated by a narrow vote, the new [economic impact research](#) which supported it is of interest. Commissioned by the Pembina Institute and conducted by Navius Research, the modeling showed that the \$5 per tonne annual increase would stimulate economic growth by an average of 2.1% per year until 2030, creating approximately 850,000 new jobs, reducing B.C.'s carbon pollution by 2.1 million tonnes, and saving households an average \$1,200 per year.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [British Columbia](#), [Carbon Pricing](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Community Input to the Sustainable Canada Dialogue on a Low-Carbon Economy

Posted on **October 23, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

In March 2015, Sustainable Canada Dialogues (SCD) released [Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars](#) – a “consensus paper” which compiled proposals for a national climate action plan from 60 Canadian academics. On October 8, SCD followed up with the release of [Acting on Climate Change: Extending the Dialogue Among Canadians](#) – which compiles the formal [responses](#) from First Nations, businesses, NGOs, labour, youth and private citizens, organized into topics which include Employment and Labour, Social Justice, Indigenous Perspectives, Reinventing Cities, Renewable Energy Challenges, Youth, and more. Highlight papers: “The role of workers in the transition to a low-carbon economy”; “Protect the Environment by Doing More Work, Not Less” by Lana Payne and Jim Stanford of Unifor, [Comments](#) by Andrea Harden-Donahue on behalf of the Council of Canadians; and “Envisioning a Good Green Life in British Columbia: Lessons From the Climate Justice Project” by Marc Lee of the CCPA. The report was accompanied by an [Open Letter](#) to the Leaders of Canada’s federal parties, and is signed by the participating academics. Catherine Potvin from McGill University, who spearheads Sustainable Canada Dialogues, states that the goal was to “provide the seed for an inclusive, country-wide consultation on the best ways for Canada to transition toward a low-carbon, sustainable economy and society”. The overview report, *Agir sur les changements climatiques: vers un dialogue élargi à la société civile canadienne*, and individual papers are available in [French](#).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Dutch Government Announces it will appeal the landmark Urgenda Climate Change Decision

Posted on **September 22, 2015** by **workinawarmingworld**

As [reported](#) in the June WCR , the courts of the Netherlands ruled that the government has a legal duty of care to its citizens to improve the environment, and ordered the government to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by 2020. However, on September 1, the Dutch government [announced](#) it would appeal the decision. Environmentalists around the world have been inspired by the implications for their own legal systems: see “[Around the world in five climate lawsuits](#)” . A sampling of thought from Canada: [Dutch climate court win – What does it mean for Canada?](#) (June 26) at and [Dutch Judicial Lessons for Canada](#) (West Coast Environmental Law); [What the Dutch Climate Court win means for Canada](#) (Ecojustice); [Exciting developments in Climate Change Law](#) (Alberta Environmental Law Centre); “[Are countries legally required to protect their citizens from climate change?](#)” (Corporate Knights , July 28). And most recently, the reports sparked by a public lecture in Toronto by Roger Cox, Urgenda lawyer: “[Dutch climate lawsuit could work in Canada: lawyer](#)” in *The Tyee* (Sept. 15); and “[Canadian Courts could face Climate Change cases in wake of Dutch ruling](#)” *Globe and Mail* (Sept. 14).

From Australia: [Could Australians sue for climate action ?](#). For a U.S. viewpoint, see [The Enormous Significance For Climate Law and Ethics Of a Dutch Court's Order Requiring the Netherlands To Reduce Its GHG Emissions by 25% by 2020](#) at the Ethics and Climate website. From a legal viewpoint, [The Urgenda decision: Balanced constitutionalism in the face of climate change?](#) (Oxford University Press).

Watch the [Urgenda Foundation website](#) for news of the appeal by the Dutch government.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate change Law, The Netherlands, Urgenda Decision** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Updates the Social Cost of Carbon to \$36 Per Ton

Posted on **September 22, 2015** by **workinawarmingworld**

On July 2, the [White House Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\)](#) set the new 2015 Social Cost of Carbon at \$36/ton of CO₂, representing the cost of the damage to society caused by one ton of carbon dioxide emission. At the same time, the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Carbon released its formal response to the comments and letters submitted during the most

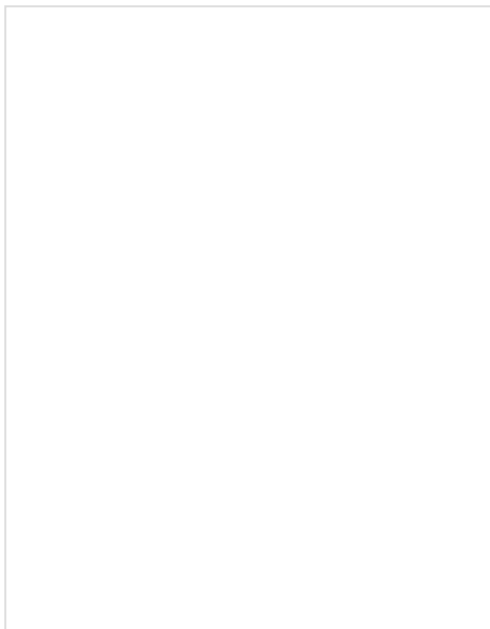
recent public comment period in 2013 in [Response to Comments: Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Social Cost of Carbon](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change Issues in the Canadian Federal Election

Posted on **September 22, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Canada is in the midst of a federal government election, with voting on October 19, 2015. The climate change issue was stated early, by Jeff Rubin and David Suzuki in "[Canada's Carbon Moment has arrived](#)" . From their article: "Mr. Harper's carbon-fuelled energy agenda hasn't worked out, and that's put the Canadian economy in precarious shape. But this critical moment of economic and environmental crisis is an opportunity for Canada to confront the reality, costs and urgency of climate change, and find solutions that will both reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and contribute to the economy. This is a challenge that every party in the current campaign should address."



On September 15, prominent environmentalists stepped into the campaign with the release of the [LEAP Manifesto Canada: A Call for Canada Based on Caring for the Earth and One Another](#). The Manifesto puts Aboriginal rights at the forefront of the climate debate, calls for energy democracy and a bottom-up revival of democracy, declares austerity " a fossilized form of thinking that has become a threat to life on earth", and enumerates clean energy projects and means to pay for them. LEAP is supported by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which published a companion report, [We Can Afford the Leap](#) , offering more detail about specific sources of revenue to accomplish the Manifesto goals . The Canadian Union of Public Employees has also endorsed

the Manifesto. An article in The Guardian is titled: “The Leap Manifesto isn’t Radical: It’s a way out of Canada’s head-in-the-sand Politics ” .

Some websites dedicated to climate issues in the election: [Green Pac](#) ; [Environmental Laws Matter](#) , [350.org Campaign](#) , or [Anyone but Harper](#), a guide to strategic voting to defeat the Harper government.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Canadian election](#), [climate politics](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

RGGI Carbon Market in the Northeast : An Example of Decoupled Growth

Posted on **September 22, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A July 2015 report from the Acadia Center states that the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative \(RGGI\)](#) has allowed the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States to achieve significant reductions in CO2 emissions while providing economic benefits through the reinvestment of the proceeds from the auctions of carbon allowances. Since 2009, when RGGI began, the emissions in RGGI states dropped by 35% , compared to 12% in non-RGGI states. At the same time, the rate of economic growth in RGGI states was 21.2%, compared to 18.2% in non-RGGI states. Read [RGGI: A Model Program for the Power Sector -2015 Update](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Markets](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#), [RGGI](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy East Pipeline is not worth the Risks

Posted on **September 22, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Energy East Pipeline is Not Worth the Risks: The Ontario Energy Board released the conclusions from an 18-month study and consultation on August 13. [A Review of the Economic Impact of Energy East on Ontario](#) considered the impacts on tax revenue and local employment, and concluded that “there is an imbalance between the economic and environmental risks of the project and the expected benefits for Ontarians”. The greatest concerns were expressed about potential gas shortages as the pipeline switches from transporting natural gas to oil, proximity to important waterways, and the need for up-to-date technology to prevent and mitigate spills. Employment impacts were difficult to estimate because of lack of data from the Trans Canada proposal, but were considered minimal, especially in Northern Ontario. The final report was prepared by researchers at the Mowat Centre and University of Toronto; consultants’ reports and

submissions are available online at the [Consultation website](#), including the [Canada's Building Trades Unions submission](#).

The Conservation Council of New Brunswick describes the natural environment and thriving fishery and tourism industry in its August report, *[Tanker Traffic and Tar Balls: What TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline means for the Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine](#)*. The report cites the dangers to whales increased noise and traffic in already busy shipping lanes, as well as the greater danger of an oil spill. Further, it cites research that states that oil dispersants can be 52 times more toxic than spilled oil to certain marine species. It concludes with 9 recommendations for further consultation, research, and environmental protection legislation.

The Council of Canadians also exposed the dangers of Energy East oil spills to waterways across Canada in a 2014 report, *[Energy East: Where Oil meets Water](#)*.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Bay of Fundy](#), [Energy East pipeline](#), [New Brunswick](#), [Oil Spills](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green Growth and Climate Justice Considered

Posted on **September 22, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

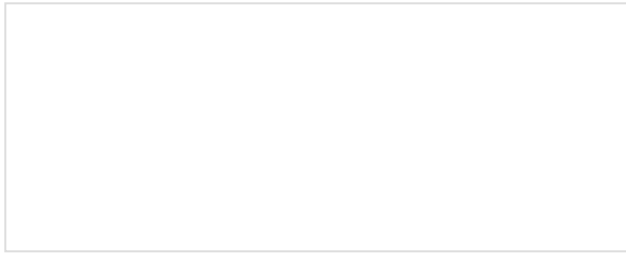
A September essay published by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) presents a European approach to the two currently prevailing paradigms in the discussion of the low-carbon transition: “green growth”, described as essentially a neo-Keynsian market-based approach where green jobs of high quality are the goal, and the “prosperity without growth” approach, which is less about quantifying new green jobs and more about changing the nature of the jobs and altering the conception and experience of work. *[Towards a Social-ecological Transition. Solidarity in the Age of Environmental Challenge](#)* concludes with “Ten Proposals for a social-ecological transition”, which include: Re-think working time; Develop rights for the transition; Measure the quality of new jobs; Embark on the third tax revolution; Develop local social-ecological indicators and policies.

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

Unions demand Just Transition and Climate Justice at COP21

Posted on **September 22, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The Trade U



nion Climate Summit was held in Paris on September 14th and 15th, organized by the International Trade Union Confederation. It included a session on [Alliances: Walking Together and More](#), presented by Canadians Jerry Dias, (President of Unifor), Naomi Klein, (author of *This Changes Everything*), and Hassan Yussuff, (President of the Canadian Labour Congress), as well as Kumi Naidoo, (CEO of Greenpeace International). The Summit issued [three topline demands](#) for the Paris Agreement, calling on negotiators at COP21 to: “put back the language of just transition that has been stripped from the draft agreement; raise ambition before 2020 and invest in the potential of jobs and climate action and commit to a binding review of effort; support the most vulnerable with the promised financial commitments.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [COP21](#), [ICFTU](#), [International labour cooperation](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Job Impacts of Infrastructure, Transit, Clean Energy

Posted on [September 22, 2015](#) by [workinawarmingworld](#)

JOB IMPACTS OF TRANSIT, INFRASTRUCTURE, CLEAN ENERGY: *The Economic Benefits of Public Infrastructure Spending in Canada* released by the Broadbent Institute on September 15 includes transit in its definition of public infrastructure – along with highways, and water supply and wastewater treatment facilities. It concludes that a public infrastructure program can help an investment-led economic expansion. Employment impacts vary over short-term and long-term, but the report estimates a short-term job multiplier effect of 9.4 jobs generated per million dollars spent. The study concludes that “while employment gains may be limited, businesses are more productive and competitive, and workers earn higher real wages: up 0.4–0.6 per cent a year on average”.

The Benefits of Transit in the United States: A Review and Analysis of Benefit-Cost Studies concludes that jobs and economic stimulus are among the largest benefit categories from transit investments, not only in urbanized areas but in small urban and rural areas also. The report recommends that greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, and other important but undervalued transit benefits categories should be considered in future studies.

A brief report released in August by the Donald Vial Center on Employment in the Green Economy at the University of California, Berkeley estimates the jobs created from California's renewable energy investments from 2003 through 2014, and forecasts job creation between 2015 and 2030 as the state works to meet its 50% renewables portfolio standard (RPS). [Job Impacts of California's Existing and Proposed Renewables Portfolio Standard](#) includes jobs related to the construction, but not maintenance and operation, of renewable energy facilities.

In June, the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) jointly released a 2-volume report which examines the policy frameworks needed for development of large-scale renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. *Global Green Growth: Clean Energy Industrial Investment and Expanding Job Opportunities* ([Volume 1](#)) presents Overall Findings. [Volume 2](#) assesses the employment impacts of the developments in Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, South Africa, and the Republic of Korea.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Job Creation](#), [Public Transportation](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How Green are Electric Vehicles?

Posted on [September 22, 2015](#) by [workinawarmingworld](#)

According to an article by Carla Lipsig Mumme and Caleb Goods, “an EV powered by average European electricity production is likely to reduce a vehicle’s global warming potential by about 20% over its life cycle. This is not insignificant, but it is nowhere near a zero-emission option”. [“The Battery Revolution is exciting, but Remember they Pollute too”](#) in *The Conversation* (June 2) also raises a bigger question: “For a technology to be seriously considered ‘green,’ the processes by which the tech is produced and the ways in which it operates, must also be ‘green.’” The authors then discuss the detrimental health consequences of the mining and manufacture of lithium ion batteries, which is the focus of a spin-off article in the *National Observer*, “[Your green Car could cause Black Rain in China](#)” .

Yet there are emission savings to be made, according to researchers from the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, who released the results of their investigation into Canadian consumer attitudes to electric vehicles in July.

[Electrifying Vehicles: Insights From The Canadian Plug-in Electric Vehicle Study](#) states that “With today’s electricity grids, usage of PEVs can cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80—98% in British Columbia, around 45% in Alberta, and 58—70% in Ontario.”

In August, Quebec, California, and The Netherlands announced the launch of the [International Zero-Emission Vehicle Alliance](#) (ZEV Alliance) to accelerate global adoption of electric vehicles. The [press release states](#) uses the term “zero emission vehicles”, and states that the number of ZEVs registered in Quebec has increased by 134 percent over the last 16 months, thanks largely to government incentives and a well-developed public charging infrastructure.

The Green Economy includes Women and the Services Sector

Posted on **September 22, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A newly-released Special Issue of *Women and Environments International Magazine* (Winter 2014/2015) is devoted to [Women and Work in a Warming World \(W4\)](#) . Co-editors Marjorie Griffin Cohen and Patricia Perkins state: “it is crucial that governments and policy makers (and even environmentalists) broaden the view of what would constitute a ‘green economy’ to include a greater emphasis on care work and the services sectors. This would shift the typical policy focus from an emphasis on cleaning up dirty industries (which of course needs to be done), to including and promoting a more rational society designed to meet people’s fundamental needs: physical, political and social well-being. If a ‘green economy’ meant not just cleaner energy and transportation, but structural sustainability, women’s work would be clearly situated as central in bringing about this transition.” The issue articles include “Opportunities and Constraints for Women in the Renewable Energy Sector in India”, “Gender in Government Actions on Climate Change and Work: the U.S. example”, “Are There Jobs for Women in Green Job Creation?” (re Canada), and “Women and Low Energy Construction in Europe: A New Opportunity?”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Gender](#), [women and climate change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Highlights of Climate and Energy Policy Changes from Summer 2015:

Posted on **September 21, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Alberta: The [Climate Change Advisory Panel](#) was appointed and a consultation process begun, based on the [Climate Leadership Discussion Document](#) . The Pembina Institute issued a backgrounder, [Opportunities to Improve Alberta’s climate strategy](#) (Aug. 21) and convened a [Alberta Climate Summit](#) on September 9 including a variety of stakeholders.

In late summer, a [Royalty Review Advisory Panel](#) was appointed to examine and lead public discussion concerning royalties for crude oil and liquids, natural gas, and oil sands.

British Columbia: A [review of the Climate Leadership Plan](#) began in July, with the release of a [Discussion Paper](#). In December 2015, a draft Plan will be released for public comment, with a final [Climate Leadership Plan](#) promised for Spring 2016. Also in July, a consultation period began re

proposed regulations under the [Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act](#) , expected to come into force in Fall 2015.

In a special session of the Legislature in July, the B.C. government passed [controversial legislation](#) which sets the terms for the \$36 billion Pacific Northwest LNG project at Lelu Island.

British Columbia, as a member of the Pacific Coast Collaborative (PCC), joined with California, Oregon, and Washington, to launch the [West Coast Electric Fleets initiative](#) , “a toolkit for public and private fleet managers to quickly assess opportunities for ZEVs and access useful incentives and resources to assist with procurement.”

Nova Scotia and British Columbia signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) on July 21, pledging to share research and technology related to tidal energy.

Nova Scotia [discontinued](#) its Community Feed-in Tariff (COMFIT) program for local renewable projects on August 6. A [DeSmog blog article](#) provides background and details. The government promises a new electricity policy, including for renewables, in Fall 2015.

Ontario: In July, Ontario and Quebec jointly hosted the Climate Summit of the Americas, which resulted in the signing of a [Climate Action Statement](#) by Ontario and 22 other states and regions.

[Feeling the Heat: Greenhouse Gas Progress Report 2015](#) was released by the Acting Environmental Commissioner on July 7, stating that, although Ontario met its GHG reduction targets for 2014, it is unlikely to achieve its 2020 targets with the current policies in place.

[Ontario Climate Change Lab: Solutions for Ontario's Climate Challenge](#) reports on a one-day multi-stakeholder workshop that produced a series of actionable recommendations for the provincial government to include in its climate change strategy.

Quebec: On September 11, Quebec and Ontario signed [Memoranda of Agreement](#) regarding increased trade in electricity, and collaboration on the cap and trade system currently under development in Ontario. They also committed to attend COP21 in Paris, to which end, the government of Quebec, on September 17, proposed [Canada's most ambitious target for greenhouse gas emissions reduction](#) – 37.5 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030. The proposal follows the [recommendations of the Climate Change Advisory panel](#) , tabled in the Legislature on the 17th. (in French only).

In August, Quebec, California, and The Netherlands announced the launch of the International Zero-Emission Vehicle Alliance (ZEV Alliance) to accelerate global adoption of electric vehicles. The [press release](#) states that the number of ZEVs registered in Quebec has increased by 134 percent over the last 16 months, thanks largely to government incentives and a well-developed public charging infrastructure.

Atlantic Provinces and U.S. Governors : [Adopted](#) a regional target of shrinking carbon pollution by 35% – 45% below 1990 levels by 2030 at the 39th annual meeting of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP).

And around the World:

Australia: Bipartisan agreement brought about the new [Renewable Energy Target legislation](#) on June 23, after an 18 month review. A [new GHG reduction target](#) of 26-28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 was announced on August 11, and is included in the Australian government [INDC submission to the UNFCCC](#) in advance of the Paris climate talks. The *New Scientist* [compares this](#) to the U.S. pledge of 41 per cent by 2030, and the UK by 48 per cent (converting to Australia's 2005 baseline year). The Climate Action Tracker website [analyses](#) the goals and ranks them "inadequate".

At the end of June, the [Australian Climate Roundtable](#) was formed through the alliance of major Australian business, union, research, environment, investor and social groups, including the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Industry Group, the Business Council of Australia, The Climate Institute, the Energy Supply Association of Australia, the Investor Group on Climate Change and WWF Australia.

On September 14th came the stunning news that Tony Abbott had been replaced as Prime Minister by Malcolm Turnbull. However, the Australian Broadcasting Corp. [reported on September 15](#) that Turnbull has signaled no change to Australia's climate policies.

China : China submitted its [climate action plan](#) to the UNFCCC on June 30, vowing to peak its emissions by 2030 at the latest, to cut its carbon emissions per unit of GDP to 60-65 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, to increase renewable and nuclear power to 20 percent of the country's energy portfolio, and to increase its forest cover by 4.5 billion cubic meters from 2005 levels by 2030.

European Union: The EU restructured its Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) as part of the [renewal of its Energy Union Strategy](#). The European Commission [announced](#) changes to the Emission Trading Scheme on July 15. Under the new plan, only 50 economic sectors (including heavy industries such as steel and cement manufacturing) will receive free allowances, down from the current 177.

France: The [Energy Transition for Green Growth legislation](#) was approved on July 22, with far-reaching provisions: a goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 40% between 1990 and 2030 ; to halve the country's energy usage by 2050, with a reduced share of fossil fuels in energy production, a cap on nuclear power at 63.2 gigawatts and a goal of 32% of energy production from renewables , and a four-fold increase of the carbon tax on fossil fuel use, to €56 per ton in 2020 and €100 in 2030.

The Netherlands: On Sept. 1, the Dutch government [announced](#) it will appeal the Courts' June decision in the landmark [Urgenda case](#).

United Kingdom: The U.K. Department of Energy and Climate Change [announced](#) surprising cuts to its renewable energy programs, including solar PV, biomass conversion, and a consultation re changes to the Feed-in-tariff program. Cuts to subsidies to off-shore [wind farms had been announced](#) in June . As a result, “[UK drops out of top 10 renewable energy ranking for first time](#)” according to the latest quarterly report of EY consultants on September 16. Meanwhile, fracking continues to gain government favour in the U.K., with the third of a series of task force [reports released on September 17](#). And on September 17, the U.K. government [announced](#) that Prime Minister David Cameron has appointed a former consultant to major oil and gas companies as his key adviser on energy and environment policy heading into the U.N. Paris climate talks.

This, in spite of the fact that 24 of Britain’s learned scientific societies issued a [joint communique](#) on July 23, urging the British government to curb greenhouse gas emissions through drastic reductions in the burning of fossil fuels, and a shift towards energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Two substantial reports on climate change risks and policy were tabled in the House of Commons over the summer: [Reducing emissions and preparing for climate change: 2015 Progress Report to Parliament](#) (June 30) ; and [Climate Change: A Risk Assessment](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [EU Emissions Targets](#), [EU Emissions Trading Scheme](#), [Pacific Coast Collaborative](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updates on Climate Change Action in Cities:

Posted on [September 21, 2015](#) by [workinawarmingworld](#)

[Accelerating Low-Carbon Development in the World’s Cities](#) was released by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate on September 8. It estimates financial savings of \$17 trillion by 2050 if cities around the world invest in low-carbon policies such as public transport, building efficiency, and waste management. A [summary](#) at Sustainable Cities Collective points out the positive impact of cooperative relationships at the municipal level – such as the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), and the Compact of Mayors, and calls for additional support at the federal level. On September 17, CDP (formerly the Climate Disclosure Project) and AECOM released their [global survey of cities](#) , showing that Latin American and European cities are the least reliant on fossil fuels for their electricity. In Canada, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) recently released the [Green Municipal Fund \(GMF\) 2014–2015 Annual Report](#) , which gives an overview of funded green projects using a triple bottom line approach. And the City of Toronto has launched a new 2-year initiative, [Transform TO](#) to consult with citizens to arrive at new policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.

Clean Energy Advances in the U.S. with Landmark Clean Power Plan

Posted on **September 21, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On August 3, President Obama released the [finalized Clean Power Plan](#) , which goes even further than the draft version in requiring the states to source 28 percent of their power from renewables by 2030. The U.S. Congressional Research Service published [EPA's Clean Power Plan: Highlights of the Final Rule](#) August 14, 2015 to summarize the document and highlight the differences from the Proposed Rules. The National Resources Defense Council also released an Issue Brief, [Understanding the Clean Power Plan](#) , and [stated](#) "The plan represents the most important step the United States can take right now to combat climate change and help spur climate action around the globe." Labor Network for Sustainability provides a union view in [The EPA Clean Power Plan, Jobs and Labor](#) , and [The EPA's Clean Power Plan: How Unions and Allies can protect affected workers](#) , both of which discuss the role labor unions can play in lobbying for transition funds and programs for workers in the fossil fuel industry. At the federal level, LNS envisions federal Just Transition programs, modeled after the Base Realignment and Closing Commission (BRAC) initiatives operated by the Department of National Defense when military bases were closed. At the state level, the report urges unions to build alliances among environmentalists, labor, and environmental justice advocates to lobby for Clean Power Plans which incorporate climate justice objectives.

See also: "[The Very Real Impact of the Clean Power Plan](#)" (Aug. 14) in *Corporate Knights* magazine, which refutes the [negative reaction by Michael Grunwald](#) of Politico , and concludes that "... to dismiss it as insignificant ignores the data and the political context. As the country sees the health and economic benefits of an accelerating movement toward renewable energy, we can expect greater openness to more aggressive actions. We are engaged in a process." That's clear from [the timeline](#) published by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute.

The WCR published an earlier [summary of studies](#) of the employment impacts of the CPP, including the widely cited report by Josh Bivens.

Further, the Obama administration [announced initiatives](#) at the National Clean Energy Summit in Las Vegas on August 24. Highlights: an additional \$1 billion in loan guarantee authority for distributed energy projects using innovative technology, such as rooftop solar and methane capture for oil and gas wells; expansion of the residential clean energy financing program, which makes loans to homeowners who want to purchase home energy improvements; and \$24 million to 11 solar research projects.

Pension Fund Managers Get It

Posted on **September 21, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Climate Change and the Fiduciary Duties of Pension Fund Trustees in Canada was written by the Toronto law firm Koskie Minsky LLP for [SHARE](#) (Shareholder Association for Research and Education) . Released on September 8, it examines the legal responsibilities of pension trustees, with an emphasis on British Columbia, and considers the interface with public policy and governments . Concurrently, SHARE and NEI Investments issued a [public letter to the Premier of Alberta](#), stating “We encourage the Government of Alberta to keep carbon pricing as a central tenet of future carbon policy.” It also urges the government to diversity the economy and to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives. The letter was signed by institutional investors and related bodies representing over \$4.6trillion in assets under management, most notably the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation, the B.C. Teachers Federation, California State Teachers’ Retirement System, the Pension Plan for the Employees of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Pension Plan for the Employees of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and investment and financial officials from churches around the world and across denominations.

Pension fund managers have lots to think about, as business-oriented reports continue to warn about the financial risks of climate change and stranded assets. The Koskie Minsky paper acknowledges the influence of the analysis of Mercer Investment Consulting , *Investing in a time of Climate Change* (2015), and an earlier 2011 Mercer report. Publications over Summer 2015 include: *Carbon Asset Risk Discussion Framework* (published by World Resources Institute and the UNEP Finance, partly funded by the Bank of America Foundation, Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A., and Wells Fargo Foundation); *The Cost of Inaction: Recognising the value at risk from climate change* (from the Economist Intelligence Unit); and *Energy Darwinism II: Why a Low Carbon Future Doesn’t Have to Cost the Earth* , (from a division of Citi Bank).

A [recent report](#) by Trillium Asset Management found that California’s public pension funds, CalPERS and CalSTRS, had incurred a massive loss of more than \$5 billion last year from their holdings in the top 200 fossil fuel companies. [Legislation](#) passed the California Assembly on September 2 to force CalPERS and CalSTRS to divest their holdings in coal; Governor Brown has until October to sign the Bill.

Better Health for Workers: Green Offices, Factories and Hospitals can Help, but What is the Future for Outdoor Workers?

Posted on **September 21, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

“Green Buildings and Health” appears in the September issue of *Current Environmental Health Reports*, and investigates indoor air quality in offices, factories, and hospitals, as well as homes. The authors, from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, state that evidence points to superior air quality in green buildings versus non-green buildings, resulting in direct health benefits for the occupants. They propose a framework for identifying direct, objective and leading “Health Performance Indicators” for use in future studies of buildings and health.

Concerning outdoor workers, a study led by Sir David King, the U.K. Foreign Secretary’s Special Representative for Climate Change, is relevant. [Climate Change: A Risk Assessment](#) is a broad study, but includes discussion of heat stress, and the elevated risk which workers face. Using the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety thresholds regarding [Wet Bulb Globe Temperatures \(WBGT\)](#), the King report defines an environment as ‘too hot to work’ if the average daily maximum WBGT is 36°C or more for a month. The report states that climate change will likely increase the probability of crossing that temperature threshold in North India, Southeast China, and Southeast USA.

Other studies examining the impact of climate change on human health were released over the summer:

“Unraveling the Relationship between Climate Change and Health “ in the *New York Times* (July 14); “Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health” in *The Lancet* (June) (registration required); and [Climate Change and Public Health](#), a book edited by Barry S. Levy and Jonathan A. Patz, available from Oxford University Press . It has a chapter on occupational health. Finally, “Health and climate benefits of different energy-efficiency and renewable energy choices” was published in *Nature Climate Change* (August 31) The study by Harvard’s Center for Health and the Global Environment showed that “energy efficiency measures and low-carbon energy sources can save a region between \$5.7 million and \$210 million annually, based on the accepted dollar value of human life. Those benefits depend on the type of low-carbon energy involved and the population density of the area surrounding a coal-fired power plant whose emissions are reduced by a clean energy project.”

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

CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MEDIA IS ENHANCED BY COOPERATION

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On May 21, 2015 the [Climate Publishers Network](#) was launched. More than two dozen international news publishers agree to freely share climate change-related news content for 6 months, until December 11, the final day of the UN Climate Change Summit in Paris. It is coordinated by the Global Editors Network, and also spearheaded by *The Guardian* in the U.K., and *El Pais* of Madrid. Montreal's *La Presse* is a founding member, and the *Toronto Star* is in the process of signing up, joining a group that includes India Today, The Seattle Times, China Daily, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Irish Times, and others. See "[Media failing on Climate-Change Coverage](#)" in the *Toronto Star* (May 31).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change in the Media](#), [COP21](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

TWO IMPORTANT GLOBAL ENERGY UPDATES

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

From REN21, the annual [Renewables 2015 Global Status Report](#) provides up to date data on the global renewable energy industry and policy landscape. It credits China's increased use of renewable energy and the OECD's progress for "landmark 'decoupling' in 2014 – For the first time in four decades, the world economy grew without a parallel rise in CO₂ emissions." From the International Energy Agency, the [World Energy Outlook Special Report on Energy and Climate Change](#) presents a detailed assessment of the energy sector impact of known and signalled IDNC national climate pledges for the COP21 meetings, and concludes that they will be insufficient to meet the 2 degree C goal. The report states, "A transformation of the world's energy system must become a unifying vision if the 2°C climate goal is to be achieved." The IEA sets out "[four pillars for success](#)" in that endeavour.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Decoupling](#), [Energy policy](#), [IDNC](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

G7 MEETINGS HISTORIC FOR UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT TO

PHASE OUT FOSSIL FUELS

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Globe-Net answers the question: “Just what did the G-7 Leaders Decide about Climate Change, Energy, and the Environment?” in a thorough summary of the communiques from the G7 meetings in Germany in June 2015. All the official documents from the meetings are [here](#). In “G7 Fossil Fuel Pledge is a Diplomatic Coup for Germany’s ‘Climate Chancellor’ ”(June 8), *The Guardian* calls the leaders of Japan and Canada, “climate recalcitrants” and applauds the fact that even Canada has agreed to the G7 plan to phase out fossil fuels by the end of the century. The [press release from Prime Minister Harper’s](#) office on June 8 however, doesn’t mention that pledge amongst the achievements of the G7. “[Canada commits to G7 plan to end use of fossil fuels](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (June 8) hints at Mr. Harper’s lack of enthusiasm.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [G-7 Leaders](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [phase-out of fossil fuels](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

31% OF THE WORLD’S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM 32 ENERGY COMPANIES

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

According to a new report, *Global 500 Greenhouse Gas Report: The Fossil Fuel Energy Sector*, 31% of the world’s annual GHG emissions can be attributed to the operations and use of the products of 32 companies, ranked in the report. It is important to note that the calculations include emissions from “scope 3 use of product”, which accounts for the high percentage, and which leads the authors to state: “It is these companies’ value chains, and their customers in particular (which includes all fossil fuel users), which bear a burden of leadership and environmental stewardship, and it is the purpose of this report to bring transparency to the role of this sector to help us all manage our collective GHG footprint.” Of the named companies, Gazprom was the single biggest emitter, producing 1.26 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases in 2013, (roughly equivalent to Japan’s annual emissions). Coal India was 2nd by far, producing 820 million tonnes. The next biggest emitters, in rank order: Glencore, Petrochina, Rosneft, Royal Dutch Shell and Exxon Mobil.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [responsibility for climate change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IF NORWAY CAN DIVEST FROM COAL ASSETS, WHEN WILL THE CANADA PENSION PLAN RECOGNIZE THE RISKS?

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

According to the [New York Times](#) (June 5) “Norway’s \$890 billion government pension fund, considered the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world, will sell off many of its investments related to coal, making it the biggest institution yet to join a growing international movement to abandon at least some fossil fuel stocks.” Yet a June 15th Special Report in *The Guardian*, “[Coal Crash: How Pension Funds Face Huge Risk from Climate Change](#)” highlights the coal assets held by the public pension funds of South Africa, Netherlands, U.S. teachers, and Canada, and estimates that Canada’s Pension Plan Investment Fund holds \$590m in coal-related investments. The report includes private asset management companies as well, with BlackRock as the clear leader with \$24.5 billion in coal. The June 14th article in the *Globe and Mail*, “[Campaigns to Divest from Fossil-Fuel Holdings Gain Steam](#)” describes divestment by Canadian universities and the United Church of Canada, but makes no mention of pension funds. Helpful reading on the growing trend away from coal: Chapter 3, “[Closing the Coal Plants](#)” in *The Great Transition: Shifting from Fossil Fuels to Solar and Wind Energy* from the Earth Policy Institute ; a series by Inside Climate News “[Coal’s Long Goodbye: Dispatches from the War on Carbon](#)”, and “[Big Oil takes on King Coal: The Climate Fight Shifts Gears](#)”, a May 28 article from the *National Observer* in Vancouver, which argues that the petroleum industry will abandon its partner, coal, in the fight for its share of the world’s carbon budget.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canada Pension Plan](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

CARBON TAXES: THE POPE’S MORAL POSITION AND THE SECULAR ANALYSIS

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On the issue of carbon taxes, the Pope’s Encyclical of June 2015 was clear: “The strategy of buying and selling “carbon credits” can lead to a new form of speculation which would not help reduce the emission of polluting gases worldwide. This system seems to provide a quick and easy solution under the guise of a certain commitment to the environment, but in no way does it allow

for the radical change which present circumstances require. Rather, it may simply become a ploy which permits maintaining the excessive consumption of some countries and sectors. ” Yet economists continue to take an interest: new analysis by B.Murray and Nic Rivers, released by Duke University, reviews the studies to date on the economic effects of British Columbia’s carbon tax, and discovers “little net impact” either for or against economic growth in the province. See [British Columbia’s Revenue-Neutral Carbon Tax: A Review of the Latest ‘Grand Experiment’ in Environmental Policy](#) . And in June, the Ecofiscal Commission released a brief, [The Way Forward for Ontario: Design Principles for Ontario’s New Cap-and-Trade System](#) which outlines four fundamental principles of good cap-and-trade design for Ontario, based on their April report.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Pope Francis](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

OPEN LETTERS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY: CANADA AND AUSTRALIA

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On June 10, 2015 an [Open Letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper](#) was released by a group of Canadian and U.S. academics, including high-profile names such as Marc Jaccard (Simon Fraser University), Thomas Homer Dixon, (University of Waterloo), David Schindler, (University of Alberta), Shawn Marshall, (University of Calgary’s Canada Research Chair in Climate Change). The Letter provides 10 reasons, based on science, for its demand that : “No new oil sands or related infrastructure projects should proceed unless consistent with an implemented plan to rapidly reduce carbon pollution, safeguard biodiversity, protect human health, and respect treaty rights.” In Australia on June 16, an [Open Letter](#) signed by civil society groups including Greenpeace, WWF, Oxfam, Environmental Farmers Network, and Friends of the Earth urged the government to adopt a zero carbon emissions target, and stressed the economic benefits of moving towards renewables.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Protests & Rallies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Reaction to Pope’s Encyclical

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The global press has made the Pope’s June 18th Encyclical, *Care for our Common Home*, a headline event, although Canadian reaction has been surprisingly quiet. Prime Minister Harper has made no official reaction; the most complete press coverage came from the CBC “[Pope Francis](#)

Urges Decisive Climate Change Action”. One might expect an official reaction to be forthcoming from Kairos, the Canadian ecumenical group. The *National Observer* summary of reactions to the leaked version of the Encyclical is [here](#). The *New York Times* ran several stories, including “Championing Environment, Pope Francis takes aim at Global Capitalism” (June 18) and “Pope Francis May Find Wariness Among U.S. Bishops on Climate Change” (June 13). *Laudato Si* is available from the [Vatican website](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Ethics](#), [Pope Francis](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

OPPOSITION TO KINDER MORGAN'S TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE CONTINUES

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The TransMountain Pipeline Expansion project by Kinder Morgan proposes to build a new pipeline from Alberta to Burnaby, B.C., as well as a new marine terminal, to be served by oil tankers. CBC has created a [compilation of stories](#) about the highly unpopular project and the protests against it, available [here](#). The project is currently under review by the National Energy Board with a recommendation to Cabinet expected in January 2016 – all official documents and proceedings are [here](#). On May 26, the Tsleil-Waututh's First Nation, whose traditional territory includes Burrard Inlet, rejected the project. The City of Vancouver also formally opposes the project and released [a report](#) estimating the economic damage to the City from potential oil spills. On May 27, [Unifor submitted evidence to the NEB](#), laying out the union's reasons for its opposition, which include the environmental risks, but also relate to the economic interests of the union's membership in the oil and gas sector and the B.C. commercial fishery. Unifor also criticized the narrow scope of the NEB review, which excludes consideration of the impacts of the pipeline project on workers and commercial interests as part of its “public interest” mandate. On June 1, a study released by Simon Fraser University and Living Oceans concluded that the public interest is not served by the project. [Public Interest Evaluation of the Trans Mountain Expansion](#) tests a variety of economic scenarios, and concludes that the project will result in a net cost to Canada that ranges between \$4.1 and \$22.1 billion, mainly because it will create excess pipeline capacity, and because of the enormous environmental risks.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [employment impacts](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Spills](#), [Transmountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF B.C. LNG DEVELOPMENT

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A May 2015 report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives considers six possible scenarios for liquefied natural gas export development in B.C., ranging in the number of export terminals from zero to five (the current government estimate). *[A Clear Look at BC LNG: Energy Security, Environmental Implications and Economic Potential](#)* states that government claims of available gas supplies for export are greatly exaggerated, and that production would involved massive disruption, given that most wells would be fracked wells. Further, author David Hughes argues that is unlikely that anything close to the revenue projected by the BC government will ever be realized. And beyond the environmental dangers to the citizens of B.C., LNG will not reduce global GHG emissions: “From wellhead to final combustion, there are substantial leakages of methane, a much more potent greenhouse gas than CO2. Given this, liquefied fracked gas from BC actually has GHG emission rates similar to coal.” Researchers who wish to pursue these concerns will welcome a new interactive planning tool, called the [B.C. Shale Scenario Tool](#), available online at the Pembina Institute website. It allows users “to quantify the potential impacts of shale gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) development in northeast B.C. in terms of carbon pollution, land disturbance, water use and wastewater.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [BC LNG](#), [Economic Impacts of Fracking](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#), [Methane Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

WATER MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

[California's Oranges and B.C.'s Apples? Lessons for B.C. from California Groundwater Reform](#) was released in June by the Water Sustainability project of the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance at the University of Victoria. Regulations under the *[2014 Water Sustainability Act](#)* are currently under development. This report looks to the legislation in drought-wracked California., and based on that analysis, argues that there is an urgent need to begin piloting groundwater sustainability plans in critical watersheds in B.C.. It also recommends clear performance standards, timelines, and accountability for local decision-making bodies to ensure successful watershed or aquifer plans; and points to the importance of shared responsibility between senior government and local decision-makers.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BC Water Sustainability Act](#), [California](#), [Water Policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN ALBERTA & BRITISH COLUMBIA

Posted on **June 26, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

In one of its first announcements, on June 4 the new Government of Alberta [announced](#) a \$2 million investment in the province's [Municipal Climate Change Action Centre](#) to promote energy efficiency and conservation initiatives led by local governments. The [Alberta Energy Efficiency Alliance](#) recently released a brief report, *[GHG Savings and Energy Efficiency High – Level Opportunity Analysis in Alberta](#)*, which forecasts that over 15,000 new jobs could be created in one year, provincial annual GDP increased by \$3 billion, and nearly \$200 million/year in additional tax revenue could be raised, if the Alberta government were to invest in energy efficiency to a level equivalent to other provinces. The Alberta study uses the same methodology as a Canada-wide study released in November 2014 by the [Acadia Center](#), *[Energy Efficiency: Engine of Economic Growth in Canada. A Macroeconomic Modeling & Tax Revenue Impact Assessment](#)*. The Canada-wide study found that, for every \$1 million invested in efficiency programs, 30 to 52 job-years are generated. Both studies were prepared by Dunksy Energy Consulting.

[Accelerating Energy Efficiency in BC's Built Environment: Lessons from Massachusetts and California](#) was released by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions at the end of May. The report compares the policy framework for energy efficiency in the three jurisdictions and concludes that B.C.'s Energy Efficient Buildings Strategy had merit when it was launched in 2008, but has lagged in success because it lacks accountability and public reporting mechanisms. Amongst the recommendations: "Appoint an expert, permanent and broad stakeholder representative Energy Efficiency Advisory Council to work with the province to develop, implement and ensure the delivery of an ambitious 20-year building energy efficiency strategy; Empower local communities via legislative changes to become niches for super-efficient buildings; Establish a transparent, deliberative process for setting utility energy savings targets that align with the province's mitigation and market transformation goals."

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Construction Industry](#), [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

DUTCH COURT RULES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS A LEGAL DUTY

TO ITS CITIZENS TO CUT EMISSIONS:

Posted on **June 25, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On June 24th, 2015 the courts of the Netherlands ruled that the government has a legal duty of care to its citizens to improve the environment, and ordered the government to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by 2020. According to the [BBC report](#), the court ruling was based on the judgement that under current policy, the Netherlands would only achieve a 17% reduction at most in 2020, which is less than other nations and less than the climate crisis demands. Where does that leave Canada? The BBC describes the case as “unexpected”, a “landmark”, and quotes a Greenpeace official who says “This is the start of a wave of climate litigation”. In fact, similar cases are being pursued already in Belgium and the Philippines. The arguments and progress of the case are thoroughly documented at the [Urgenda website](#) – Urgenda is the NGO which sponsored the class action lawsuit on behalf of 900 Dutch citizens.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [international law](#), [Netherlands](#), [Oslo Principles](#), [Urgenda Climate Case](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

INTERNATIONAL UNIONS LOBBYING FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Posted on **June 25, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) continued its Climate Change campaign with a [Global Week of Action](#), from June 1 – 7, 2015. To support the campaign, the ITUC has released two Frontlines Briefing documents: *Climate Justice: There are no Jobs on a Dead Planet* (March 2015), and *Climate Justice: Unions4Climate Action* (May 2015). In May, the ITUC also posted a Sustainlabour report, *Reducing emissions from the Workplace and Creating Jobs: 4 European case studies*, which describe commitments and proposals from British, Spanish, Belgian and German trade unions. As part of the Global Week of Action, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) sent a [letter to Canada's Environment Minister](#), urging Canada to participate ambitiously in the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, restating a commitment to a Just Transition for workers, and urging a national energy plan for a low-carbon economy. The ITUC is organizing a Union Climate Summit in Paris on September 14 – 15.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Union of Public Employees \(CUPE\)](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: HOW AN INDC BASED ON 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY COULD BENEFIT CANADA, U.S., EU, CHINA AND JAPAN

Posted on **June 25, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A report by the New Climate Institute in Germany provides an overview of the general co-benefits that climate action can achieve: reduced oil imports and fossil fuel dependency, lives saved from lower air pollution, and jobs created from growing the renewable energy sector. [Assessing the Achieved and Missed benefits of Countries' National Contributions: Quantifying potential Co-benefits](#) then presents scenarios for the U.S., China, the EU, Canada and Japan , comparing the impacts of each country's stated Intended Nationally Determined Contribution targets (INDCs) with those that could be achieved through targets of 100% renewable energy in 2050. For Canada, the report projects that shifting to a 100% renewable energy system by 2050 could prevent 700 premature deaths, compared to 100 premature deaths under Canada's INDC target , and could create approximately 5,000 additional jobs in the domestic renewable energy sector, compared to the 3,000 jobs predicted under Canada's target scenario. The [Canadian results](#) are summarized in a separate 3 page document .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [employment impacts](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [IDNC](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. CLEAN POWER PLAN AND ITS EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS

Posted on **June 25, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The [U.S. Clean Power Plan](#) mandates a 30 percent decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from existing power plants by 2030, using the baseline year of 2005. The Plan, submitted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to the White House Office of Management and Budget on June 1, now proceeds to review and is expected to be finalized in August 2015 – when it is also expected that legal challenges will begin immediately. Good background reading about the CPP: [The Clean Power Plan: A Climate Game Changer](#) from the Union of Concerned Scientists. The [Center for Energy and Climate Solutions website](#) has compiled links to detailed documents, (including an April 2015 [report on the impact of the CPP on Canadian hydropower exports to the U.S.](#)) Amidst the [controversy](#), the Economic Policy Institute has released [Employment Impacts of the Proposed Clean Power Plan in the U.S.](#), by Josh Bivens. Bivens disputes the [employment](#)

impact analysis done by the EPA. He concludes that the Clean Power Plan is likely to lead to a net increase in of roughly 360,000 jobs by 2020, but that the net job creation will diminish rapidly to approximately 15,000 jobs in 2030. Bivens differentiates between job-gaining and job-losing industries, and characterizes the workers in job-losing industries as less likely to have four-year college degrees, and substantially more likely to be unionized. He also points to a geographic concentration of gross job losses in poorer states. Another report, *Assessment of the Economy-wide Employment Impacts of EPA's Proposed Clean Power Plan* was released by the University of Maryland in April 2015. Perhaps the most controversial on this topic: “*Potential impact of Proposed EPA Regulations on Low Income Groups and Minorities*”, was authored by Roger Bezdek and published by the National Black Chamber of Commerce in June . Its dire predictions include that by 2035, job losses would total 7 million for Blacks and nearly 12 million for Hispanics. The Bezdek study is roundly criticized by the Union of Concerned Scientists in “ *New Flawed Study of the Clean Power Plan: How the MISI Study Gets It So Wrong*” and by the *National Resources Defense Council* which states: “We should not let the polluter industry mislead us through the use of junk science and “mercenaries with PhDs” whose only goal is to prioritize polluter profits over the well-being and health of people.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Clean Power Plan](#), [Electric power generation](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ONTARIO'S NEW INFRASTRUCTURE LEGISLATION OPENS DOOR TO GOOD CONSTRUCTION CAREERS FOR YOUTH, IMMIGRANT, WOMEN, ABORIGINAL WORKERS THROUGH COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS

Posted on **June 25, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

As part of its [commitment to invest \\$130 billion in public infrastructure](#) over 10 years , the Ontario government passed the *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015* on June 4th. The Act states: “Infrastructure planning and investment should minimize the impact of infrastructure on the environment and respect and help maintain ecological and biological diversity, and infrastructure should be designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change.” And “Infrastructure planning and investment should endeavour to make use of acceptable recycled aggregates.” Regarding the workforce, it requires: “Infrastructure planning and investment should promote community benefits to improve the well-being of a community affected by the project, such as local job creation and

training opportunities”. Steve Shallhorn, Executive Director of the Labour Education Centre and Chair of the [Toronto Community Benefits Network](#) states, “This is a huge step forward” in a [Globe and Mail](#) article (June 3) . The Toronto Network negotiated the [Eglinton –Scarborough Crosstown Line Community Benefits Agreement](#) with transit authority Metrolinx in 2013 . Their website provides “[Definition of a CBA](#)” and “[CBA’s Here and Elsewhere](#)” , which highlights models from Vancouver, Los Angeles, and other programs in Toronto. Separately, the City of Toronto Council recently passed a [motion](#) to consider inclusion of Community Benefits Agreements as part of the review of the city’s Social Procurement Policy for development and infrastructure projects, due at the end of 2015.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [community benefits agreements](#), [Infrastructure](#), [local job creation](#), [Ontario](#), [Toronto](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

CANADIAN CLEAN TECH INDUSTRY – CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT NEEDS INVESTMENT

Posted on **June 25, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Ottawa-based research and consulting firm Analytica Advisors released the 2015 edition of its annual [Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report](#) at the Canadian Energy Summit in Toronto at the end of May. The report notes that more than 800 clean tech firms in Canada directly employed almost 50,000 people in 2013 – a growth rate of almost 21% since 2012, making the industry a bigger employer than the aerospace manufacturing sector, logging or pharmaceuticals and medical devices. 20% of workers in the industry are 30 years old or under. While current employment growth is encouraging, continued growth of the sector may not be assured, as the report documents a troubling loss of export markets. U.B.C.’s Sauder School of Business in “[The Ups and downs of Cleantech Venture Capital in B.C.](#)” also casts doubt on the future of clean tech by contrasting the risk-averse culture of Canadian capital markets to that of the U.S. The interview concludes that “Without strategic changes brought on by the private sector and government, business will continue as usual.” – i.e. companies will continue to favour the U.S. over Canada as a place to invest. Case in point: the Obama administration announced “[More than \\$4 Billion in Private Sector Commitments and Executive Actions to Scale up Investment in Clean Energy Innovation](#)” on June 16. Note also the [analysis](#) of the U.S. funding by *The Guardian* which states “.. arguably more important than the \$4bn raised was the fine print: a new federal information source and new financing options for would-be investors.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [clean technology industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Update on the “Keep it in the Ground” Divestment Campaign at The Guardian newspaper

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by **workinawarmingworld**

The Keep it in the Ground campaign, urging the Gates Foundation and the Wellcome Trust to divest from fossil fuels, is keeping up the pressure with an investigative series on the practices of Big Oil. For an update on the campaign and links to the latest major stories, go to [Leading Health Charities should divest from Fossil Fuels say Climate Scientists](#) at *The Guardian* news site (May 23). Information about the Divestment campaign is consolidated [here](#); Sign the Divestment petition [here](#).

And watch for: another interactive feature of the Keep it in The Ground campaign at The Guardian, asking readers “How has your job been affected by climate change”... From the [website](#): “We’d like you to complete the sentence “What I wish others knew about climate change ... ” using the form below and we will create an article with contributions from individuals around the world. “

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate change in the Media, Fossil Fuel Divestment** | [Leave a reply](#)

Pension Funds ill-prepared for the risks of Stranded Assets

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by **workinawarmingworld**

A survey by Asset Owners Disclosure Project (AODP) found that only 76 of the 500 largest asset owners in the world (pension funds, insurance funds, foundations and endowments) have taken meaningful action to manage climate risk. 21 of the 32 large Canadian institutional investors in the survey scored badly, including the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and the Ontario Public Service Pension Plan. “ [Risky Management](#) ” at *Corporate Knights* magazine (April 29) provides a summary of the survey results. The [full report](#) is at the AODP website .

The Asset Owners Disclosure Project (AODP) is an independent not-for-profit global organisation whose objective is to protect retirement savings and other long term investments from the risks posed by climate change. AODP and a London-based environmental law firm, ClientEarth, have announced they will work with pension fund members to challenge trustees and managers to fulfill their legal duty to protect investments from climate risk. The campaign could result in a test case to clarify the legal duties of pension fund fiduciaries.

The Dangers of Stranded Assets and Carbon Bubbles

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The HSBC Bank released advice to investors in April, titled *Stranded Assets, What Next?*. The letter admits that coal and fossil fuel investments are highly likely to become stranded, and advises that there are “reputational as well as economic risks to staying invested”. [A blog by the Pembina Institute](#) summarizes the HSBC report and considers the dangers of stranded assets for Alberta.

At the international level, G-20 leaders have asked the Financial Stability Board in Basel to convene a public-private inquiry into the dangers to the financial sector as climate rules become much stricter, and fossil fuel assets become stranded. All member countries have agreed to co-operate or carry out internal probes, including the United States, China, India, Russia, Australia, and Saudi Arabia. The investigation will be modeled on that commissioned by Mark Carney at the Bank of England, which is set to report in July 2015. See “[G20: fossil fuel fears could hammer global financial system](#)” in *The Telegraph* (April 29).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Financial Industry](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IMF Report estimates Global Fossil Fuel Subsidies at \$5.3 Trillion – More than global spending on Public Health

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A new working paper from the International Monetary Fund , *How Large are Global Energy Subsidies?* reflects the shifting attitudes in the corporate world to the fossil fuel industry . A quote from [the summary at the CBC website](#) : “Described as a “post-tax” subsidy, the figure doesn’t take into account the pre-tax incentives used to encourage exploration and production, and is still much larger than ever before calculated.”... “The fiscal implications are mammoth: At \$5.3 trillion, energy subsidies exceed the estimated public health spending for the entire globe”. The report concludes

that energy subsidy reform is urgently needed, and though not perfect, “energy taxes” are the most effective tool currently available .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [IMF](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Business Leaders endorse Carbon Pricing, an end to Fossil Fuel Subsidies, and Science-based GHG Reduction Targets

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

BUSINESS LEADERS ENDORSE CARBON PRICING, AN END TO FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES, AND SCIENCE-BASED GHG REDUCTION TARGETS : The [Business and Climate Summit](#) in Paris on May 20-21 was opened by the President of France, with the UN's Ban Ki Moon in attendance, along with 2000 international business leaders, policymakers and investors. The [final press release](#) called on policymakers to leverage public funds and private sector finance towards low-carbon assets; to introduce carefully designed and predictable carbon pricing; and to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies.

Another business group, the Caring for Climate program within the UN Global Compact, [issued a statement](#) at the Summit which commits them to carbon pricing, to set long-term targets based on science, and to speak up publicly against negative lobbying on climate action. As part of this effort, the Science Based Targets Initiative, led by the Carbon Disclosure Project and WWF, released *Mind the Science*, and *Sectoral Decarbonization Approach: A method for setting corporate emission reduction targets in line with climate science* . Both reports are available [here](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Business policies](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Climate change denial](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Green Business](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Streaming Video is slowing Efforts to Green the Internet

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Greenpeace has been evaluating the energy demand of the Internet, and the energy choices made by individual Internet companies, since 2010 , with its [Cool It campaign](#). A new report,

Clicking Clean: A Guide to Building the Green Internet identifies two major problems for companies who are moving to greener practices: 1. several critical data centre hubs must rely on monopoly electric utilities which provide only coal-generated electricity; and 2. the rapid rise of streaming video is driving significant growth in power use by data centers and network infrastructure. Profiles of the major tech companies show that Apple leads the way in the greening.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Apple Inc.](#), [cloud computing](#), [data processing facilities](#), [Information Technology Industry](#), [Internet](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Workforce Certification Guidelines for U.S. Commercial Building Occupations

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The National Institute of Building Sciences and the U.S. Department of Energy have developed voluntary national guidelines to improve the quality and consistency of commercial building workforce credentials. The [Better Buildings Workforce Guidelines](#) were introduced in March 2015 and cover four energy-related occupations: Energy Auditor, Building Commissioning Professional, Energy Manager, and Building Operations Professional. See the press release [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [construction occupations](#), [Energy audits](#), [energy conservation](#), [green buildings](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Leadership of the Arctic Council passes to the U.S.; U.S. approves Arctic drilling

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

At the end of April, 2015 chairmanship of the [Arctic Council](#) passed from Canada to the U.S., as reported in the [Globe and Mail](#). The U.S. stated their priorities for the chairmanship as addressing the impacts of climate change; supporting Arctic Ocean safety, security and stewardship; and improving economic and living conditions in Arctic communities. Yet barely two weeks later, the U.S. Department of the Interior granted conditional approval to Shell to begin drilling for oil in the Chukchi Sea this summer. See “[U. S. will allow Drilling for Oil in Arctic Ocean](#)” in the *New York Times* (May 11). Reaction has been strong: read Bill McKibben’s OpEd in the *New York Times*,

“Obama’s Catastrophic Climate-Change Denial” (May 12) , or “ Letting Shell drill in Arctic could lead to catastrophic oil spill, experts warn” in *The Guardian* (May 12) .

Also in mid-May, the [International Maritime Organization](#) (IMO) adopted provisions under the Polar Code which will govern the safety and environmental impact of ships around the Earth’s poles, starting in 2017. The agreed provisions prohibit the discharge of sewage, noxious liquid substances, and oil or oily mixtures; require that fuel tanks be separated from the outer shell; and restrict garbage discharge. Disappointingly, [the delegates put off adoption](#) of a GhG reduction target for the shipping industry till a future date.

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New Canadian Association for Renewable Energy industry

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The Canadian Council on Renewable Electricity was launched on May 6, 2015. Founding members are [Canadian Hydropower Association](#), [Canadian Solar Industries Association](#), [Canadian Wind Energy Association](#), and [Marine Renewables Canada](#). The council “aims to engage and educate Canadians on the opportunity to expand renewable electricity and strengthen our nation’s position as a global renewable-energy leader”. Each of the associations continues to maintain its own website, and the new Council website is available at <http://renewableelectricity.ca/>.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Clean Energy](#), [hydroelectric power](#), [marine renewable energy](#), [renewable energy](#), [Solar Energy](#), [tidal energy](#), [wind energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Wind and Solar Energy Updates: May 2015

Posted on **June 1, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

[Energy Technology Perspectives 2015](#) , published by the International Energy Agency, “ provides a comprehensive analysis of long-term trends in the energy sector, centred on the technologies and the level of deployment needed”..... “Wind and solar PV have the potential to provide 22% of annual electricity sector emissions reduction in 2050 under the 2DS” (2 degree scenario). The report is accompanied by [Tracking Clean Energy Progress 2015](#), which finds that “ the deployment rate of most clean energy technologies is no longer on track to meet 2DS targets”. “Policy

certainty, incentives, regulation and international co-operation are required to meet stated ambitions and transform the global energy system”.

In the U.S., the U.S. Department of Energy released [Enabling Wind Power Nationwide](#) , which supports the U.S. ambition to expand utility-scale wind energy to all fifty states. The *Enabling* report highlights the the need for technological advancements, especially taller wind turbine towers and larger rotors, currently under development by the Energy Department and its partnering national labs, universities, and private-sector companies. The DOE Wind Program website is available [here](#) . A similar focus on the need for research and technological advancement is found in [The Future of Solar Energy](#) report , released by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Energy Initiative (MITEL) . Read also a related overview of current solar technology, [Solar Power for CO2 Mitigation](#) by the Grantham Institute at the London School of Economics.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [renewable energy](#), [Solar Energy](#), [United States](#), [wind energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recognition of First Nations’ Leadership to preserve the Environment

Posted on **May 31, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

The Goldman Environmental Prize, the world’s largest international contest for grassroots environmental activism, was announced in April 2015. The North American winner was Marilyn Baptiste , an elected councillor and former chief of the 400-member Xeni Gwet’in First Nations, near Williams Lake, British Columbia. The award [recognizes](#) her leadership in the fight against the Prosperity Mine which would have destroyed Fish Lake, a source of spiritual identity and livelihood for First Nations. Baptiste presented and prepared comprehensive environmental, cultural and economic data at federal environmental hearings. She also initiated a one-woman blockade in 2011 that prevented construction crews from reaching the proposed mine site. Other [winners are profiled](#) at the Goldman Prize website.

The list to recognize all the efforts of Canada’s First Nations to protect our environment would be almost endless. Most recently, on May 14, the Lax Kw’alaams Nation rejected an offer of over \$1-billion from Petronas LNG, in exchange for their consent to construction of an LNG export terminal on Lelu Island in the Great Bear Sea. See the [DeSmog blog](#) or the [WWF reactions](#) . Meanwhile, the government of [B.C. signed an agreement](#) with Petronas LNG which will promote such ventures. Read the *Globe and Mail* article, “ [B.C. pushing ahead with LNG proposal despite Objections from First Nations](#)” (May 20).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal Peoples](#), [British Columbia](#), [LNG](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

All eyes are on Alberta's new government

Posted on **May 31, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)



The stunning win by the New Democratic Party in Alberta's election on May 5 2015 has prompted a flurry of articles, such as [What the NDP's Alberta Win Means for Energy and Climate Change](#) (May 6) at DeSmog Blog and [Can the NDP get Alberta off the Rollercoaster](#) at Environmental Defence . Sean Sweeney from the U.S. Trade Unions for Economic Democracy [writes about](#) the "Alberta election shock" in the context of other recent elections (India, Greece, Spain, UK), and suggests " a new 'class and climate politics' could be on the rise." The new Premier, Rachel Notley, will be held accountable to the [NDP election platform](#), which included the following: "We will establish a green retrofitting loan program that will assist Alberta families, farms and small businesses to reduce their energy usage affordably, which will reduce environmental impacts and create jobs in the construction industry." "We will phase out coal-fired electricity generation to reduce smog and greenhouse gas emissions and expand cleaner, greener sources, including wind and solar and more industrial co-generation in the oil sands". For reaction by the oil industry, headquartered in Calgary, see "[Boss of Biggest Oil Sands player calls for tougher action on Climate Change](#)" in the *Globe and Mail* (May 22) ; and "[Big Oil to Rachel Notley, Bring on Carbon tax](#) " at CBC website (May 23).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [New Democratic Party](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ambitious Targets for GHG Reduction in the "Under 2 MOU" signed by subnational governments

Posted on **May 31, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On May 19 2015, the “ [Under 2 MOU](#)” was launched with 12 founding signatories, collectively constituting the fourth largest economic entity in the world by GDP. The signatories included Ontario and British Columbia, as well as: California; Oregon; Vermont; Washington; Acre, Brazil; Baden-Württemberg, Germany; Baja California, Mexico; Catalonia, Spain; Jalisco, Mexico; and Wales, UK. The signatories commit to either reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 to 95 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 or achieve a per capita annual emission target of less than 2 metric tons by 2050. The pact also pledges enhanced cooperation amongst jurisdictions , for example, by sharing technology, scientific research and best practices to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy; collaborating to expand the use of zero-emission vehicles; ensuring consistent monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions; reducing short-lived climate pollutants such as black carbon and methane; and assessing the projected impacts of climate change on communities. The full text (44 pages) of the [Global Climate Leadership Agreement](#) is available [here](#) . See the [B.C. press release](#) or the [California press release](#) .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [international agreements](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Reaction to Canada’s GHG Reduction Target to the UNFCC

Posted on **May 31, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

On May 15 2015, Canada’s Environment Minister [announced](#) the submission of Canada’s overdue Intended Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCC , pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. The government also [announced](#) that it will introduce regulations to reduce emissions from methane, chemical and nitrogen-fertilizers, and natural-gas fired electricity. [Jeffrey Simpson’s article](#) in the *Globe and Mail* (May 19th) sums up reaction: “Having utterly failed to meet its previous GHG reduction target, no one should put any credence in the Harper government’s latest one.” “Weak” and “Inadequate” were frequent judgments in other reactions to the announcement: from the the [Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions](#) ; from [Environmental Defence](#) ; from [Natural Resources Defence Council](#); from the [Pembina Institute](#) ; from the [Climate Action Network](#) ; from the [World Resources Institute](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [IDNC](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Review of Research on Green Job Growth

Posted on **May 31, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A recent policy brief provides a thorough content analysis of recent literature concerning methods of measuring green job growth and the effects of labour market policies. The three-page bibliography is a comprehensive resource regarding international green job creation. Amongst the paper's recommendations for improvement in green job research: improving and standardizing green job definitions, restoring the compilation of national green jobs statistics, notably in the United States and United Kingdom, and developing strategies for coping with employment losses in the sectors that will suffer from green growth policies. [Looking for Green Jobs: The Impact of Green Growth on Employment](#) was released in March 2015 by the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics and the Green Growth Institute in Seoul.

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U.S. Labour as a Force for Climate Protection

Posted on **May 31, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A recent article in [The Nation online](#) describes dozens of examples of cooperative actions by labour and environmental justice groups in the U.S. since the People's Climate March in New York City in September 2014. Author Jeremy Brecher, one of the founders of the Labor Network for Sustainability, highlights the work of LNS, which is "working to pull together a "convergence" gathering of trade unionists who want to make the labor movement a climate-protection movement" ... "Fortunately for labor-climate activists, there is no element of American society that will gain as much from such a program as the labor movement, and no force as crucial for bringing it about." Read *How Climate Protection Has Become Today's Labor Solidarity* [here](#). Read another article by Jeremy Brecher , *The Paris Climate Summit and the Power of the People* [here](#) , and see his details of his newly-released book, *Climate Insurgency: A Strategy for Survival* [here](#) (Paradigm/Routledge 2015).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Labor Network for Solidarity](#), [Labour and Greens](#), [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

What Motivates People to Engage in Climate Change Activities?

Posted on **May 31, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

In May, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions in Victoria B.C. released [A Synthesis of PICS-Funded Social Mobilization Research: What works – and what doesn't – for engaging people on Climate Change](#) . The report summarizes the psychology of behaviour change, social movements, social learning, but mainly presents case studies of seven social mobilization projects in B.C. between 2010 and 2014. Based on those experiences, the report provides a range of recommendations—and pitfalls to avoid—for groups trying to mobilize their communities effectively on climate change. “ Overall the recommendations emphasize: (a) the importance of multiple social engagement methods; (b) the power of digital, visual and social media; (c) benefits of collective action at neighbourhood scale; and (d) the need for coordinated top-down/bottom-up action between citizens and government.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [community action](#), [green behaviours](#), [individual action](#), [motivation](#), [social media](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Labour Congress Profiles the Green Economy

Posted on **May 28, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

At the end of April, the Canadian Labour Congress posted profiles of three green economy sectors under the banner *Real Alternatives for a Green Economy*. The series describes new initiatives across Canada, and call for public policy initiatives to support the growth of a green economy. Regarding [Energy](#), the CLC calls for “public investments totalling \$4.65 billion need to be made to simulate the development of renewable energy sources with a priority being put on public sector owned and operated wind, solar, geothermal, and tidal power. “ Regarding [transportation](#) , they call for investment in light rail transportation, with strong domestic content rules . One example given for transit is the [Ottawa Light Rail transit project](#); a [report](#) for that project compiles estimates of economic benefits, including job creation, for light rail projects around the world. The third segment of the series looks at [Green Construction](#). The CLC posts follow closely the information on the website of the [Green Economy Network](#) , an alliance of Canadian labour unions, environment and social justice organizations, of which the CLC is a member.



Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Energy policy](#), [Green Building](#), [Public Transportation](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Jobs in Canada's Hydroelectric Industry

Posted on **May 28, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

A May report by Prism Economics estimates that the hydroelectric sector contributed nearly US\$31 billion to the country's gross domestic product. *Hydropower and the Canadian Economy: Jobs and Investment in Canada's Largest Electricity Source* also states that in 2013, "Canada's hydropower industry's investment and operations expenditures sustained an estimated 57,800 jobs (FTE) in Canada. When inter-industry purchases are factored in, the number of jobs rises to 100,000 jobs. In total, the investment and operations expenditures made by Canada's hydroelectric power sector support over 135,400 (FTE) direct, indirect and induced jobs across Canada."

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Electric power generation](#), [electricity sector](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Mapping Clean Energy in British Columbia

Posted on **May 28, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

In April, the Pembina Institute launched a new, interactive [Clean Energy Map](#) which quantifies the number of jobs in the clean energy sector in British Columbia, and maps where renewable energy projects are located. To date, it displays the electricity sector, where 14,100 jobs have been tallied; forthcoming updates will include jobs associated with energy efficiency, green buildings and clean transportation technologies and services. The project is funded by B.C. Government and Services Employees' Union, City of Vancouver, Green Jobs BC, North Growth Foundation, Pembina Foundation and TIDES Canada. A text description of the project is available [here](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [electricity sector](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

7.7 Million People work in the Renewable Energy Sector Worldwide

Posted on **May 28, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2015 is the new report from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). It shows a growth of 18% in one year in the global workforce in renewable energy, and estimates that “doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030, would result in more than 16 million jobs worldwide.” Solar PV is the largest employer in the renewable energy sector, with 2.5 million jobs, mostly in China and the Asian countries. Solar PV employment in the European Union decreased by 35% to about 165,000 jobs in 2013. Countries highlighted in the Annual Review are China, India, Brazil, U.S., EU, Germany, France, Japan, Bangladesh. There are 140 member countries of IRENA, but Canada is not a member. The most recent information about Canada’s renewable energy jobs appeared in Clean Energy Canada’s December 2014 report, *Tracking the Energy Revolution 2014*.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [IRENA](#), [renewable energy](#), [Solar PV Manufacturing](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Legislation Supports Nova Scotia’s Ambitions to lead the Tidal Energy Industry

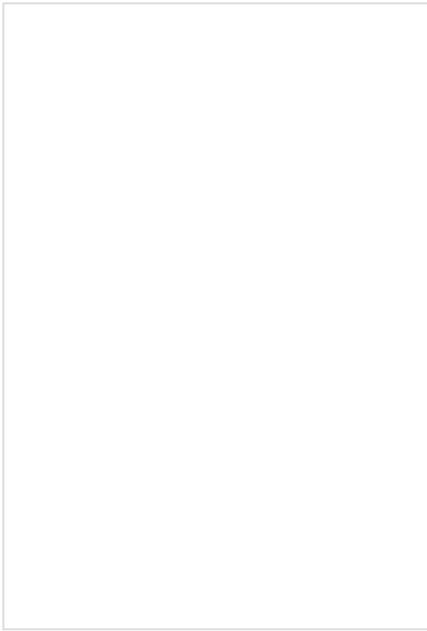
Posted on **May 28, 2015** by [workinawarmingworld](#)

Nova Scotia’s legislative framework for marine renewable energy was tabled in the provincial Legislature on April 29. (For a plain language version of the Act, click [here](#)). The legislation implements the 2012 Marine Renewable Energy Strategy, and authorizes the development of regulations to govern the industry. Also in late April, a new report, commissioned by the Offshore Energy Research Association of Nova Scotia (OERA), was released . *Value Proposition for Tidal Energy Development in Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada and Canada* forecasts that over the next 25 years, the tidal energy industry could contribute up to \$1.7 billion to Nova Scotia’s gross domestic product, create up to 22,000 full-time positions and generate as much as \$815 million in labour income. [Annex 4](#) of the Report, provides a tabular analysis of supply chain requirements, including a general assesment of the skilled worker/knowledge worker requirements. The Annex is based on [Module 9](#) of the *Community and Business Toolkit for Tidal Energy Development* prepared by the Acadia Tidal Energy Institute (ATEI) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Nova Scotia](#), [Tidal energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Role of Work and the Labour Movement to Slow Global Warming

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**



[Work in a Warming World](#), released by McGill Queen's University Press on April 15, begins with the acknowledgement that the world of work – goods, services, and resources – produces most of the greenhouse gases created by human activity. In ten chapters, the book's contributors demonstrate "how the world of work and the labour movement need to become involved in the struggle to slow global warming, and the ways in which environmental and economic policies need to be linked dynamically in order to effect positive change". The book is organized into "Trends and Challenges", such as the dilemma of the Canadian labour movement, and gender analysis of emissions reduction, and "Making Green Work", with examples from the construction, hospitality, and energy industry, as well as chapters on sustainable infrastructure and its implications for the engineering profession, and the role of cities and the green economy. The book has a Canadian focus, but includes an international context. Chapters were written by associates of the Work in a Warming World research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, led by Professor Carla Lipsig-Mummé.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Activism, Labour Movement, Labour Policy, Work in a Warming World, Workplace greening** | [Leave a reply](#)

Good Jobs and GHG Reductions Promised by Vancouver Transit Plan

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

[Good Jobs, Clean Skies](#) examines the potential economic and climate impacts of the [Mayors' Council Regional Transit Plan](#), which calls for an investment of \$7.5 billion over the next ten years, to cope with the expected immigration of 1 million new residents to the Vancouver Tri-City area.

The analysis forecasts 26,322 person years of new direct employment, 43,800 person years of total employment, \$2.96 billion in wages, and \$4.48 billion toward GDP in Metro Vancouver over its 10 year life span. Additionally, the area would experience an 8.2% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from transport, versus a business as usual approach, and the plan would save more than \$1 billion in traffic congestion costs. By improving by 7% the number of jobs accessible by transit, the Plan would support targets for livability, growth, and location of employment.

The study is a co-publication of Green Jobs BC and Blue Green Canada. In February 2015, the Mayors Council had released a report by InterVISTAS Consulting, [The Economic Impact of Mayors' Transportation and Transit Plan 2014 – 2045](#). That report forecasts direct, indirect and induced jobs, finding 40,000 jobs created for the capital phase, and 197,000 created in operations from 2014-2045. The consultants' report doesn't address other economic benefits such as reduced congestion, improved goods movement, and improved labour mobility, nor does it forecast the environmental benefits. The Transit Plan is subject to a [Referendum vote](#) underway until May 29, 2015.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BlueGreen Canada](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Labour Mobility](#), [Public Transportation](#), [Transit](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Employee-Related Initiatives at Canada's Greenest Workplaces

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The results of the 9th annual Canada's Greenest Employers competition were made available online at the *Globe and Mail* on Earth Day. "[Canada's greenest employers help the Earth – and their bottom lines](#)" (April 22) is a quick overview, but the online [list of winners](#) allows readers to select each employer by name, and find much more detail on the reasons why they were selected: e.g. unique initiatives, presence of an environmental audit, organizational responsibility for green initiatives, building LEED rating, community initiatives, etc. Companies are listed both for the environmental impact of their products/services, and their workplace policies. For example, Nature's Path is an organic food manufacturer in Richmond, B.C., but was also cited for its mandatory sustainability training for all new employees. Keilhauer, a custom furniture manufacturer in Toronto, is included for its in-house "Design for Environment" employee training program, which began in 2011 and sparked the switch to more environmentally-responsible manufacturing processes such as water-based wood stains and FSC-certified wood. Not all employers on the list produce green products: e.g. Labatt's Breweries is included because of its significant water and waste reduction programs, and for its employee engagement initiatives – all employee suggestions for green improvements are entered into a searchable database so employees in any of the parent company Anheuser-Busch locations around the world can learn from each other. The Greenest Employers list is linked to the [Eluta job search engine](#) to aid job-seekers who prefer to work for a green company.

Organizations will need Leaders with Sustainability Competencies

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

[Sustainability Talent Management: The New Business Imperative](#) is a consultant's report released in April by Alberta firm Strandberg Consulting. Arguing that companies will need to reinvent themselves to secure their access to resources and the social license to operate and grow, the author reviewed the business and human resource management literature since 2005 to arrive at five competencies required for leaders to successfully cope with the sustainability issues. These are: systems thinking, external collaboration, social innovation, sustainability literacy, and active values. It concludes: "Professional associations, management education and business schools should consider their role in equipping future leaders with these competencies. HR, talent and learning and development professionals can identify gaps in their current approach to leadership development and build these leadership qualities to enable future sustainable and commercial success. Organizations can use these competencies to enhance the talent pipeline and develop the next generation of leaders and the organizational capacities to steer corporations toward a sustainable future for all".

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Competencies](#), [Green Business](#), [Strandberg Consulting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Climate Policy Considers Health Effects of Climate Change, Including Occupational Health

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

On April 7th, the [Obama administration announced](#) a series of new initiatives which will highlight the health risks of climate change, especially for children, the elderly and the vulnerable. In the companion [Climate and Health Assessment](#) report released by the U.S. Global Change Research Program, outside workers are identified as exceptionally vulnerable to heat extremes. "Certain occupational groups that spend a great deal of time exposed to extreme temperatures such as agricultural workers, construction workers, and electricity and pipeline utility workers are at increased risk for heat-and cold-related illness, especially where jobs involve heavy exertion... Lack of heat illness prevention programs that include provisions for acclimatization was found to

be a factor strongly associated with death”. The report cites numerous other reports on heat effects, including a 2014 report from the Centers for Disease Control, “[Heat Illness and Death Among Workers – United States, 2012-2013](#)”.

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Job Benefits of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

An analysis [published at the end of March](#) by the New Climate Institute of Germany estimates the co-benefits associated with the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) targets of the EU, as well as the anticipated statements from the U.S. and China. The co-benefits include the cost savings associated with reduced fossil fuel imports, the reduction in premature deaths associated with reduced air pollution, and the generation of green jobs in the renewable energy sector.

Job creation forecasts were only made for wind, solar, and hydro electricity sectors, and within that, only for manufacturing, construction and installation, and operation and maintenance. Even within those conservative parameters, the forecasts show that if the IDNC's of the three jurisdictions were strengthened so that they actually would meet the 2 degree celsius reduction target, job creation would be 350,000 in the EU, 180,00 in the U.S., and 1.4 million in China. [Assessing the Missed Benefits of Countries' National Contributions](#) demonstrates that “the achievement of a 2°C compatible trajectory does not only preserve the well-being of future generations, but may also generate positive economy-wide returns, rather than costs for the current generation”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [China](#), [Climate Economics](#), [EU Emissions Targets](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Intended Nationally Determined Contribution \(INDC\)](#), [New Climate Institute of Germany](#), [U.S.](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The European Circular Economy Debate Informed by New Job Creation Report

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

An interim report by the Club of Rome examines the social benefits that a circular economy would bring to the Swedish economy. The full report, due out in summer 2015, will include the Dutch and Spanish economies as well. [The Circular Economy and Benefits for Society: Swedish Case Study shows Jobs and Climate as Clear Winners](#) estimated the effects of three different scenarios to reduce carbon emissions.

The report found that if all three decoupling strategies were undertaken together, carbon emissions would be cut by almost 70% and job creation would likely exceed 100,000. This report was partly supported by Swedish Association of Recycling Industries, and was released with the stated objective of influencing the current political debate in the European Commission, where a proposed Circular Economy program was withdrawn amidst controversy in 2014. [The original proposal](#), included a 70 per cent recycling and reuse target for 2030, as well as a requirement to increase the recycling rate for packaging waste to 80 per cent by 2030 and a ban on the landfilling of recyclable plastics, metals, glass, paper and cardboard, and biodegradable waste by 2025. Read also [Circular Economy Package Consultation Expected Before Summer](#) (April 21) and follow developments from the official [EC Circular Economy website](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Club of Rome](#), [Decoupling](#), [Europe](#), [Green Job Creation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Two years after Rana Plaza – the Fashion Industry hangs its hat on Greening, not Labour Rights

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

On April 24, 2013, the Rana Plaza [garment factory in Bangladesh collapsed](#), killing 1,134 people and injuring thousands more. Two years later, [according to a report](#), by Human Rights Watch, working conditions and labour rights are unchanged. However, the garment industry is working to burnish its public image on sustainability issues. The recently-released [H&M Conscious Action Sustainability Report 2014](#), discusses “the challenges” in the industry, which they identify as “Clean water, climate change, textile waste and wages and overtime in supplier factories”. But in a press release titled, “[H&M’s sustainability promises will not deliver a living wage](#)” (Apr. 9) the [Clean Clothes Campaign](#) states: “Despite announcing partnership projects with the ILO, education schemes alongside Swedish trade unions, and fair wage rhetoric aplenty, H&M has so far presented disappointingly few concrete results that show progress towards a living wage. H&M are working hard on gaining a reputation in sustainability, but the results for workers on the ground are yet to be seen”. The Clean Clothes Campaign is an alliance of trade unions and NGOs in 16 European countries.

H&M, along with Target, Gap, and Levi Strauss, has been commended by the Clean by Design program of the [National Resource Defense Council](#) for their progress in incorporating environmental performance in their procurement decisions. In April, NRDC also released [The Textile Industry Leaps forward with Clean by Design: Less Environmental Impact with Bigger Profits](#) which describes the extent of the pollution in textile mills in China, and highlights the mills which made operational improvements and achieved the most cost savings, chiefly through increased motor and lighting efficiency, process water reuse, and heat recovery from exhaust.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Bangladesh](#), [Clean Clothes Campaign](#), [Garment Industry](#), [Green industry](#), [H&M](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [Labour Rights](#), [Natura Resources Defense Council](#), [Rana Plaza](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Premiers' Summit on Climate Change Reveals Divisions, but the Act on Climate March shows Solidarity

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Premiers of Canada's provinces met in a [Summit](#) in Quebec City on April 13th, sparking high hopes which were not met, according to the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, [Interprovincial climate summit a damp squib](#). In "Interprovincial climate summit reveals rifts in Canada's carbon strategy", the *Globe and Mail* (April 14) called the [final joint communiqué](#) "vague", going only so far as referencing "transitioning to a lower-carbon economy" and "strengthening co-operation" on climate measures. And the Calgary Herald editorial, "[On the Hot Seat](#)", criticized Alberta Premier Prentice for skipping the Summit. B.C. Premier Christy Clark spent her day addressing the World Bank instead of attending, but issued a [challenge](#) to other Premiers regarding B.C.'s climate action plan 2.0: "meet it or beat it".

The Premiers meeting, however, sparked the [Act on Climate March](#), organized by environmental groups, and including First Nations, trade unions, social and citizens' groups, student associations, and individuals. The march attracted 25,000 marchers on April 11 and, according to participant Judy Rebick's article, [Huge march raises temperature](#), "...the Act On Climate march was an historic moment in the fight against climate change in Canada and a major step forward in the movement towards merging the environmental and social justice movements as promoted in Naomi Klein's new book, not to mention a rare common action between Quebec and the rest of Canada...It was an important if not historic moment in our struggle". For a union viewpoint, read also [CUPE Says Yes to Action on Climate](#).

Also, on April 13, the Canadian Roundtable on the Green Economy was organized by SWITCH, the [Alliance for a Green Economy](#) in Quebec, a business-environmental alliance. The [press](#)

[release](#) lists all participants, endorses carbon pricing, and affirms the central role of cities to promote a greener economy through sustainable procurement policies and innovative urban development. A second group of business, aboriginal and civic leaders went on record with their position concerning climate change policies in [Canadian Leaders Pen Low Carbon Economy Letter to Premiers](#) (April 12), at the Sustainable Prosperity website.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Act on Climate March](#), [Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions](#), [Paris 2015](#), [Sommet de Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

...Also from the Premiers' Summit: Ontario Announces Cap-and-Trade

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The main outcome of the Quebec City meetings occurred beforehand on April 13, with the [Joint Statement of Intent from the Ontario and Quebec Premiers](#). Ontario announced that it would join Quebec in a cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions. The [Ontario government press release](#), provides links to earlier discussion papers and whatever details are currently available. Reactions to the announcement were generally positive but tinged with questions about the effectiveness of the cap-and-trade system. See [Want to make Polluters pay? Opt for a carbon tax over cap and trade](#) from EcoJustice or reaction from [Environmental Defence](#). From the new [Clean Economy Alliance of Ontario](#), launched on April 8 by 50+ Ontario businesses, labour unions, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and environmental groups: "Ontario should join with the many other jurisdictions around the world in putting a price on carbon. The province must also take complementary actions in other key sectors across Ontario's economy including energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate friendly land-use planning, and low-carbon transportation".

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Clean Economy Alliance of Ontario](#), [EcoJustice](#), [Ontario-Quebec Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Cap-and-Trade or Carbon Tax?

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Recent reports have examined the strengths and weaknesses of the two systems. On April 7, the EcoFiscal Commission released [The Way Forward: A Practical Approach to Reducing Canada's Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) which employs policy analysis and new economic modelling to reach recommendations that every province should put a price on carbon, that existing and new policies should increase in stringency over time, should be designed to be as broad as practically possible,

should be tailored to each province's unique economic contexts and priorities, yet should be designed for longer-term coordination.

On April 13, Clean Energy Canada released [Inside North America's largest Carbon Market: Top Lessons from the Front Lines of Quebec's Fight Against Carbon Pollution](#). Together with their February report, [How To Adopt a Winning Carbon Price](#), which focused on British Columbia's carbon tax, Clean Energy Canada provides what they call "under the hood" comparisons of the two approaches to carbon pricing.

Sustainable Prosperity also weighed in with two [Briefing Notes](#) on April 23; Briefing Note #1

summarizes the rationale for pricing carbon, and the main policy approaches i.e. carbon tax and cap-and-trade. Briefing Note #2 reviews the key policy design criteria and considerations, and how they differ across approaches.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Emissions](#), [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Ecofiscal Commission](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil and Gas and Canada's Energy Policy

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

Two other reports were released in advance of the Premiers meetings in Quebec City. [Crafting an Effective Canadian Energy Strategy: How Energy East and the Oil Sands Affect Climate and Energy Objectives](#) by the Pembina Institute reviews Canadian experience with carbon pricing, emissions levels, and states that any energy strategy will only be effective if it takes into account the emissions footprint of new infrastructure projects, including the proposed Energy East pipeline project. The report also recommends that the Council of the Federation create an advisory committee modelled on the disbanded National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. The report is also available in [French](#).

Another study, released by Environmental Defence and Greenpeace, makes similar arguments and asserts that "continuing to expand tar sands production makes it virtually impossible for Canada to meet even weak carbon reduction targets or show climate leadership". Read [Digging a Big Hole: How tar sands expansion undermines a Canadian energy strategy that shows climate leadership](#).

In April, Environment Canada released the UNFCCC-mandated report, [National Inventory Report 1990-2013: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada](#). The report states that the Energy industry was responsible for 81% of Canada's emissions in 2013.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Emissions](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Energy East](#), [Energy East pipeline](#), [Energy policy](#), [Environment Canada](#), [Environmental Defence](#), [Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#), [Greenpeace](#), [National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy](#), [Pembina Institute](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Health Studies of the Oil and Gas Industry

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

On March 26, the government of British Columbia released the [Northeast Oil and Gas Human Health Risk Assessment Study](#), which includes a scientific literature review, a screening level risk assessment, a detailed human health risk assessment, a review of the current regulatory framework, and recommendations for future research and action. According to the Minister of Health, “After careful review and analysis, the study found that the risk to human health from emissions from oil and gas activities in the Northeast remains low”. The report did make 14 recommendations regarding: emergency planning; flaring, venting and fugitive emission management; hydraulic fracturing; information management; and environmental monitoring. All [documentation from the study](#) is available online.

Of related interest, several recent U.S. studies: “[Predictors of Indoor Radon Concentrations in Pennsylvania 1989-2013](#)” appeared in *Environmental Health Perspectives* on April 9. Researchers from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health measured radon levels in U.S. homes near the Marcellus shale fields since fracking began in 2004 and found higher readings of radon, compared with homes in low-activity areas. Another study, [Wasting Away: Four states’ failure to manage oil and gas waste in the Marcellus and Utica Shale](#), conducted by Earthworks, explored state oversight of drilling in New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The article particularly focuses on the identification and handling of the potentially hazardous waste materials left behind after fracking. Finally, the Environmental Defense Fund in the U.S. has recently released the latest of [16 studies](#) they commissioned/collaborated on regarding methane leaks in the oil and gas sector.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Earthworks](#), [Emissions Health Impacts](#), [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [Flaring](#), [Health](#), [Radiation](#), [Radon](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Study finds no Significant Health Impacts from Wind Energy

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

[Understanding the Evidence: Wind Turbine Noise](#), was published on April 9 by the Council of Canadian Academies, and concludes that the only adverse health effect of wind turbines is annoyance. From the report: “We identified 32 health issues and then analyzed the published peer reviewed studies on each problem to determine if there was evidence for a causal relationship with wind turbine noise...We can say conclusively that hearing loss is not related to wind turbine noise”. The experts also concluded that there is limited evidence for sleep disturbance, but inadequate evidence to link any of the other studied health issues.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Health](#), [Public Health](#), [wind energy](#), [Wind Turbine Health Impacts](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Cities, including Vancouver and Los Angeles, keep Reducing GHGs

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

At the World Congress of the ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability in April in Seoul, Korea, mayors from over 100 cities adopted the The Seoul Declaration, and a new Strategic Plan 2015-2021. The meetings also launched the Transformative Actions Program (TAP) to improve access to existing capital and encourage additional public and private capital investment. The Press release summarizes the meetings.

At the meetings, Vancouver and Montreal joined the Compact of Mayors, launched in 2014 and described as “the world’s largest effort for cities to fight climate change”. The Compact entails a commitment for cities to make deep GHG emissions reductions and report on their progress annually, using a standardized international measurement system. Vancouver has announced a goal of 100% renewable energy in 20 years for electricity, heating, cooling, and transportation – a big jump from the current 32 per cent of its energy from renewable sources. The City maintains a website to describe and monitor progress on its Green City Action Plan 2020.

The Mayor of Los Angeles recently released a Sustainability Plan, titled The pLAn, which addresses transit, housing, air quality, water, renewable energy and carbon footprint, as well as environmental justice and green jobs. Amongst the goals: a landfill diversion rate of 90%, more electric vehicle infrastructure than any of the cities in the U.S., and complete divesture from coal power by 2025; to reduce greenhouse gas emissions citywide to 60% below 1990 levels and to source 50% of water locally by 2035. The section on “Prosperity and Green Jobs” sets short term (2017) goals of attracting \$100 million of private-sector investment through the LA Clean Tech Incubator, creating 20,000 new green jobs, and increasing the minimum wage to \$13.25 per hour. By 2035, the goal is at least 150,000 new green jobs. The overall vision includes workforce development initiatives to create private-sector partnerships for apprenticeship programs in green industries, and to partner with higher education institutions to retain high-skill graduates and

enlarge the talent pool in Los Angeles. Importantly, the pLAn will be integrated into the city's administration: for example, the General Manager's annual performance review will include measures of progress and outcomes from the pLAn, and Chief Sustainability Officers will be appointed in key departments.

For information about the sustainability, building energy use and climate change policy work of cities around the world, a series of documents was released in April by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group and the World Green Building Council (WGBC). Toronto and Vancouver are the only Canadian cities profiled.

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New Website to Monitor Supply Chain pledges Re Deforestation and Agricultural Commodities

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

On March 25, Forest Trends, in collaboration with CDP and WWF, launched [Supply Change.org](#), a web portal to track corporate supply chain commitments relating to the purchase of palm oil, soy, timber and pulp, and cattle. A report released in tandem with the portal, [Supply Change: Corporations, Commodities and Commitments that Count](#) provides an “inaugural snapshot of corporate commitments and performance”, based on publically-available data from 243 companies describing 307 commitments.

In April, fast-food giant McDonalds exceeded expectations by pledging to eliminate deforestation from its global supply chain for all commodities linked to deforestation, including beef, fiber-based packaging, coffee and poultry, and palm oil. A summary appeared in *The Guardian*, “[McDonald's to axe deforestation in its supply chain](#)” (April 21), and the [8-point corporate statement](#) is online.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Deforestation](#), [Forest Trends](#), [Supply Chain Analysis](#), [SupplyChange.org](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Two out of Three – U.S., Mexico Submit their INDC Targets – but Not Canada

Posted on **April 30, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

March 31st was the deadline set by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for each nation to submit a statement of its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to greenhouse gas emission reduction, as a precursor to the climate discussions in Paris in December. The United States set an ambitious economy-wide target to reduce emissions by up to 28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2025. Read the [White House Fact Sheet: U.S. Reports its 2025 Emissions Target to the UNFCCC](#).

Reductions will be accomplished primarily through fuel economy standards, energy efficiency for buildings, limiting methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, and reducing emissions from existing power plants. The [statement by Mexico](#) was the first by a developing country, and pledges a 22 per cent reduction of GHG emissions and 51 per cent cut in black carbon emissions by 2030. Prime Minister Harper promised our INDC submission by May, and lowered expectations, according to a *Globe and Mail* article (April 23) "[Harper suggests Canada likely won't match U.S. emissions targets](#)". All INDC submissions are cumulated at the [UNFCCC website](#).

In addition, the U.S. and Mexico issued a [joint statement](#) which states, "The two countries will launch a new high-level bilateral clean energy and climate policy task force to further deepen policy and regulatory coordination in specific areas including clean electricity, grid modernization, appliance standards, and energy efficiency, as well as promoting more fuel efficient automobile fleets in both countries, global and regional climate modeling, weather forecasting and early alerts system". Two countries – not including Canada.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Emissions reduction targets](#), [Intended Nationally Determined Contribution \(INDC\)](#), [Paris 2015](#), [UN Framework Convention for Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Displacement in the Energy Industry: Fossil Fuels have “Lost the Race”; Wind Power Growing; Coal Workers Displaced

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Analysis presented at the Bloomberg New Energy Finance annual summit in New York on April 14 was titled: [Fossil Fuels Just Lost the Race Against Renewables: This is the beginning of the end](#) (April 14). Bloomberg states that the shift occurred in 2013, when the world added 143 gigawatts of renewable electricity capacity, compared with 141 gigawatts in new plants that burn fossil fuels.

More statistics and a forecast are presented in a White Paper, [Medium-term outlook for US power: 2015 = deepest decarbonization ever](#) (April 8). And an International Energy Agency (IEA) press

release in March states that global emissions of carbon dioxide from the energy sector stalled in 2014, marking the first time in 40 years in which there is a drop in GHG emissions that was not tied to an economic downturn. [“Preliminary IEA data point to emissions decoupling from economic growth for the first time in 40 years”](#) (13 March, 2015). The IEA attributes the halt in emissions growth to expanding reliance on renewables in China and energy efficiency improvements in OECD countries. China alone added 23 GW in wind power, almost half the world’s new wind installation capacity in 2014, according to the [Global Wind Energy Market Report 2014](#) by the Global Wind Energy Council. Canada ranked 6th in new wind installations in 2014 and now ranks 7th in cumulative installed capacity in the world. Canada also appears in the report regarding the use of green bonds to finance wind power, illustrated by the case of Northland Power.

Duke University researchers used input output modelling to measure job loss, gains, and displacement in each sector of the electricity sector in [“Employment Trends in the U.S. Electricity Sector, 2008-2012”](#) in the journal *Energy Policy* in March (access restricted). They report that the U.S. coal industry lost more than 49,000 jobs, while the natural gas, solar and wind industries together created nearly four times that amount.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Bloomberg New Energy Finance](#), [Low-Carbon Transition](#), [Renewables](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Do Governments have a Legal Obligation to Protect their Citizens from Climate Change? Yes, say the Oslo Principles and Citizens in Netherlands and Belgium

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

In March, a group of experts in international, human rights, and environmental law released the [Oslo Principles on Global Obligations to Reduce Climate Change](#). “These Principles set out the legal obligations of States and enterprises to take the urgent measures necessary to avert climate change and its catastrophic effects”. Based on a network of local, national and international laws, the Oslo Principles outline specific measures and assert that these should be undertaken “without regard to cost”. The lack of an international agreement does not relieve nations from their duty to their citizens.

The brief Principles document is accompanied by a more extensive [Commentary](#) (94 pages). The members of the Oslo Principles group are supporting a court challenge in the Netherlands, the first case in Europe in which citizens attempt to hold a state responsible for its inaction against climate change, and the first case in the world in which human rights are used as the legal basis for its arguments. The [Urgenda Climate Case](#) opened on April 14, and a verdict is promised on June 24th. The plaintiffs are asking the Court to order the Dutch State to reduce its CO2 emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2020. A [similar case](#) is under preparation in Belgium.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Ethics](#), [Climate Justice](#), [Human Rights](#), [Oslo Principle](#), [Urgenda Climate Case](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alternative Economic Models proposed for the 21st Century by a new U.S. Group

Posted on [April 30, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The [Next System](#) is a new project “that seeks to disrupt or replace our traditional institutions for creating progressive change”. Its backers include Greenpeace President Annie Leonard, clean energy champion Van Jones, United Steelworkers President Leo Gerard, Gerald Hudson, Mark Levinson and Peter Colavito from Service Employees Intl Union, Ron Blackwell, UNITE and AFL-CIO, Joe Uehlein from the Labor Network for Sustainability, climate activist Bill McKibben, and hundreds of other prominent academics including Noam Chomsky, Frances Fox Piven, and Jeffrey Sachs. The project launches with a webinar on May 20th, and has already released its inaugural report, [The Next System Project: New Political Economic Alternatives for the 21st Century](#). The report states that such new movements as the Next System “seek a cooperative, caring, and community-nurturing economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable, and socially responsible”. It draws inspiration from a variety of alternative systemic models and ideas, including employee ownership and self-management, cooperatives, social democracy, participatory economic planning, socialism and public ownership, localism and bioregionalism, and ecological economics.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alternative Economics](#), [Frances Fox Piven](#), [Greenpeace](#), [Jeffrey Sachs](#), [Labour Network for Sustainability](#), [Next System](#), [Noam Chomsky](#), [Service Employees International Union](#), [United Steelworkers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Action Policy Prescriptions for Canada

Posted on [April 8, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Two sets of recommendations were recently released: on March 18, by a new academic collaboration, Sustainable Canada Dialogues (SCD); and on March 19, in the Alternative Budget published annually by the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis. The Sustainable Canada Dialogues document, [Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars](#), and a french-language version, [Agir sur les changements climatiques](#), are characterized as “a scholarly consensus on science-based, viable solutions for greenhouse gas reduction”.

Sixty academics from across Canada combined to urge policymakers to adopt a long-term target of at least an 80% reduction in emissions by mid-century. “In the short-term, we believe that Canada, in keeping with its historical position of aligning with US targets, could adopt a 2025 target of a 26-28% reduction in GHG emissions relative to our 2005 levels”. Policy recommendations include, most immediately: Either a national carbon tax or a national economy-wide cap and trade program; elimination of subsidies to the fossil fuel industry; and integration of sustainability and climate change into landscape planning at the regional and city levels so that maintenance and new infrastructure investments contribute to decarbonizing.

The paper also advocates establishment of East-West smart grid connections to allow hydro-producing provinces to sell electricity to their neighbours; energy efficiency programs, and a “transportation revolution”. The *Acting on Climate Change* document will be followed by a special issue of [Alternatives Journal](#) magazine, to be released on March 27, to include more detailed articles by 20 of the SCD participant authors. Sustainable Canada Dialogues, launched in September 2014, is partnered with three institutions in Panama, and “proposes to advance sustainability education, research and social dialogues in Panama and in Canada”.

The second statement of recommended climate policies appears in the CCPA Alternative Budget for 2015, [Delivering the Good](#). The Alternative Budget, like the government budget statement that it shadows, covers the full range of economic and social issues facing Canada. It also includes a section on the Environment and Climate Change, which states: “The best current budget opportunities include implementing a price on greenhouse gas emissions through a carbon tax; not subsidizing liquefied natural gas (LNG) or hydraulic fracturing (fracking); protecting Canada’s public lands and species at risk; and supporting power storage through accelerated expense write-offs, electric vehicles through fast-charging recharging stations in high-demand areas, and public transit and energy efficiency home retrofits”. A National Harmonized Carbon Tax should be implemented immediately, at \$30 a tonne (the current level in British Columbia), increasing to \$200 a tonne by 2020. More than half of the HCT revenues should be used to provide a Green Tax benefit for individuals and the remainder transferred to the provinces to fund “climate change abatement measures”. It is estimated that the carbon tax would generate annual revenue of \$16 billion, with the Green Tax Refund incurring a net annual cost of \$8.8 billion (p. 28). Is the time finally right for serious consideration of Canada’s climate change policies? As Environmental Defense reported on March 9, [NDP, Liberals and Greens agree on an Approach to Assess Carbon Pollution Reduction](#). Calling it “a step in the right direction”, the blog describes the February 19 [debate](#) in the House of Commons around Bill C-619, the [Climate Change Accountability Act](#), a private members bill introduced by NDP Matt Kellway in June 2014. NDP, Liberals and Greens are now on record as supporting the Bill’s accountability measures and the target of domestic greenhouse gas emissions reductions to at least 80% below 1990 levels by the year 2050.

CUPE Provides a New Guide for Greener Workplaces

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Canadian Union of Public Employees, in advance of Earth Day in April 2015, has released [Healthy Clean and Green: A Worker's Action Guide to a Greener Workplace](#). CUPE answers the basic question, "Is climate change a union issue?" and then focuses on workplace actions and solutions, with examples and tips to improve energy efficiency, recycling and reduction of resources, worker education, and workplace environment committees. The book also describes the LEED features of the CUPE National Headquarters in Ottawa. To further encourage greening activities, the union announced the 2015 CUPE [Green Workplace Contest](#), with a deadline of May 2015.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [CUPE](#), [LEED](#), [Recycling](#), [Workplace Environment Committees](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How are U.S. Unions Working Toward a Climate-Safe Economy for All Workers?

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Joe Uehlein, Co-founder and Executive Director of the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS), has written [A Climate Protection Guide to Organized Labor](#), which summarizes the issues and arguments regarding the role of U.S. labour in the fight against climate change. Joe's essay also introduces the [Labor Landscape Analysis](#), a "set of tools" compiled by the LNS and consisting of several units. For climate activists not familiar with the labour movement, [The Labor-Climate Landscape: A Guided Tour for Worker- and Climate-Protection Advocates](#) explains decision-making in labour unions, relationships in the movement, and the climate change policies of 42 U.S. unions, as well as the role of more than 800 local, regional and national labour leaders. It updates and expands on [Labor and Climate Change: A Briefing Paper for Activists](#) (2010). In his introductory essay, Joe Uehlein states: "The threat of global warming requires a different concept of solidarity, one which recognizes the common interest of all workers in climate protection. That concept gives all unions a legitimate role in shaping labor's climate policy. But it also gives them

an obligation to protect the livelihoods and well-being of any workers who might be adversely affected by climate protection policies through a just transition to a climate-safe economy”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Labor Network for Sustainability \(LNS\)](#), [Labour Unions](#), [U.S. Labour Movement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Workforce Development Issues for the Expansion of Wind Energy in the U.S.

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

[Wind Vision: A New Era for Wind Power in the United States](#) was released by the White House on March 12, providing an overview of the U.S. wind industry and projections for the future. Analysis focuses on greenhouse gas (GHG) and pollution reductions, electricity price impacts, job and manufacturing trends, and water and land use impacts – for the years 2020, 2030, and 2050. The study provides a roadmap of actions to achieve a goal of 35% wind energy in the U.S. by 2050, at which time the wind industry would employ more than 600,000 people. Workforce development is one of nine core topics in the roadmap, detailed in item M8 of [the Appendix](#). The workforce development recommendations build on previous research published by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in 2012, [National Skills Assessment of the U.S. Wind Industry](#) by Levanthal and Tegen.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Economics of Renewables](#), [Green Jobs](#), [renewable energy](#), [U.S. Wind Industry](#), [Wind Power](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Appoints a Climate Change Advisory Group

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

In March 9, the government of Ontario [appointed](#) John Godfrey as Special Advisor, and created a new Climate Change Advisory Group which he will chair. The Climate Action Group is composed of academics, business and civic leaders, with one representative from the labour movement: James St. John, the business manager of the Central Ontario Building Trades. The advisory group is meant to collaborate closely with Québec’s Climate Change Advisory Committee to support work between the two provinces.

Alberta Regulations Re Water Management and Tailings Management

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

On March 13, the Alberta government [announced](#) two new policies meant to provide environmental protections in the Athabasca Oil Sands area. The [Tailings Management Framework for Mineable Oilsands](#) limits the amount of tailings allowed to accumulate and requires that sites be remediated to a ready-to-reclaim state within 10 years of the end-of-mine-life of a project. Companies are encouraged to invest in new technology, and are required by the Conservation and Reclamation Regulation to post additional financial security to deal with potential remediation issues. Read the Pembina Institute reaction, [Tailings Management Framework: A new Chapter in the Alberta Oil Sands Story?](#) (March 16). Regarding water policy, [The Surface Water Quantity Management Framework](#) establishes limits for water use during low-flow periods and requires maintenance of an adequate quantity of water for Aboriginal river navigation and pursuit of traditional activities. It does not establish Ecosystem Base Flow (EBF) system, as recommended by scientists. The Council of Canadians [reacted](#) by pointing out that the Framework restrictions are voluntary, and provide exemptions to Suncor and Syncrude, even if water levels are low. The explanation? Under NAFTA Chapter 11, the government of Canada could be sued if Alberta were to limit the current water access of the oil sands companies. SumOfUs.org, Keepers of the Athabasca, Environmental Defence Canada and the Natural Resources Defence Council issued a [joint press release](#) condemning the new regulations as an “oil industry wish list”. See also the NRDC blog, [New Tar Sands Water Policy from Alberta favors Industry](#) (March 13).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Pembina Institute](#), [Tailings](#), [Tailings Management](#), [Tar Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Water Week, March 16-22, including the Importance of Water in the Fracking Debate

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Council of Canadians continues its advocacy for a clean, safe, public water system with a new campaign for a [National Water Policy](#). Their proposals include the creation of a national public

water infrastructure fund, a strategy to reduce water pollution (including stronger standards for agriculture, oil sands extraction), a ban of bulk water exports, and exclusion of water from NAFTA and all future trade agreements. On March 12, the Council of Canadians released a new report, [On Notice for a Drinking Water Crisis](#) and will be staging protests throughout Canada on World Water Day, March 22. Environmental Defence also marked Water Week with several blogs, including [No Energy East Tar Sands in our Water!](#). And for interesting case studies of the importance of water in the anti-fracking movement, see [Getting Off the Frack Track: How Anti-Fracking Campaigns Succeeded in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia](#) (Feb. 20) at the [Freshwater Alliance](#) website.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Council of Canadians](#), [Environmental Defence](#), [Fracking](#), [NAFTA](#), [Water Crisis](#), [Water Policy](#), [Water Week](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Economic Impact of Alberta Greenhouse Gas Emissions Funds

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

On February 27, the Conference Board of Canada released [Investing in GHG Emissions-Reduction Technology: Assessing the Economic Impact](#) (free with registration). The study quantifies the economic impact of investments in greenhouse gas emission-reducing technologies that are funded in whole or in part by Alberta's Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation (CCEMC), and concludes that the total economic impact of CCEMC and related investments from 2011 to 2016 will be over \$2.4 billion and an additional 15,017 person-years of full-time-equivalent (FTE) employment. The Pembina Institute [reaction](#) (March 5) was to point out that despite any economic gains, the problem remains that there are no significant reductions to greenhouse gas emissions.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation \(CCEMC\)](#), [Climate Economics](#), [Conference Board of Canada](#), [Pembina Institute](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Resolute Forest Products on Notice after 3M Announces a new

Sustainability Policy for Paper Procurement

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

Following a review of its procurement processes conducted in collaboration with ForestEthics and Greenpeace, multinational 3M released a revised [Pulp and Paper Sourcing Policy](#) in March, with high standards for environmental protection and human rights. 3M will no longer use the Sustainable Forests Initiative (SFI) label. Its new policy requires improved monitoring and reporting of source materials, and “free, prior and informed consent by indigenous peoples and local communities before logging operations occur”. The company has already cancelled its contracts with Indonesian Royal Golden Eagle Group-owned suppliers and has warned Montreal-based Resolute Forest Products that it must quickly improve its controversial relationships with First Nations, as well as its practices of logging of caribou habitat and in High Conservation Areas. Read [ForestEthics Applauds 3M's New Industry-Leading Sustainability Plan](#) (March 5), or [3M's new pulp & paper policy impacts Resolute Forest Products](#) (CBC, March 5). For an excellent history of Resolute's controversial environmental record, see “Resolute and Greenpeace at Loggerheads” in the *Montreal Gazette* (Feb 13).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **First Nations, ForestEthics, Forestry Industry, Free, Greenpeace, Informed Consent (FPIC), Prior, Resolute Forest Products, Sustainable Forestry, Sustainable Forests Initiative (SFI)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Tech Investments in Canada

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC) began its rollout of announcements of recipients from the SDTC Tech Fund in February in [Southwest Ontario](#) and in [Quebec](#) on February 16. Of the \$25 million invested in Quebec, almost half was directed to Nemaska Lithium Inc., for a pilot demonstration project aimed at lowering costs associated with electric vehicle use. On February 20, seven clean technology projects in [Ontario](#) received over \$26.8 million and on March 4, similar investments in Alberta were announced. In [Alberta](#), with the top three recipients are projects for cleaner technologies for oil sands. It was [B.C.](#)'s turn on March 16, when a further \$27.3 million was distributed for 10 projects. Each press release names the recipient companies and summarizes their technologies.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Clean Tech, Electric Vehicles, SDTC Tech Fund, Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Oregon joins B.C. and California with Clean Fuel Standards

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

According to the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) the state of Oregon “clinched a spot in the clean energy future” on March 12 when the Governor signed [Bill SB324A](#), which removes the December 2015 sunset clause on previous legislation requiring the adoption of clean fuel standards, and extends the target date for compliance from 2020 to 2025. With B.C. and California already regulating clean fuels, the NRDC states that it needs only the state of Washington to pass similar standards to “create a corridor of clean fuel demand encompassing more than 50 million people up and down the length of the West Coast, equivalent to the 5th largest economy in the world”. The NRDC draws its information from a detailed and wide-ranging analysis by the International Council on Clean Transportation, [Potential: Low-carbon Fuel Supply to the Pacific Coast Region of North America](#) (January 2015). Of related interest, The California Energy Commission issued its [2014 Integrated Energy Policy Report \(IEPR\) Update](#) in March, highlighting its transportation achievements in electric vehicles, fuel cell development, and biofuels.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Clean Fuel**, **Fuel Efficiency**, **Natural Resources Defense Council**, **Oregon** | [Leave a reply](#)

Toronto, Vancouver amongst Case Studies of District Energy in Cities Worldwide

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report released on February 25 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency (C2E2), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and UN-Habitat, offers concrete policy, finance and technology best practice guidance on energy efficiency improvements and the integration of renewables in cities. [District Energy in Cities: Unlocking the Potential of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#), offers an analysis of the 45 ‘champion cities’, which have collectively installed more than 36 GW of district heating capacity (equivalent to 3.6 million households), 6 GW of district cooling capacity (equivalent to 600,000 households) and 12,000 km of district energy networks. The case studies include Toronto, Vancouver, St. Paul Minnesota, Paris, London, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Milan, Gothenburg, Copenhagen, and Tokyo.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cities and Climate Change**, **Municipal Government**, **Toronto**, **UNEP**, **Vancouver** | [Leave a reply](#)

New GHG Emission Reduction Targets for the U.S. Federal Government

Posted on [April 8, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Federal government of the U.S. operates 360,000 buildings, 650,000 fleet vehicles, and spends \$445 billion annually on goods and services, making it the largest consumer of energy in the country. To reduce GHG emissions, an Executive Order by President Obama on March 19 mandates that Federal buildings reduce total energy use by 2.5% per year between 2015 to 2025, and increase the proportion of clean energy to 25% by 2025. Water intensity in Federal buildings will also be cut by 2 percent per year till 2025. Regarding the fleet of 650,000 vehicles, the Order establishes a goal of 30% reduction of GHG's from 2014 levels by 2025. A White House Fact Sheet, [Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Federal Government and Across the Supply Chain](#) (March 19) provides more details, and summarizes the emissions reductions commitments made by major suppliers in the federal government supply chain. Those suppliers include such giants as IBM, HP, AECOMM, Northrup Grumman, and United Technologies.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Emissions reduction targets](#), [energy efficiency](#), [U.S. Federal Government](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fossil Fuel Divestment and the New Campaign by the Guardian Newspaper and 350.org

Posted on [April 8, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The divestment movement has been busy since global Fossil Fuel Divestment Day in February, with news that hundreds of thousands of [academics, engineers and lawyers in Denmark](#) will vote on divesting their €32bn pension funds from fossil fuel investments in April, and that [Oxford University is facing protest demonstrations](#) because it has deferred a vote on divestment till May. In March, *The Guardian* newspaper in the U.K. and 350.org launched the [Keep it in the Ground campaign](#), asking the Wellcome Trust and Gates Foundation to divest their endowments from fossil fuels. *The Guardian* has been relentlessly posting information and arguments for the cause of divestment: [“Bank of England warns of huge financial risk with fossil fuel investments”](#) (March 3); [“Mark Carney defends Bank of England over Climate Change Study”](#) (March 10); [“UN Backs Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign”](#) (March 16); [“Wellcome Trust sold off 94 million pound](#)

ExxonMobil oil investment” (March 18) and, “Revealed: Gates Foundation’s \$1.4bn in fossil fuel investments” (March 19). The retiring editor of *The Guardian* newspaper, Alan Rusbridger, announced the paper’s new editorial stance in “Climate change: Why the Guardian is Putting Threat to Earth Front and Centre” (March 6). He states: “The coming debate is about two things: what governments can do to attempt to regulate, or otherwise stave off, the now predictably terrifying consequences of global warming beyond 2C by the end of the century. And how we can prevent the states and corporations which own the planet’s remaining reserves of coal, gas and oil from ever being allowed to dig most of it up. We need to keep them in the ground”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [350.org](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [The Guardian](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Energy Canada Moves to Simon Fraser University

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Clean Energy Canada, formerly a project of Tides Canada, [announced](#) on March 2 that it will become a new program within [the Centre for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University](#). The Centre for Dialogue states that “uses dialogue to generate non-partisan and constructive communication around difficult topics. We partner with government, business, and community groups to explore critical issues that impact the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of our communities”. Merran Smith, Director of [Clean Energy Canada](#), has been named a Fellow within the Centre and will continue to lead the program, which aims to accelerate Canada’s transition to a clean and renewable energy system.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Centre for Dialogue](#), [Clean Energy Canada](#), [Low-Carbon Transition](#), [Renewables](#), [Simon Fraser University](#), [Tides Canada](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Literature Review of Climate Adaptation by Multinationals

Posted on **April 8, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A recent working paper by the Grantham Institute at the London School of Economics finds that “there is a paucity of work analysing adaptation actions by MNCs, their motivations and contribution to broader adaptation and climate resilient development efforts, as well as possible instances of maladaptation”. The review points out research gaps and provides a useful bibliography of the academic literature. See [Multinational corporations and climate adaptation – Are we asking the right questions? A review of current knowledge and a new research perspective](#) (March 11).

British Columbia's Economic Transition and Just Transition Proposals

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A January report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives offers insight into the kinds of just transition policies that will be needed to support labour as carbon-intensive industries are phased out. *Just Transition: Creating a Green Social Contract for BC's Resource Workers* is the result of seven focus groups composed of workers from the forestry, mining, and fossil fuel industries. They were asked about their first-hand experiences with transitioning out of industrial employment, and the changes they felt were necessary for workers and communities to thrive alongside effective environmental and climate policies. Participants stressed the importance of improving training and education programs, which were seen as neglecting transferable and upgraded skills in favour of narrow specialization that plugged current labour gaps but left workers vulnerable to wage suppression and unable to change industries without downgrading. Participants also highlighted personal, family and community strain associated with moving to find work or commuting long distances, pointing to the need for related socioeconomic support, counselling, and policies that keep workers closer to home. Local economy diversification and greener, and value-added industries were identified as a way to lower carbon and create more resilient communities, though workers' concerns highlight that the loss of industrial wages would need to be managed.

The report recommends income security guarantees to maintain stability in resource communities, as well the embrace of alternative models such as worker ownership. Further, the new social contract needed to address the training and socioeconomic needs of transitioning communities should include a just transition fund drawn from resource revenues, harnessing pre-existing tools such as B.C.'s natural gas royalties and carbon tax. The new source of public funds could support investment in job-creating green infrastructure, public transit, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.

The B.C. business community is also recognizing the coming economic transition. *Business in Vancouver* magazine has launched a new series on the economic impacts of climate change in the province, with a first installment based on interviews with Tom Pedersen of the University of Victoria's Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions and Deborah Harford of Simon Fraser University. "Climate Change Looms as Major Threat to Key B.C. Industries" (Feb. 16) considers B.C.'s future in light of problems that have already arisen, including water shortages in the Okanagan, reduced water flow at hydroelectric dams, soil salinization, and ocean acidification impacting shellfish

farmers and the salmon industry. The series will continue throughout 2015, engaging experts from diverse fields and industries.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Boom and Bust](#), [British Columbia](#), [Business in Vancouver](#), [Climate Economics](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental Groups Stand with U.S. Refinery Workers on Strike for Safety

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The United Steelworkers union represents workers at 65 oil refineries in the United States. On February 1, the union announced an unfair labour practice strike at 9 locations, with the remainder operating under a rolling 24-hour contract extension. In a [media advisory](#), the head of the USW National Oil Bargaining Program states: “This work stoppage is about onerous overtime; unsafe staffing levels; dangerous conditions the industry continues to ignore; the daily occurrences of fires, emissions, leaks and explosions that threaten local communities without the industry doing much about it; the industry’s refusal to make opportunities for workers in the trade crafts; the flagrant contracting out that impacts health and safety on the job; and the erosion of our workplace, where qualified and experienced union workers are replaced by contractors when they leave or retire”. Indeed, the dangerous working conditions of the oil industry have been well documented by no less than the [U.S. Chemical Safety Board](#). These safety and health issues have been at the heart of the dispute, and have resulted in widespread public support from environmental and community groups, as summarized in “[Striking for Climate Justice](#)” in *Dissent Magazine* (Feb. 21). The [Sierra Club](#) issued an almost immediate statement of support on Feb. 3, ready to do so because of an earlier agreement spelled out in *A Common Position on the Future of Oil* (September 2013). Public statements of support from other green groups: [Oil Change International](#); [Labor Network for Sustainability](#), and [Communities for a Better Environment](#), a California-based group which sums it up: “Environmental justice demands everyone’s right to a safe and healthy work environment and challenges the false choice that would force us to choose between our health and our jobs. Indeed, fighting for worker rights protects community health and safety”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Strike](#), [United Steelworkers](#), [USW](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green Jobs, Green Economies from a Social/Gender Justice Lens

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

A discussion paper released in February by the ILO and the Global Labour University provides a wide-ranging and well-documented global analysis of Green New Deal programs, green economies, and green jobs. Some excerpts: "...while advocates of the green economy promise the elimination of poverty, the green economy agenda is a new version of what has been described as finance-led accumulation and as such a continuation of the neoliberal project that has fuelled inequality during the past three decades". Of green jobs, he observes, "statistical evidence suggests that many of the assumptions associated with green jobs are far too optimistic". Referencing Austrian, EU, and South African studies, he states, "statistical evidence suggests that in terms of working conditions they (i.e. green jobs) are actually worse than average jobs...in sum, female workers are clearly disadvantaged when it comes to the distribution of the benefits from green growth". Finally, "in sum, an alternative approach to a green transition towards a more sustainable economy and society must go beyond the goal of a thermal insulated capitalism and promote ecological, gender and social justice". The author particularly discusses the importance of hours of work as a key factor in equality/inequality, and in ecological damage. Source: *[Green New Deal and the Question of Environmental and Social Justice](#)*.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Environmental Justice, Gender, Global Labour University, Green Economy, Green New Deal, ILO, Neoliberalism, Social Justice** | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour Market Impacts of a Circular Economy in the U.K.

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

A report released in late January 2015 by the Green Alliance and WRAP in the U.K. considers the regional and occupational patterns of employment in recycling, reuse and remanufacturing activities, with a forecast for the future. *[Employment and the Circular Economy: Job Creation in a More Resource Efficient Britain](#)* concludes that "if Britain continues to develop its resource efficiency, the country's circular economy sector will create net jobs in regions where unemployment is higher, such as the North East and West Midlands, and among low to mid skilled occupations, where a higher rate of job losses are projected for the future". The public report is based on a technical report, *[Opportunities to Tackle Britain's Labour Market Challenges through Growth in the Circular Economy](#)*, which describes the U.K. labour market, explains the methodology and calculations, and forecasts job creation potential for low-skilled, skilled, and professional workers under three different scenarios. In the best case, by 2030 the sector could require an extra 205,000 jobs, reduce unemployment by around 54,000, and offset 11 per cent of future job losses in skilled employment.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Circular Economy, Green Job Creation, Labour Market, U.K.** | [Leave a reply](#)

Polluter Pays in New Rail Safety Legislation

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

Bill C-52, *The Safe and Accountable Rail Act* was announced by the federal Transport Minister on February 20, in the latest of several legislative and regulatory responses to the tragedy of the Lac Megantic derailment and explosion in 2013. "[Ottawa announces Rail Disaster Relief Fund](#)" in the *Globe and Mail* (Feb. 20) summarizes the provisions, which include the requirement, for the first time, that railways must carry a minimum amount of liability insurance, ranging from \$25-million up to \$1-billion, depending on their volume of dangerous goods. Additionally, a fee of \$1.65-a-tonne will be charged to the companies and pooled in a fund to cover the costs of damages that exceed their insurance. The Act also requires that rail companies implement policies and procedures to ensure workers the right to report fatigue without fear of reprisals. See the [text of the Act](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Bill C-52, Oil Transport, Polluter Pays Principle, The Safe and Accountable Rail Act, Transportation Infrastructure** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Federal Liberal Party takes a Flexible Position on Carbon Pricing

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

Federal leader Justin Trudeau chose Calgary's Petroleum Club on February 6 as the venue to announce that, if elected in October 2015, a Liberal government would set national targets for reducing carbon emissions but allow provinces to design and manage the policies to meet them. The [Liberal party website](#) provides text of the speech as well as a video. The Pembina Institute reacted to the announcement, as did [Clean Energy Canada](#), which also provides a comparison chart of the positions of three of the four federal parties. There is no shortage of recent policy reports on the issue of carbon pricing, for example: [Carbon Pricing and Mind the Hissing](#) from Sustainable Prosperity (case studies of revenue allocation in the carbon pricing systems of B.C., Alberta, and Quebec); [How to Adopt a Winning Carbon Price: Top 10 Takeaways from the Architects of British Columbia's Carbon Tax](#) from Clean Energy Canada; [Will Nova Scotia Implement a Carbon Tax?](#) by Brendan Haley at the Progressive Economics Forum. Even the World Bank's Partnership for Market Readiness has a policy "wish list" in its business-oriented new report, [Preparing for Carbon Pricing: Case Studies from Company Experience: Royal Dutch Shell, Rio Tinto, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Architecture, Canadian Federal Election 2015, Carbon Pricing, Clean Energy Canada, Justin Trudeau, Liberal Party, Liberal Party of Canada** | [Leave a reply](#)

Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaigns in Canada

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

Global Divestment Days took place worldwide on February 13 and 14th, organized by 350.org through their [Go Fossil Free campaign](#). In Canada, a divestment campaign led by the UBCC350, (a group of students, faculty, staff, and alumni) climaxed on February 10 with a largely symbolic vote by UBC Faculty : see [“UBC profs vote 62 per cent in Favour of Fossil Fuel Divestment”](#) in the *Vancouver Observer* (Feb 10) and see the [press release from UBCC350](#). On February 12, the *Financial Post* reported that [“University of Calgary will not Divest from Fossil Fuels”](#).

Also in February, the Sustainability and Education Policy Network housed at the University of Saskatchewan released [The State of Fossil Fuel Divestment in Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions](#), which lists all 27 Canadian post-secondary institutions where divestment campaigns were underway as of October 2014, as well as the amount of money currently invested in fossil fuels. The report notes a “disconnect”: “While some campuses have positioned themselves as sustainability leaders, they are still heavily invested in fossil fuel companies”. Other related documents from the ongoing research are at the [SEPN website](#).

A White Paper, [Fossil Fuel Divestment: Reviewing Arguments, Policy Implications, and Opportunities](#) was published by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) in January. It concludes that fossil fuel divestment campaigns can be socially effective but are unable to have any real impact on reducing emissions or financing transition to sustainability without alternative investments that change the structure of the economy. [PICS is maintaining a website](#) for ongoing commentary on the issue, and indeed, the paper has been criticized in [The Tyee](#) and in the [DeSmog Canada Blog](#) for “missing the point” of the importance of divestment to revoke social license.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **350.org**, **Climate Movement**, **Fossil Free**, **Fossil Fuel Divestment**, **UBC** | [Leave a reply](#)

Fossil Fuel Subsidies Detrimental to Global Climate

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

A report from the International Institute for Sustainable Development was presented at the U.N. Geneva Climate Change Conference, held from February 8-13. [Fossil-Fuel Subsidies and Climate](#)

Change: Options for Policy-makers within their Intended Nationally Determined

Contributions argues that removal of fossil fuel subsidies could lead to global GHG emissions reductions of between 6-13% by 2050. The CEO of IISD also stated: “The billions of dollars spent on these subsidies means less money is available for clean energy, health, education and infrastructure”. The report was financed by the [Nordic Prime Ministers' Green Growth Initiative](#). The IISD also provides a [comprehensive summary of the Geneva meetings](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Economics](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Local Energy Distribution Vancouver, Guelph, Connecticut

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A February report describes the development of the low-carbon Neighbourhood Energy Utility (NEU), which uses a hybrid system of sewage heat recovery (SHR) backed up by natural gas boilers to deliver thermal energy to 24 buildings in the False Creek area of Vancouver. The opportunity arose from the redevelopment of former industrial land into a mixed-use community- a highly capital-intensive project which generated approximately 50 FTE jobs over 3 years of construction, and has resulted in 3.5 highly-skilled engineering jobs in the operational phase. Although the job creation impact is small because of the small scale of the project, author Marc Lee maintains that it is important as an example of public sector innovation which challenges the paradigm of centralized energy distribution, and which could be replicated by other cities. See [Innovative Approaches to Low Carbon Urban Systems: A Case Study of Vancouver's Neighbourhood Energy Utility](#), published by Economics for Equity and Environment as part of their Future Economy Initiative.

Guelph, Ontario was recently profiled in “Community and Energy in Guelph: Environment and Economy in Partnership” in *Engineering Dimensions* (Jan/Feb 2015), which briefly describes Guelph's Community Energy Initiative, begun in 2007. More recently, the [Guelph District Energy Strategic Plan](#) explains the concept of distributed urban energy systems, and includes case studies from Mannheim, Copenhagen and North Vancouver. The Guelph plan envisions a system which would supply at least 50 per cent of the heating needs of commercial, institutional and industrial facilities as well as residential dwellings.

In Connecticut in December 2014, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection announced a study to evaluate the merits of distributed energy. In response, a working paper by Jeremy Brecher of the Labor Network for Sustainability discusses the monopoly power of electrical utilities and makes seven proposals to reform a system to reduce GHG's and be worker- and community-friendly. [Connecticut's Electric Utilities: Time to Revise the Model](#) specifically proposes that the ownership of energy distribution be transferred from private utilities to consumer-owned

co-operatives, municipal or state-owned companies, or “other alternatives”. And for a more general vision of some of those alternative models, read the EnergyVision document, [A Pathway to a Modern, Sustainable, Low Carbon Economic and Environmental Future](#) by the Acadia Center, released February 15.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Energy Distribution](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Low-Carbon Economics](#), [Marc Lee](#), [Neighbourhood Energy Utility \(NEI\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Business Voices call for Net-zero Emissions Target at COP21, as well as Carbon Pricing and an end to Fossil Fuel Subsidies

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The B-Team, a group of international business leaders, released an [Open Letter](#) to Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change on Feb. 5, calling on governments to commit to a zero-net-emissions target for 2050 at the COP 21 talks in Paris in 2015. Further, they call for businesses and governments to adopt meaningful and effective carbon pricing; an end to all fossil fuel subsidies, and redirection of that capital to renewable energy solutions; and for businesses and governments “to ensure the benefits of responses to climate change flow to vulnerable and impoverished communities that suffer disproportionately from climate change and are least equipped to cope with its impacts”. In October 2014, the B-Team partnered with other business organizations (The Climate Group, Ceres, Carbon Disclosure Project, BSR, World Business Council for Sustainable Business and the Prince of Wales Corporate Leaders Group) to form the [We Mean Business Coalition](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [COP21](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Paris 2015](#), [UNFCCC](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ethical Supply Chains: Different View Points

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

[Supply Chain Sustainability Revealed: A Country Comparison, 2014-2015](#) was commissioned by CDP (a member of the We Mean Business coalition) and authored by Accenture consultants. The

report reveals how the suppliers of 66 CDP-member corporations (who spend \$1.3 trillion in procurement) are approaching risks and opportunities related to climate change and water. Supply chains in the U.S., China and Italy are considered “vulnerable”. Suppliers in India and Canada are judged as not doing enough to manage climate change risks. Indian companies, in particular, demonstrate a low propensity to report on emissions, and suppliers in Brazil have done the least to manage climate exposures and recent water shortages. A profile of Canadian suppliers is provided on page 14. A more business-oriented report, *Beyond Supply Chains: Empowering Responsible Value Chains* was jointly authored by the World Economic Forum and Accenture consultants. It highlights 31 supply chain practices which, it is claimed, can increase revenue by up to 20% for responsible products, reduce supply chain costs from 9%-16% and increase brand value by 15%-30%. This commercial success, combined with improved environmental impact and better local economic conditions, is called the “triple supply chain advantage”. The report states that “Adopting the triple advantage can also shrink carbon footprint by up to 22% while enabling companies to contribute to local development”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [CDP](#), [Climate Risk](#), [Supply Chain](#), [We Mean Business coalition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Sustainable Energy Updates

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The 2015 edition of the *Sustainable Energy in America Factbook* found that “over the 2007-2014 period, U.S. carbon emissions from the energy sector dropped 9%, U.S. natural gas production rose 25% and total U.S. investment in clean energy (renewables and advanced grid, storage and electrified transport technologies) reached \$386 billion”. The report was commissioned by the Business Council for Sustainable Energy and prepared by analysts at Bloomberg New Energy Finance. On February 2, the 2013 *Renewable Energy Data Book* was released by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Key findings include: Renewable electricity, including hydropower and biopower, grew to nearly 15% of total installed capacity and 13% of total electricity generation in the United States in 2013, compared to 23% of all electricity generation worldwide, and [15% in the UK](#). Solar electricity was the fastest growing electricity generation technology in the U.S., with cumulative installed capacity increasing by nearly 66% from the previous year.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Biopower](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Business Council for Sustainable Energy](#), [Hydropower](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Chilly Climate re Climate Change continues in Canada

Posted on **February 25, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

In the U.S., the White House *National Security Strategy* document was released on Feb. 6, stating that climate change is a significant risk to Americans at home and abroad, along with terrorism and a nuclear Iran. Here in Canada, the intelligence community appears to see things differently. A threat assessment document by the critical infrastructure intelligence team of the RCMP, written in January 2015 and leaked to the press in February, seems skeptical of the world's understanding of climate science and states: "There is a growing, highly organized and well-financed, anti-Canadian petroleum movement that consists of peaceful activists, militants and violent extremists, who are opposed to society's reliance on fossil fuels". See coverage in [The Toronto Star](#) (Feb. 17); [The Globe and Mail](#) (Feb. 17); or [The Guardian](#) (Feb. 18). For reaction by Greenpeace, one of the groups high on the RCMP's radar, see "[Caring for the Climate is not a Crime in Canada. Yet](#)", which puts the RCMP document in the context of Bill C-51, Canada's *Anti-terrorism Act*, introduced to the House of Commons on January 30, 2015.

As for the media, consider the facts presented by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (Feb. 12) in "[Do you know who's writing your climate change news](#)". The article notes the case of Andrew Weaver, described in more detail in "[B.C. MLA Andrew Weaver wins defamation suit against National Post](#)", *The Globe and Mail* (Feb. 6). PICS puts the Weaver case in a wider context by reporting on the dismissal by Postmedia of both Margaret Munro (nominated for a World Press Freedom Award for her stories on the muzzling of federal government scientists) and Mike De Souza (who wrote about the oil sands and exposed examples of bribery, undeclared conflicts of interest and withheld information relating to the federal government's energy policy). Energy and oil industry news coverage will now be "centralized" at the *National Post*, according to "[Postmedia cuts National Writer Jobs, Offers Newsroom Buyouts](#)" in the *Globe and Mail* (Feb. 5).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Risk**, **National Security Strategy**, **RCMP** | [Leave a reply](#)

Growth of Canada's Clean Energy, Wind Energy, and more on Grid Parity

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

[Tracking the Energy Revolution – Canada](#), is the first annual status report by Clean Energy Canada, released in early December 2014. The report states that \$25 billion has been invested in clean energy, resulting in a 37 percent employment increase in the sector in the past five years, so

that by 2013 the clean energy sector (manufacturing, power production, energy efficiency, and biofuels) accounted for more direct Canadian jobs than the oil sands. To back up their job creation claim, [Clean Energy published an explanation of the calculations](#). Full of infographics and tables, the report goes beyond statistics to highlight the leading provinces, companies, projects, and investor groups. It also makes recommendations for the federal and provincial levels and aims to spur laggard jurisdictions to more action.

More good news comes in a [new report by the Canadian Wind Energy Association](#): 2014 was a record-breaking year for wind in Canada, with 37 new wind energy projects representing over \$3.5 billion in investment. Fifteen of the projects involved municipalities, First Nations, and local farmers; activity was strongest in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta. The Grand Renewable Energy project in Ontario can be considered a poster child for the industry, with over 98% of the workforce on the project from Ontario – from turbine manufacture to construction, installation, and operation. Samsung and Pattern Energy are equity partners with the Six Nations of the Grand River, which owns 10% of the project; [Samsung and Pattern Energy provided a \\$400,000 donation to the Grand River Post-Secondary Education Office](#), to help Six Nations students. In B.C., the government has provided more than \$5.8 million since 2011 to support the participation of over 90 Aboriginal communities in the clean energy sector, including wind energy, biomass and run-of-river hydroelectric power. See [“First Nations Clean Energy Funding tops \\$5.8 million”](#) in the *Vancouver Observer* (Jan. 6, 2015). And also of interest, a report in January 2015 by Oceana conservation group concludes that offshore wind has the potential to generate more jobs (91,000 more over 20 years) produce more power, and lead to a higher degree of energy independence than offshore drilling for oil and gas, while posing fewer environmental threats. Read [Offshore Energy by the Numbers: An Economic Analysis of Offshore Drilling and Wind Energy in the Atlantic](#)

All this, despite the assertion in a December report that the \$548 billion that is paid annually in fossil fuel subsidies around the world have impeded the growth of the renewable energy industry by making fossil fuel power generation appear cheaper than it really is. [The Impact of Fossil-Fuel Subsidies on Renewable Electricity Generation](#) was published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). Yet even so, [Renewable Power Generation Costs in 2014](#), a landmark report from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), states that “biomass, hydropower, geothermal and onshore wind are all competitive with or cheaper than coal, oil and gas-fired power stations, even without financial support and despite falling oil prices. Solar photovoltaic (PV) is leading the cost decline, with solar PV module costs falling 75 per cent since the end of 2009 and the cost of electricity from utility-scale solar PV falling 50 per cent since 2010.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Wind Energy Association](#), [CanWEA](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Energy Revolution](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green Jobs](#), [International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\)](#) | 1 Reply

Canadian Companies Going Green with Energy Efficiency and More

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) “Living Planet @ Work” campaign profiles successful Canadian companies who have switched to 100% renewable energy and are employing green business practices. Toronto’s Steam Whistle Brewing and Miratel Solutions (a fundraising, call-centre, and online and mailing services company) have been featured so far.

In the case of [Steam Whistle Brewing](#), facilities are kept cool by harnessing cold water from the bottom of Lake Ontario; company vehicles are fueled with biodiesel, and renewable energy, via Bullfrog Power, saves the equivalent of 128 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

[Miratel Solutions](#) began the path to greening the workplace with a ban on plastic water bottles, an extensive recycling program, eco-friendly lighting and retrofitting, and energy-efficient electronics. Since 2006, Bullfrog Power allowed the company to support the transition to renewable energy despite the fact that they rent office space and can’t control its energy supply. Miratel saves the equivalent of 38.1 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. Other Canadian case studies of energy efficiency projects are profiled in *Heads-up CIPEC*, the online newsletter of the Canadian Industry Program for Energy Conservation (CIPEC) of Natural Resources Canada.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Bullfrog Power, Living Planet @ Work, The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Workplace greening** | [Leave a reply](#)

Solar Jobs in the U.S., and a Survey of Working Conditions

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

The newly released [U.S. Solar Jobs Census 2014](#) from the Solar Foundation states that there are 173,807 solar workers in the U.S., representing a growth rate of 21.8% since November 2013. The installation segment of the solar sector represents the single largest source of domestic employment growth in the U.S., more than doubling in size since 2010. The report also asserts that diversity is growing since 2013, and that wages remain competitive, with installers earning \$20-\$24 per hour; assemblers earning close to \$18 per hour, solar designers, \$30-\$40 per hour, and sales staff ranging widely from \$30 to \$60 per hour. [In his response to the release of the Census, the U.S. Energy Secretary highlights](#) the DOE Solar Instructor Training Network at nearly 400 community colleges in 49 states. He states that the

program has trained over 30,000 people since 2010, with a goal of 50,000 new solar workers trained by 2020.

The Solar Census covers all segments of the solar industry in the U.S. In contrast, *The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition Annual Scorecard* surveys and ranks solar PV manufacturers internationally, with the goal “to enhance transparency around environmental health, safety, and sustainability issues for communities, workers, and the environment”. [The latest edition, released in late November 2014](#) names manufacturers and ranks them on environmental issues such as Extended Producer Responsibility, water use, use of conflict minerals, and use of toxic chemicals. It also includes a category for Worker Rights and Health and Safety policies, measured by “a formal commitment to protecting worker rights, health, and safety that goes beyond compliance with local laws and regulations; commitment to improving employee wages; signage informing illiterate workers about minimum wage provisions; coverage of workforce by collective bargaining; workday case rates; recordable incident rates; and adoption of OHSAS for 100% of facilities”. Top ranked companies in the workers rights category in 2014, are Trina (owned by Chinese interests), SunPower (headquartered in California), and REC (recently taken over from Norwegian control by a Chinese company).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Job Creation](#), [Renewables](#), [Solar Industry](#), [Solar Jobs Census](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Blue and Green Authors Promote Sustainable Forestry over LNG Development in B.C.

Posted on [January 29, 2015](#) by [Ava Lightbody](#)

An article written jointly by Arnold Bercov, President of the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC), and two campaigners with the Wilderness Committee environmental group states: “We believe the B.C. government has gradually abandoned the province’s forestry heritage in pursuit of an unsustainable pipe dream: liquefied natural gas exports to Asia. The better option – for a resilient economy and for our climate – is to rebuild an innovative, sustainable forestry sector...What B.C. needs is legislation that supports an innovative and adaptable forest industry that creates local jobs and moves products up the value chain. Raw-log exports must be banned. Strong laws should also be enacted to protect the ecological values of our working forests for future generations”. See [“Trees are the Solution that LNG will never be”](#) in the *Times Colonist* (Dec. 21). The same article appeared in *The Tyee* (January 5, 2015) under the title [“Prosperity? Forestry not Fracking”](#). The PPWC has also been critical of the unequal distribution of funds in B.C.’s 2014 policy document, *Skills for Jobs Blueprint*, whereby training support for LNG jobs

appears to come at the expense of funding for other sectors, such as forestry. See [Local Knowledge and Government Funding Vital to Training the Next Generation of Foresters](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BC LNG](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [Fracking](#), [Paper and Woodworkers of Canada \(PPWC\)](#), [Pulp](#), [Sustainable Forestry](#), [Value-added](#), [Wilderness Committee](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Union/Community Cooperation Builds on De Blasio's Proposal to Reduce NYC GHG Emissions

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A strategy document released in December tackles the triple bottom line, with ten proposals that would create jobs – up to 40,000 per year – while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change. The report is notable for two reasons: it was produced by a broad group of community, environmental and labour union groups in New York, including ALIGN, the National AFL-CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, the BlueGreen Alliance, and the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance.

Secondly, the proposals in [Climate Works for All: A Platform for Reducing Emissions, Protecting Our Communities, and Creating Good Jobs for New Yorkers](#) are specific and detailed. They include mandatory energy efficiency retrofits for large buildings; installing solar energy systems on the rooftops of the 100 largest schools in New York City; investing in microgrids; investing in more bus lines and restoring train lines; improved flood protection and storm water management; improved commercial waste management and recycling.

For each of the ten proposals, there is a detailed discussion which includes consideration of workforce issues: for example, the energy efficiency retrofit proposal includes a recommendation that, “building owners should ensure that building operators are trained in energy-efficient operations. To this end, the City Council should pass Intro 13-2014, a bill that will require large buildings in New York City to have at least one building operator who is certified in energy efficient building maintenance”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Adaptation](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Mayor De Blasio](#), [microgrids](#), [New York](#), [New York City Environmental Justice Alliance](#), [NYC](#), [retrofitting](#), [Transportation](#), [Urban Adaptations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour Voices on the International Scene: G20 and Lima

Climate Conference

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

In November 2014, following the G20 Leaders Summit in Brisbane, Australia, the Labour 20 (L20) issued a statement calling on the G20 to take action on climate change and green growth, and to implement a plan for jobs and growth that reduces inequality. From the statement: G20 leaders should “commit to an ambitious and fair share in reducing emissions” to ensure the success of the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations; should contribute to the Green Climate Fund and support green bond development; commit to investing one percent of gross domestic product in infrastructure in every country, especially that which supports a transition to a low-carbon economy; support industrial transformation measures to protect the livelihoods of those in climate-vulnerable and energy-intensive sectors; support sustainable economic activities; and set attainable food and energy security targets. In addition, the L20 called for measures to promote inclusive growth by enabling women and youth to participate in secure jobs; responsible, green investment strategies; and trade and supply chains that help create decent work and safe work places. The L20 is convened by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). See [L20 website](#) and read a [summary of the L20 statement](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **G20, G20 Leaders Summit, Green Climate Fund, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), L20, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Lima Leaves Out Key Labour Language

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

Labour organizations are decrying the lack of language pertaining to just transition policies in the final negotiating agreement of the Climate Conference in Lima in December.

Organizations such as BlueGreen Alliance and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) lobbied leaders prior to the Conference, providing recommendations and wording suggestions to facilitate the inclusion of worker protection and reducing inequality in the climate agreement. [BlueGreen](#) advocated for improved international collaboration on best practices for just transition, and joined [TUED](#) in calling on the parties to prepare data on the positive and negative employment impacts of climate policies to support decision-making.

While a number of governments did raise labour issues at the Conference, co-chairs ultimately left them out of the text altogether. According to the International Trade Union Confederation, however, there was an overall trend of greater recognition of the centrality of just transition to sound climate policy, an active role played by labour organizations at the Conference, and the ongoing expansion and diversification of the climate justice movement, including increasing attention to labour issues. See [Lima climate conference deceives, but not the climate movement](#). A similar assessment was made by the Canadian Union of Public Employees in [Climate talks advance slowly, but activism on the rise](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BlueGreen Alliance](#), [Climate Agreement](#), [Climate Conference](#), [Climate Movement](#), [International Climate Summit](#), [Just Transition](#), [Lima](#), [Paris 2015](#), [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy \(TUED\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Getting Back on the Climate Track with “Made in Canada” Policies

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A new report from the David Suzuki Foundation overviews Canadian provincial and municipal policies that have effectively reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and calls upon the federal government to implement national policies that would coordinate and expand the ingenuity and skills of the existing green workforce. [Building on the Best: Keeping Canada's Climate Promise](#), also suggests that Canada would now be on track to meeting its 2020 targets if the best policies had been implemented in 2009, when Canada committed to action in Copenhagen.

The report focuses on policies that eliminated coal power, boosted renewable energy, and put a price on carbon, along with low-carbon transportation, energy efficiency, carbon capture and storage, and landfill and biogas. Ontario's staged coal phase-out, together with the introduction of the *Green Energy and Economy Act*, is lauded as evidence that major changes can be made rapidly and that green economics can be fruitful; the burgeoning Ontario renewable energy industry has created more than 20,000 jobs so far. B.C.'s carbon tax is commended for its rigor and broad application, while Québec's cap-and-trade system is favoured for its ability to link to international markets.

The report considers the application of successful policies to other jurisdictions in Canada, with each province given policy recommendations, and then rated according to their emissions reduction potential if the best policies were implemented. Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Atlantic provinces have the most potential for improvement. *Building on the Best* is based on a technical report, [Progress on Canadian Climate Policy](#), commissioned by DSF and prepared by Navius Research.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Policy](#), [Copenhagen Summit](#), [David Suzuki Foundation](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [Navius Research](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Taking a Leading Role in Provincial Climate Policy Initiatives

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

“Ontario: Tired of Waiting”, in *Corporate Knights* magazine summarizes the recent climate initiatives of Premier Kathleen Wynne. Most notably, Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and California issued a [Joint Statement on Climate Change at the United Nations Conference of the Parties in Lima on December 9, 2014](#) ([Joint Statement on Climate Change French version](#)) which pledges to “collaborate on mid-term greenhouse gas emissions reductions to maintain momentum toward 2050 targets. This commitment reflects...a collective will to take action and establish these targets prior to the 2015 Conference of the Parties”.

On December 10, Ontario announced it would host a pan-American dialogue on long-term climate action at a 2015 Climate Summit of the Americas in Toronto, from July 7-9, 2015. This gathering is likely to be the venue to launch Ontario’s carbon pricing plan, pledged on January 14th; read “Ontario to move forward with carbon-pricing plan this spring” from the *Globe and Mail*.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [2015 Climate Summit of the Americas](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Corporate Knights](#), [Kathleen Wynne](#), [Ontario-Quebec Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Carbon Tax Receives International Praise

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

While Ontario hasn’t stated whether it will choose a cap and trade system or a carbon tax, British Columbia’s carbon tax has received a recent flurry of praise. In a December 8 speech leading up to the COP Lima meetings, [World Bank President Jim Yong Kim stated](#) that “all countries should commit to put a price on carbon” and singled out British Columbia’s system as one of the most “powerful” examples...“It’s worth noting that British Columbia’s GDP has outperformed the rest of Canada’s after introduction of the tax”.

Read also: a *Globe and Mail* editorial of December 13, “[Why Stephen Harper should Love Carbon Taxes](#)”; Alberta Federation of Labour President Gil McGowan in “[Cutting Emissions needn’t kill Jobs, Says Oilsands Labour](#)” in *The Tyee* (December 8). Even well-established conservative Preston Manning, now part of the Ecofiscal Commission, appears to endorse the concept in a November 19 *Globe and Mail* article: “[How to Communicate a Good Idea: Carbon Pricing](#)”. Last word goes to Larry Sommers, former Secretary of the Treasury in the U.S., in his January article in the *Financial Times* titled “[Let this be the Year we Put a Proper Price on Carbon](#)”.

For more factual information about carbon taxes and how B.C. has achieved revenue neutrality, see [Proof Positive: The Mechanics and Impacts of British Columbia’s Carbon Tax](#), released by

Clean Energy Canada in December. [A new, much more detailed study](#) of the effect of a carbon tax, modelling with various revenue structures, was released by the state of Oregon in December.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Revenue Neutrality](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Public Health Concerns Lead to Fracking Bans in Quebec, New Brunswick, New York; and what about Workers Health Concerns?

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Quebec has had a moratorium on fracking since 2011, and in an interview with Radio-Canada in December, the Premier announced that the province would not allow further development. See [Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard says No to Shale Gas](#) and also in the *Montreal Gazette*, “[Couillard Rules out Fracking](#)”. The premier’s announcement came one day after a report from BAPE, Quebec’s environmental assessment agency, which cited risks to air and water quality, as well as potential increases in noise and light pollution. [The report is available only in French](#), or see the *Montreal Gazette* [summary in English](#). In New Brunswick, [recently-elected Premier Brian Gallant announced a fracking moratorium](#) at the end of the December legislative session – it will be voted on in February. In New York, a fracking moratorium was announced on the grounds that there were significant public health concerns about water contamination and air pollution, and insufficient scientific evidence to affirm the safety of fracking. “[Citing Health Risks, Cuomo Bans Fracking in New York State](#)” in the *New York Times* (Dec. 17). The article has a link to the report, *A Public Health Review of High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing for Shale Gas Development*. Also of interest: a January report from Friends of the Earth in the U.K.: [Making a Better Job of it: Why Renewables and Energy Efficiency are better for Jobs than Fracking](#) (January 2015) reviews and critiques economic impact studies from the U.S. and U.K. and concludes that fracking job estimates have been overstated, and that the jobs created are likely to be short-term, with as yet unknown health risks for workers. On that note, the U.K.’s Trades Union Congress on January 20 released its [TUC shale gas briefing: Fracking and workers’ health and safety issues](#), which briefly reviews some of the important research to date on the public safety issues, especially exposure to hydrocarbons and silica. It concludes that even with regulation in place, unions are needed to give workers the right to refuse unsafe work without the fear of penalty.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Fracking](#), [Fracking Moratorium](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Energy Board Consultation on Energy East Pipeline

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) released four preliminary assessments from its technical advisors on TransCanada's proposed Energy East pipeline project on January 15, 2015. [The report relating to socioeconomic aspects is by the Mowat Centre at the University of Toronto](#) and concludes that "TransCanada's estimated benefits are likely inflated while local benefits are expected to be small, particularly along the converted portion of the pipeline in northern Ontario". [The OEB Energy East Consultation webpage](#) compiles all technical and background papers and submissions to date. The deadline to make a public submission is February 6, 2015; a link is available on the OEB website. Also see [The Council of Canadians Energy East webpage](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Energy East, The Ontario Energy Board (OEB), TransCanada** | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental Investigation of Oil Sands Tailings Ponds Unlikely, and Alberta GHG Emissions Regulations Stalled

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Commission on Environmental Co-operation (CEC) was created under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to resolve environmental disputes and to provide an outlet for the public's environmental concerns. In 2010, Environmental Defense Canada and the Natural Resources Defense Council led a public submission which alleged that tailings ponds from Alberta's oil sands were leaking four billion liters each year, and that the federal government was not enforcing its own *Fisheries Act* to prevent damage to the Athabasca River. In July, 2015, the CEC ruled that the complaint merited further investigation, but according to a CBC report of January 12, the government is attempting to stop any such investigation. See [NAFTA scrutiny of oilsands tailings ponds opposed by Canada](#). The entire record of the complaint, with all documentation, is [available at the CEC website](#). In the meantime, four Alberta regulations for greenhouse gas emissions, previously set to expire on December 31, have been extended till June, to allow "government to explore new approaches and partnership opportunities" for a new climate change policy framework in 2015. The regulations affected are: The Specified Gas Emitters Regulation (SGER), Specified Gas Reporting Regulation (SGRR), Administrative Penalty

Regulation, and the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund Administration Regulation. See [the government's news release](#) (Dec. 19) and [an explanation of the current framework](#).
Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Athabasca, Environmental Defense Canada, NAFTA, Natural Resources Defense Council, North American Free Trade Agreement, The Commission on Environmental Co-operation (CEC)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Government Scientists Continue their Fight for their Right to Speak Out

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC) represents scientists employed in some 40 federal departments and agencies, including many directly involved with climate change. Having previously documented the culture of intimidation felt by their members in two reports, *The Big Chill* and *Vanishing Science*, the union is now addressing the issue at the bargaining table. Amongst the demands in the current round of bargaining: the right to speak about one's work; the right to attend professional development meetings and conferences; and the development of a scientific integrity policy. The bargaining proposals have both an [English version](#) and [French version](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Science, Environmental Science, PIPSC, The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Tools to Improve Sustainability at Universities

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by **Ava Lightbody**

A [Green Guide for Universities](#) published by Sustainia of Sweden in December, provides suggestions, tools, and best practices for university building maintenance, purchasing, transportation, and student and employee engagement. The main focus of Chapter 8, Employee and Student Engagement, is to urge the establishment of a sustainability office in each university. Case studies are presented from Yale, Cambridge, Peking, and Copenhagen University. Many Canadian universities have well-established Sustainability offices, including: [Queen's](#); [University of Toronto](#); [University of British Columbia](#); [Universite Laval](#). The 2014 Annual [STARS Review](#) by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education also presents case studies of sustainability at universities. The 2014 report features 105 higher education institutions, mainly from the United States, several from Canada, and some pilot international participants. The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) rates institutions on a host of practices, including Human Resources practices such as the presence of sustainability information

in professional development courses and new employee orientation, commuting and telecommuting policies, etc.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Assessment & Rating System \(STARS\)](#), [Sustainability Initiatives](#), [Sustainability Tracking](#), [Universities](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Obama Administration Issues New Methane Emissions Standards for the U.S.

Posted on **January 29, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A White House [Fact Sheet](#), released on January 14, announces a new goal to cut methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40 – 45% from 2012 levels by 2025. In general, reaction from environmental groups has been tepid, citing the need to address existing operations, and to rely more on regulation and less on voluntary industry action. Read “[Climate Hawks aren’t impressed with Obama’s Methane Plan](#)” in Mother Jones (Jan. 20) for a summary of reactions.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Emissions Regulations](#), [Methane](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

California’s New Climate Change Initiative

Posted on **January 28, 2015** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Re-elected Governor Jerry Brown used his inaugural speech in January to lay out three climate-related goals for 2030: Increase the proportion of electricity sourced from renewables to 50%; reduce petroleum use in cars and trucks by 50%; and double the energy efficiency of existing buildings in the state. Calling for “active collaboration at every stage with our scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, businesses and officials at all levels”, he envisioned changes such as more distributed power, expanded rooftop solar, micro-grids, and millions of electric and low-carbon vehicles. On January 1, the state’s cap and trade system expanded to include oil and gas refineries and distribution, and on January 5, a groundbreaking ceremony was held to launch the controversial high-speed rail line between San Francisco and Los Angeles, due for completion in 2028. Read the [Legal Planet analysis](#).

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