

Work and Climate Change Report

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

Canadian government climate priorities detailed in Mandate Letters to Ministers

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

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

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

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

- With the support of the Minister of Natural Resources, introduce a Clean Electricity Standard to achieve a net-zero clean electricity grid by 2035 and achieve a 100 per cent net-zero emitting electricity future.
- Enact a strengthened Canadian Environmental Protection Act to protect everyone, including people most vulnerable to harm from toxic substances and those living in communities where exposure is high.
- Identify, and prioritize the clean-up of, contaminated sites in areas where Indigenous Peoples, racialized and low-income Canadians live.
- Recognize the "right to a healthy environment" in federal law and introduce legislation to require the development of an environmental justice strategy and the examination of the link between race, socio-economic status and exposure to environmental risk.
- Work with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and with the support of the Minister of Natural Resources, to accelerate our G20 commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies from 2025 to 2023, and develop a plan to phase out public financing of the fossil fuel sector, including by federal Crown corporations.
- With the support of the Minister of Natural Resources, cap oil and gas sector emissions at current levels and ensure that the sector makes an ambitious and achievable contribution to meeting the country's 2030 climate goals. This effort will take into account the advice of the Net-Zero Advisory Body and others, including provinces and territories, Indigenous Peoples, industry and civil society, and require the oil and gas sector to reduce emissions at a pace and on a scale needed to align with the achievement of net-zero emissions by 2050, with five-year targets to stay on track.
- Make progress on methane emission reductions by developing a plan to reduce emissions across the broader Canadian economy consistent with the Global Methane Pledge and require through regulations the reduction of oil and gas methane emissions in Canada by at least 75 per cent below 2012 levels by 2030.

- In collaboration with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Minister of Indigenous Services, continue to work in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation to address climate change and its impacts, and chart collaborative strategies.
- Work with the Minister of Natural Resources to help protect old growth forests, notably in British Columbia, by reaching a nature agreement with B.C., establishing a \$50 million B.C. Old Growth Nature Fund, and ensuring First Nations, local communities and workers are partners in shaping the path forward for nature protection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Natural Resources is also charged with:

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

Building Code of Canada to specify firefighter and first responder safety as a core objective. To ensure effective implementation of these performance standards, work with partners to develop strategies around incentives, training programs and pilot initiatives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced the formation of a new Net-Zero Advisory Council in a [press release](#) on December 13. The Council will focus on how to achieve the 2030 and net-zero targets through “near term and foundational actions the government and others can take”. The goal is “to grow the green economy, while considering a just transition and affordability. The Council will also advise on global trends to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the

importance and use of carbon sinks.” The eight members of the Advisory Council are mainly from business and academic backgrounds, including Newfoundland-born Angela V. Carter, Associate Professor at University of Waterloo and author of *Fossilized: Environmental Policy in Canada's Petro-Provinces* (UBC, 2020).

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

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Some labour union reflections on COP26

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

In *“After Glasgow : Canadian Labour Unions Confront The Most Exclusionary COP Conference In History”* (*Our Times*, Dec. 16), Sune Sandbeck and Sari Sairanen of Unifor describe their experiences as union delegates to the events – where unionists and even some countries were vastly outnumbered by the 503 delegates from the fossil fuel industry . The article asserts that, despite much disappointment in the COP26 results,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From the article :

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

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

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

At its annual convention held in early December, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) passed three environmental resolutions, announced and summarized in a [press release](#) (Dec. 4). These included calls for 1. just transition for workers, 2. a green new deal that includes providing union jobs through an expanded public sector, modernizes public infrastructure, recognizes Indigenous rights and treaties; and builds a just society, and 3. a call for the Alberta Investment Management Corp. (AIMCo) to "quantify the climate risks of its investments and adopt a path to net

zero” in the pension funds it manages. Response from AIMCo is presented in [an article in *Benefits Canada*](#) , which notes that AUPE members have a seat on the AIMCo sponsors’ Board through their membership in the Local Authorities Pension Plan.

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

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

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Alberta Union of Provincial Employees](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Divestment](#), [government employees](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

building performance requirements, mandatory energy performance benchmarking and disclosure programs, and improved incentive programs, such as innovative loan programs, such as property-assessed clean energy (PACE) and on-bill financing (OBF), among programs.

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

Related reading: “[Colleges get set to train Canada’s green workforce](#)” (National Observer, Dec. 14) , which highlights Toronto’s Centennial College for resurrecting an architectural technology course with a focus on green building design and technology.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

underutilized, and in addition to offering protection, deliver multiple benefits, including improved biodiversity, carbon sequestration and storage, enhanced wellbeing and opportunities for recreational activities.

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

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

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

U.S. President Biden's *Build Back Better Act* passed the U.S. House of Representatives in November, including incentives to encourage adoption of electric vehicles: a consumer tax credit of \$7,500 for electric vehicles made in the U.S., and an additional \$4,500 tax credit if the vehicle was made with union labour. The news was [welcomed by U.S. auto workers' union UAW](#), but in Canada, workers and the government are alarmed. A press release from Unifor, the Canadian auto workers' union, is titled "[President Biden needs to realize he is shooting U.S. auto sector in the foot](#)", stating: "The fact is U.S. assembly plants couldn't survive without the engines and other components we make here. For that matter, he can't build a sustainable BEV industry without the nickel, cobalt, manganese and other minerals coming out of Canada, either." The business-oriented *Financial Post* published "[Why America's rush to EVs might kill the entire Canadian auto parts business](#)". As reported by [CBC News](#), federal government officials have threatened retaliatory trade measures, arguing that the Buy American provisions amount to a 34 per cent tariff on electric vehicles assembled in Canada and violate the terms of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). An alternate solution is described in "[Canada willing to 'align' EV incentives with U.S. to avert tax-credit crisis: Trudeau](#)" (*Toronto Star*, Dec.13). *CTV News* offers an [Explainer](#) which also summarizes reactions from government, industry, and labour.

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

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Auto Industry](#), [Build Back Better](#), [electric vehicle manufacture](#), [local content rules](#), [USMCA](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

A new publication was **released** by The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) on December 13, reporting emissions data for 2019 and 2020 in the Region of Durham, Halton Region, City of Hamilton, Region of Peel, and City of Toronto – home to 7.7 million people and representing 44% of Ontario’s emissions. **2019-2020 Carbon Emissions Inventory in the GTHA** provides data on the major sources of emissions across the region: buildings, transportation, industry, waste, and agriculture, with the greatest amounts coming from buildings (45%) and transportation (35%). Comparison over the five years since 2015 shows emissions moving in the wrong direction – up by about 2.0%, despite decreases in emissions due to the pandemic in 2020. The report concludes that the GTHA is not on track to reduce emissions in line with local or international 2030 climate commitments, makes policy recommendations for municipalities. The TAF report gives examples of the technological changes required, and states that only leadership is missing.

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

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Increasing Heat stress as an occupational health issue

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

These findings are consistent with an anecdotal report [“Workers Pick Job Stability Over Higher Wages as Oil Rig Operator Scrambles for Crews”](#) (*The Energy Mix*, Sept. 14), which reports on the recruitment difficulties of the oil and gas industry. The article quotes the head of the Canadian Association of Energy Contractors, who speaks of shift in the industry, “citing the premium many younger workers place on work-life balance, along with the federal government’s talk about just transition legislation.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Also of interest: The Commissioner’s [Report #4: Emissions Reductions Fund – Natural Resources Canada](#), which is a scathing rebuke to the department and a catalogue of poor, hasty design and inaccurate measurement of the impacts of the Onshore Emissions Reduction Fund. The Fund, launched in 2020 as part of the federal Covid-19 Economic Response Plan, offered \$675 million in the form of interest-free loans and non-repayable grants with the stated goals of helping land-based oil and gas companies attract investment, retain jobs, and reduce emissions. Amongst the failings: Natural Resources Canada failed to use recognized GHG accounting principles to measure the GHG reductions, and awarded maximum grants to all applicants without assessing value for tax-payers money. Further, “Natural Resources Canada indicated that one of the rationales for the Onshore Program was to help maintain jobs in the oil and gas sector. However, we found that the department did not include job retention as a feature in the program’s design. For example, it did not list job retention as an eligibility condition or an assessment criterion for funding decisions. The department also did not include job retention or creation in the oil and gas sector as a performance indicator for the Onshore Program. However, it planned to request this information from funded companies as part of the contribution agreements’ reporting requirements.” Natural Resources Canada has accepted this criticism and promises to “provide annual and periodic reporting on greenhouse gas emission reductions and jobs (direct and indirect) from ERF-funded projects, as new information becomes available.” The new Minister of Natural Resources, Jonathan Wilkinson, [announced a review of the program on November 26](#)

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

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

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

Responding to over a year of intense pressure, the government of B.C. *DID* announce new plans in November, to defer logging on 2.6 million hectares of at-risk old growth forests for two years or so, pending the approval of First Nations – a compromise policy which satisfied no one. **“BC Paused a Lot of Old-Growth Logging. Now What?”** (*The Tyee*, Nov. 8) explains background to the decision and the opposition from the United Steelworkers, whose members work in the forestry sector . The **USW press release** accuses the government of selling out the workers. **“Protecting some old growth isn't enough. B.C. needs a Forest Revolution”** and **“Counting the Job Costs of halting old growth logging”** expand on the economic arguments for the clearcutting of B.C.'s forests. (*The Tyee*, Nov. 10). B.C. now needs new research, to count the dollars required to re-build lives and infrastructure after this disaster.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Disasters](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [Forestry Industry](#) | [2 Replies](#)

Wind and solar companies perform poorly re labour and human rights

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

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

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

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

COP26 takeaways for Canada and the labour movement

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

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

“Calls upon Parties to accelerate the development, deployment and dissemination of technologies, and the adoption of policies, to transition towards low-emission energy systems, including by rapidly scaling up the deployment of clean power generation and energy efficiency measures, including accelerating efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, while providing targeted support to the poorest and most vulnerable in line with national circumstances and recognizing the need for support towards a just transition;”

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

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

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

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

Key Issues:

On Just Transition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

On Ending new fossil fuel production and subsidies:

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

On November 4, a federal [press release](#) states that Canada has signed the Statement on International Public Support for the Clean Energy Transition, stating that ...“Canada and other signatories will further prioritize support for clean technology and end *new* direct public support for the *international unabated* fossil fuel sector by the end of 2022, except in limited and clearly defined circumstances that are consistent with the 1.5 degree Celsius warming limit and the goals of the Paris Agreement.” [emphasis by the editor]. Climate Action Network Canada (CAN-Rac) sums up that commitment and hopeful reactions by many in [“Canada joins historic commitment to end international fossil fuel finance by end of 2022”](#) . However, for context, the CAN-Rac press release also notes [Canada’s Big Oil Reality Check](#), a report released on November 3 by Oil Change International and Environmental Defence Canada. It assesses the climate plans of eight Canadian oil and gas producers (including Cenovus, Suncor, Canadian Natural Resources Ltd , ExxonMobil and Imperial Oil ,and Shell Canada), and concludes that their current business plans to 2030 put them on track to expand annual oil and gas production in Canada by nearly 30% above 2020 levels. Also, at a COP side event on November 12, [The Fossil](#)

Fueled 5 report called out the governments of Canada, the U.K., the United States, Norway, and Australia for the huge gap between their net zero targets and climate pledges and their public support for fossil fuel production. In the case of Canada, the report states that the government has provided approximately \$17 billion in public finance to three fossil fuel pipelines between 2018 and 2020. **The Fossil Fueled 5** was produced by the University of Sussex in cooperation with the **Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative** and their regional partners in each of the 5 countries – Uplift (UK), Oil Change International (USA), Greenpeace (Norway), The Australia Institute (Australia) and Stand.earth (Canada).

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

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

Union participation at COP26:

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

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

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

The **International Transport Workers Federation** (ITF) mounted a focused campaign, including a new report co-released on November 10 with C40 Cities. Their original research modelled the impacts of doubling public transportation in five major cities – Houston, Jakarta, Johannesburg, London and Milan and demonstrated that it create tens of millions of jobs worldwide (summarized by an **ITF press release** and available as the full report, **Making COP26 Count: How investing in public transport this decade can protect our jobs, our climate, our future**).

Also on November 10, the ITF **announced** that a tripartite Just Transition Maritime Task Force will be formed, to drive decarbonization and support seafarers through shipping's green transition. Official partners include the UN Global Compact and the International Labour Organization, as well as the ITF representing workers and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), representing ship owners. The ITF Sustainable Shipping Position Paper, titled *The Green Horizon We See Beyond the Big Blue*, is available [from this link](#).

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

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

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

Another related *Corporate Knights* article describes youth-driven campaigns which have challenged pension plans to acknowledge and adjust to climate risk. *“How young people are using climate litigation to fight for their future”* focuses on youth activism targeting pension funds. It describes a years-long challenge to the Retail Employees Superannuation Trust (REST) in Australia, which ultimately ended in the pension fund settling a lawsuit out of court by acknowledging that “climate change is a material, direct and current financial risk” that could “lead to catastrophic economic and social consequences.” The fund also agreed to be more proactive and “ensure that investment managers take active steps to consider, measure and manage financial risks posed by climate change and other relevant ESG risks.” A second example describes the current activist campaign calling for the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) to phase out all current fossil fuel investments by 2025 and completely decarbonize its portfolio by 2030. Retired teachers and high school students have mobilized in Toronto, under the leadership of Shift Action for Pension Wealth and Planet Health (Shift), which is organizing similar campaigns at the ten largest Canadian pension funds. In September 2021, the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan Board **announced** “industry-leading targets to reduce portfolio carbon emissions intensity by 45% by 2025 and two-thirds (67%) by 2030, compared to its 2019 baseline. These emission reduction targets cover all the Fund's real assets, private natural resources, equity and corporate credit holdings across public and private markets, including external managers.” The WCR has more detail [here](#).

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

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

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

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

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

This research comes as the government has a stated goal to reach 2 million green jobs by 2030, and to do so, has initiated a [Green Jobs Task Force](#), and a multitude of studies, plans and consultations. Some sense and summary of all these comes in the [Green Jobs Report](#) released by the U.K. Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee on October 25. It is the result of a consultation process which received 65 submissions. Amongst the recommendations: based on the recent failure of the government's Green Homes Grant voucher scheme, it is clear that the Government urgently needs to set out a retrofit skills strategy.

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

New website launched to promote greener international trade agreements

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

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

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

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

Canada signs on to COP26 Just Transition Declaration

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

At the end of week one of the Conference of the Parties in Glasgow (COP26), Canada signed on to the **Just Transition Declaration**, along with 14 other countries, including the UK, USA, much of the EU, and New Zealand. The declaration cites the preamble from the Paris Agreement and the 2015 ILO Guidelines for Just Transition, and states that signatories recognize their role to ensure a transition that is

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As it has for 26 years, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released its Alternative Federal Budget, offering progressive, costed policy choices for Canada, along with a plan to pay for them. This year’s AFB, released on November 9, is titled: **Mission Critical: A Just and Equitable Recovery**, which focuses on key issues which include: strengthening and expanding the existing health care system, implementing universal public child care, reforming Canada’s income security system, addressing the housing crisis, and moving forward on reconciliation with First Nations peoples. Climate

action is addressed in Chapter 7, “Physical Infrastructure for People, Biodiversity and Planet”, and relates to Chapter 6, “A Vision for Job Creation and Decent Work”.

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

Other notable climate-related proposals: 1. Adjust the existing revenue-recycling formula for the national carbon pricing system by reallocating the majority of federal revenue away from middle-to-high-income households and toward emission reduction initiatives in the provinces where revenue is generated. 2. Establish a new federal economic diversification crown corporation which would prioritize direct public ownership of new infrastructure, funded by \$15 billion per year over five years to allow it to invest at the required scale. 3. Reconstitute the Canada Infrastructure Bank to become a fully publicly financed bank with a mandate to invest in publicly owned and publicly operated infrastructure (and to require Community Benefits Agreements in those projects). The new CIB would also provide low-cost loans to municipalities, Indigenous governments, and other public bodies to scale up important infrastructure projects that are in the public interest, and would include the new Economic Diversification Crown Corporation.

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

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

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

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

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

The Sink or Swim discussion starts from a fundamental statement that “achieving success is also about more than supporting affected workers in transition-vulnerable companies or sectors. Success will come from generating strong and inclusive economic growth that improves the wellbeing of all Canadians.” The ensuing discussion recognizes that multinational companies have weak connections and relationships to local communities, making them more likely to relocate than to re-invest. Using census data, it identifies 55 communities of 10,000 people or more that have more than 3% of their workforce employed in transition-vulnerable sectors, highlighting the Wood Buffalo area in the oil sands of Alberta, and Thompson Manitoba, a nickel-mining community. The report offers recommendations for communities, focusing on the critical areas of infrastructure investment, financing, and the need for local capacity to analyze labour markets and financial opportunities—using the examples of the InvestEU advisory hub and the Colorado Office of Just Transition.

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

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

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

Nova Scotia's Minister of Environment introduced the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* to the Legislature on October 27 – the press release is [here](#). It builds on a previous Bill which was never enacted, with the important distinction that the EGCCRAct enshrines climate action goals and timelines into law. The new legislation follows a **public consultation** in 2021, and is built on four principles: equity, sustainable development, a circular economy, and “Netukulimk” (a Mi'kmaq word defined as “the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community by achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity or productivity of the environment”).

The specific goals include: reducing total GHG emissions to at least 53% below 2005 levels by 2030; ensuring at least 30% of new passenger vehicles are zero-emissions by 2030; a requirement that any new build or major retrofit in government buildings, including schools and hospitals, that enters the planning stage after 2022, be net-zero energy performance and climate resilient; decrease greenhouse gas emissions across Government-owned buildings by 75% by the year 2035; phase out of coal-fired electricity generation by 2030, with 80% of electricity supplied by renewable energy by 2030. The problematic issue of forestry policy is finally addressed with a deadline of 2023 to implement the ecological forestry approach for Crown lands, as recommended in the 2018 Lahey report, “An Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia”.

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

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

Reaction to the legislation, with a goal-by-goal analysis is available from Nova Scotia's Ecology Action Centre, is [here](#) . One of the sector- specific pieces is a call for [an end to oil and gas production and a Just Transition for workers](#) .

Despite the fact that there is currently no oil and gas production in Nova Scotia, the EAC highlights the danger that the [Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board \(CNSOPB\)](#) issued a call for bids in May 2021.

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

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

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

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

Accompanying the report is [a database](#) with much more information about individual institutions.

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

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

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

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

Prime Minister Trudeau announced his appointments to Cabinet on October 26, and one of the strongest symbolic appointments was that of Steven Guilbeault as the new Minister of Environment and Climate Change. It appears that Trudeau did not (yet) follow the demands in [Unifor’s October 22 letter to the Prime Minister](#), which included “Establish a Just Transition Ministry and Just Transition Fund, partially financed through levies on large industrial emitters, with the mandate to support workers affected by climate-related job displacements through enhanced income insurance, pension bridging, severance pay, retraining and relocation support, and local just transition centres.” However, the new

appointments sent an unmistakable signal, as described in the *National Observer* article [“Cabinet shuffle signals support for climate, not oil and gas”](#). The previous ECC Minister, Johnathan Wilkinson, was shifted to the ministry of Natural Resources – replacing Seamus O’Regan, who had been accused of a too-cozy relationship with the fossil fuel industry which falls under the Natural Resources portfolio. The *National Observer* article highlights the continued importance of Wilkinson on the climate change file.

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

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

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

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

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

[CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#) is the new climate strategy document released by the B.C. government on October 25. The [press release](#) summarizes the framework of eight pathways to action: Low Carbon Energy; Transportation; Buildings ; Communities; Industry, including Oil and Gas ; Forest Bioeconomy; Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries; and Negative Emissions Technologies. Some of the flagship proposals include an increase to the carbon price; stronger regulations for methane emissions (by 2035); new requirements to make all new buildings zero-carbon by 2030; 100% adoption of zero-emission vehicles by 2030 and new ZEV targets for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles. What’s missing? Glaringly, no reduction of fossil fuel subsidies, no end to fracking of Liquefied Natural Gas.

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

B.C.'s new climate plan" (*The Tyee*, Oct. 26) highlighting that it will be impossible to meet GHG emissions reduction targets while supporting the LNG industry in the province.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some news from a worker's point of view:

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

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

In addition, COP26 Coalition has organized a **People's Climate Justice Summit** in Glasgow, composed of 150 sessions which will focus on indigenous struggles, racial justice, youth issues, and worker and labour union perspectives. Many, but not all, worker-related sessions will be held on November 8 as a "Just Transition Hub" – a full day of sessions hosted by the Friends of the Earth Scotland, Just Transition Partnership, Platform, STUC, TUC and War on Want. The full program, with the ability to register is [here](#): those unable to travel to Glasgow can register as "Online- only" to receive a Zoom link for a livestream of some of the sessions. The online program includes the opening panel for the Just Transition Hub:

"Here and Everywhere: Building our Power", to be led by Asad Rehman, (War on Want), Sean Sweeney,(TUED), Roz Foyer, (STUC), and Denise Christie, (FBU). Other sessions available online include **"UK climate jobs rooted in global solidarity and climate justice"** and **"Just Transition in Latin America, from Decarbonization to Transformation"**.

In-person only sessions, which tend to have a U.K. focus, include: **"Lessons from the Frontline: Climate crisis resistance from around the world"**; **"Are green jobs great jobs, or are green jobs rubbish jobs?"**; **"The Lucas Plan for Climate? How workers are fighting to future-proof industry"**; **"Geared Up: Campaigns for Greener Transport"**; **"Air tight: Campaigns for home retrofits"**; **"Organising the unorganised: tactics and strategies for power in new industries"**; and **"Changing workplaces, changing jobs: organising for power in unionised workplaces"** – a training session led by Prospect union. Other sessions, outside of the Just Transition Hub, (in-person only), include **"Trade Unions and Climate Action"**, a training session led by the Ella Baker School of Organizing and **"International Trade Union Forum on Social and Ecological Transitions: what's next?"**, reporting on the International Trade Union Forum on Ecological and Social Transitions which took place for 6 days during June 2021, with more than 140 organizations from about 60 countries.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quebec bans fossil fuel exploration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Across Canada:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Which countries are historically responsible for climate change?](#) is a new analysis released by Carbon Brief on October 5, and Canada scores high: #10 in the world for total historical emissions, and #1 as the worst offender per capita

(calculated as cumulative emissions in each year divided by the current population – which implicitly assigns responsibility for the past to those alive today). Time to finally lay to rest that old chestnut that Canada’s contribution to the climate crisis is relatively insignificant, and we should wait till the bigger countries act to cut our own emissions.

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

Media summaries include: [“The countries most responsible for climate crisis revealed”](#) reposted from *The Guardian* by the *National Observer*; [“Any way you slice it, Canada is one of the worst emitters on the planet”](#) (*National Observer*, Oct. 7) ; and [“Historical emissions tally paints clearer picture of climate responsibility”](#) (*Energy Mix*, Oct. 12).

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

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

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

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

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

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

The existing Canadian target for reducing methane emissions from the oil and gas sector is a reduction of 40–45 percent below 2012 levels by 2025. According to the [October 11 press release](#), that will increase, with a commitment “... to developing a plan to reduce methane emissions across the broader Canadian economy and to reducing oil and gas methane emissions by at least 75 percent below 2012 levels by 2030”. It is noteworthy that the Minister also states: “our approach will include regulations” , since the government has been criticized for relying more on taxpayer-funded incentives than regulation – as in [“Canada supports global pledge to slash oil and gas methane”](#) (Oct. 13). That article quotes Julia Levine of Environmental Defence, who states: ““What we see in Canada is that despite the fact negative or low-cost (methane reductions) could be achieved through regulations, the federal government last year set up a \$750-

million emission reduction fund (that) is paying companies to reduce their methane emissions” “These are technologies that allow companies to have less leakage and, therefore, more product they can sell” So we’re subsidizing their ability to generate more profit from their products.”

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

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

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

Posted on [October 12, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IndustriALL Europe launches Just Transition campaign

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

On September 23, the global labour federation IndustriALL issued a [press release](#) announcing that "IndustriAll Europe's Executive Committee has agreed on a European campaign for a Just Transition for industrial workers." From 25 October to 10 November, member organisations will hold a variety of national campaigns and events, which will be accompanied by intensified political lobbying at EU level and a pan-European social media campaign. The campaign is planned to extend beyond the two-week action, with a series of sectoral round table discussions at regional level and joint actions with IndustriALL Global in connection with COP26 in Glasgow. The political platform statement adopted by the European Executive Committee is titled **Just Transition: 'Nothing About Us, Without Us!**'. It includes 5 demands, including the completion of "a clear, granular mapping of the employment consequences of a shift towards climate-neutral industries", and a "European legal framework.... to ensure workers have the right to co-decision during the transition in their workplaces and regions, strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining." A more complete statement of IndustriALL Europe's priorities comes in the [Strategic Plan 2021-2023](#) from their Congress in summer 2021.

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

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

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

Safeguarding the UK’s manufacturing jobs with climate action: carbon leakage and jobs is a September Briefing paper from the U.K. Trades Union Congress. The report estimates that between 368,000 – 667,000 jobs could be offshored from Britain if industries fail to meet climate targets and the UK falls behind other countries on climate action.

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

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

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

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

A Plan for Green Buildings, Jobs and Prosperity for Ontario was released on September 15 by Environmental Defence and the Ontario Clean Air Alliance. It is a plain-language guide to why and how to reduce carbon emissions from “fossil gas” (aka natural gas) and a summary of the co-benefits of doing so: create good green jobs, lower energy bills, and economic growth. The report states that Ontario’s carbon emissions from power generation are on track to increase by more than 300% by 2030, and offers specific actions which would instead reduce emissions from fossil gas by 30 – 40%.

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

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

Just Transition consultation extended as fossils try to mobilize

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

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

Some news is dribbling out however:

1. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released their [brief submission](#) on October 1, written by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood. The submission limits itself to answering the questions posed in the discussion paper, but makes a few key points: for example, "One specific concern in the context of a just transition is the definition of a worker in need of transition support. Fossil fuel workers are disproportionately high-income white men, but many other workers in fossil fuel communities who depend indirectly on the industry, such as food service and accommodation workers, are more likely to be women, immigrants, racialized workers and other marginalized people. If a "just transition" policy does not have broad coverage it can make inequality worse." The submission concludes: "The regulatory phase-out of coal-powered electricity generation in Canada provides a very clear model for how this can and should be done. Once a clear deadline is set, firms and workers can begin to plan for the transition into new industries. In contrast, the absence of a clear end date for oil and gas production encourages firms and workers to continue to invest into what will inevitably become stranded assets and stranded careers." A more complete discussion was published by the CCPA in [Roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act: A path to a clean and inclusive economy](#).

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

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

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

Electric vehicle lobby group launches in Canada as GM announces more EV truck production is coming to CAMI in Ontario

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

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

More Electric Freight Vehicles coming to Canada

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

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

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

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **electric trucks, electric vehicle manufacture, Trucking Industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

On September 22, for the first time in 16 years, the World Health Organization updated its **Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs)** , based on the rapidly growing scientific evidence that air pollutants can effect human health at even lower concentrations than previously understood. WHO’s new guidelines recommend air quality levels for 6 “classic pollutants”:

particulate matter (PM), ozone (O₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and carbon monoxide (CO), and also highlight good practices for the management of certain types of particulates for which there is not yet sufficient evidence to set guideline levels (for example, black carbon/elemental carbon, ultrafine particles, particles originating from sand and dust storms). The press release states: “Clean air should be a fundamental human right and a necessary condition for healthy and productive societies. However, despite some improvements in air quality over the past three decades, millions of people continue to die prematurely, often affecting the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.” The accompanying [Fact Sheet](#) provides key statistics, and [a report in The Guardian](#) summarizes some of the most shocking, including:

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

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [cities](#), [climate change and health](#), [health impacts of climate change](#), [Urban Emissions](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

An [Open Letter](#) sent to the B.C. government in September is yet another manifestation of the frustration and impatience of activists amidst ongoing protests in B.C. – notably the [Fairy Creek blockade](#), the [Coastal GasLink pipeline](#) and the [Trans Mountain pipeline](#) protests. The [Open Letter](#) was signed by approximately 200 organizations – mainly environmental and social justice activists, and including the [Climate Emergency Unit](#), which has been instrumental in the formation of the [BC Climate Emergency Campaign](#). Signatories also include five labour unions, the biggest being the Public Service Alliance of Canada (BC Region). The Open Letter is described more fully in a [National Observer article](#), but can be summarized by its ten demands: 1. Set binding climate targets based on science and justice; 2. Invest in a thriving, regenerative, zero emissions economy 3. Rapidly wind down all fossil fuel production 4. End fossil fuel subsidies and make polluters pay (by 2022) 5. Leave no-one behind – workers and communities 6. Protect and restore nature 7. Invest in local, organic, regenerative agriculture and food systems 8. Accelerate the transition to zero emission transportation 9. Accelerate the transition to zero emission buildings (including ban new natural gas connections in new buildings as of 2022) 10. Track and report progress on these actions every year.

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

Tyee, Oct. 1) says that the plan, even if it succeeds, will reduce only 1.3 per cent of B.C.'s total emissions, and that what is needed is a complete overhaul of the B.C. Utilities Commission.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Climate Activism](#), [electrification](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reaction from pension activist group ShiftAction states that the : “move to exclude investments in oil producers from its portfolio by the end of 2022 is a welcome and significant move that improves the CDPQ’s position as a climate leader among Canada’s major financial institutions. It is amazing that it took until 2021 for a Canadian pension fund to finally

recognize that protecting our retirement savings from the worsening climate crisis inevitably requires abandoning market exposure to high-risk fossil fuels.... To achieve climate safety, investment in fossil gas production and infrastructure must also be urgently phased out..... The CDPQ's progress stands in stark contrast to the Canada Pension Plan, whose CEO said earlier this year that the Canada Pension Plan has no plans to institute a blanket screen on oil and gas during his tenure." (Neither does the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan, as quoted in the Toronto Star article, "[Canada's oil industry dealt a financial blow as pension giant divests itself of investment in fossil fuel](#)").

New Canadian campaign demands information from pension fund managers

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

Global divestment momentum

All of this is part of the growing momentum of the divestment movement in the lead-up to COP26. On September 10, after years of resisting activist campaigns, [Harvard University announced](#) that its \$42 billion endowment will bar any future investments in coal, oil and gas. [Stand.earth states](#): "this landmark announcement marks a tipping point that will cascade throughout mainstream endowments and financial institutions globally." On September 22, Reuters reported "[MacArthur Foundation joins investment shift away fossil fuels](#)", stating that the \$8.2 billion fund "is the largest foundation in the world to commit publicly to fossil-fuel divestment to date." Bill McKibben, one of the architects of the global divestment movement, sums it all up, including the new Caisse de dépôt climate policy, in his article "[Starving the Beast](#)" (*Crucial Years*, Sept. 29).

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

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

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

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

The initiative is summarized in "[As climate change warms workplaces, Biden directs safety agency to draft heat rules for workers](#)" (*Washington Post*, Sept. 20) and in "[Extreme Heat Is Killing Workers, So the White House Is](#)

Adding Protections” (*Vice Motherboard*, Sept 23), which describes the regulation in Washington, California and Minnesota, as well as legislation currently under debate in Texas, which would eliminate requirements for 10-minute water breaks every four hours. A new national standard would set minimum levels under which state regulations could not descend.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On September 18, the EU and U.S. launched a **Global Methane Pledge**, promising to reduce methane emissions by 30% from 2020 levels by 2030 – which is a step in the right direction, but fails to meet the target of 45% reduction in this decade , as called for by the UNEP in its **Global Methane Assessment Report** released in May 2021. However, according to *Inside Climate News*, “**Global Methane Pledge Offers Hope on Climate in Lead Up to Glasgow**”, and *The Conversation U.S.* describes “**Biden urges countries to slash methane emissions 30% – here’s why it’s crucial for protecting climate and health, and how it can pay for itself**” (Sept. 17). It remains to be seen if Canada will join the eight countries already signed on to the new Methane Pledge; in Canada, the existing **regulations for methane emissions from the oil and gas industry** target a reduction by 40% to 45% below 2012 levels by 2025. The **Liberal election platform** pledged to “Require oil and gas companies to reduce methane emissions by at least 75% below 2012 levels by 2030 and work to reduce methane emissions across the broader economy.” (More Canadian context **appears in The Energy Mix**, and from the WCR **here**, which explains the federal-provincial equivalency agreement re methane regulations.

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

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

Also on September 21, China’s leader Xi Jinping announced to the United Nations General Assembly that China “will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad.” The impact, as explained **here by the New York Times**, can be huge, given that “China built more than three times more new coal power capacity than all other countries in the world combined” last year. “**Betting on a low-carbon future’: why China is ending foreign coal investment**” (*The Guardian*, Sept. 22)

highlights two important points: 1. the announcement signals that China is serious about climate action even though it hasn't confirmed attendance at COP26, and 2. Real climate progress lies in reduction of China's domestic coal production, which is 10 times higher than foreign production according to [the report in Germany's DW](#) . So far, China has not specified plans re domestic production, nor re the timing of its commitment to end coal financing.

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

#Wemaketomorrow is an activist campaign coordinated by the Trade Union Caucus of the COP26 Coalition. Planning and actions for COP26 are already underway at <https://www.wemaketomorrow.org/> . The [main COP26 Coalition website](#) organizes The People's Summit, "a global convergence space for movements, campaigns and civil society", which this year, because of Covid-19, will feature in-person and virtual events.

More to come!

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

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

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

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

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

And those movement voices are already speaking up. On September 21, Climate Action Network Canada issued a press release, ["Environmental organizations representing millions of Canadians urges Prime Minister Trudeau to listen to the majority – climate-concerned voters – and swiftly fulfil climate promises"](#) – which states that nearly 60 per cent of Canadians voted for parties with strong climate commitments, and announces a new coalition called [No more Delays](#), supported by Greenpeace Canada, Environmental Defence, SumofUs, Stand.earth, Climate Emergency Unit, Équiterre,

Citizens Climate Lobby Canada, Climate Reality Project Canada, Grandmothers Advocacy Network and Climate Action Network Canada – Réseau action climat Canada (CAN-Rac Canada).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- “Require oil and gas companies to reduce methane emissions by at least 75% below 2012 levels by 2030 and work to reduce methane emissions across the broader economy”;
- “Set 2025 and 2030 milestones based on the advice of the Net-Zero Advisory Body to ensure reduction levels are ambitious and achievable and that the oil and gas sector makes a meaningful contribution to meeting the nation’s 2030 climate goals.”;
- “Ban thermal coal exports from and through Canada no later than 2030.”;
- “Accelerate our G20 commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies from 2025 to 2023.
- Develop a plan to phase-out public financing of the fossil fuel sector, including from Crown corporations, consistent with our commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.”
- “Introduce a Clean Electricity Standard that will set Canada on a path to cut more emissions by 2030 and to achieve a 100% net-zero emitting electricity system by 2035.”
- “Launch a National Net-zero Emissions Building Strategy, which will chart a path to net-zero emissions from buildings by 2050 with ambitious milestones along the way.”
- “Accelerate the development of the national net-zero emissions model building code for 2025 adoption.”
- “Accelerate the transition from fossil fuel-based heating systems to electrification through incentives and standards, including investing \$250 million to help low-income Canadians get off home-heating oil.”
- “Establish a \$2 billion Futures Fund for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador that will be designed in collaboration with local workers, unions, educational institutions, environmental groups, investors, and Indigenous peoples who know their communities best. We will support local and regional economic diversification and specific placebased strategies.”
- “Move forward with Just Transition Legislation, guided by the feedback we receive from workers, unions, Indigenous peoples, communities, and provinces and territories”
- “Create more opportunities for women, LGBTQ2 and other underrepresented people in the energy sector.”
- “Launch a Clean Jobs Training Centre to help industrial, skill and trade workers across sectors to upgrade or gain new skills to be on the leading edge of zero carbon industry.”

- " Table legislation to require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to examine the link between race, socio-economic status, and exposure to environmental risk, and develop a strategy to address environmental justice."

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

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

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

The Ontario Teachers Pension Plan Board **announced** on September 16 "industry-leading targets to reduce portfolio carbon emissions intensity by 45% by 2025 and two-thirds (67%) by 2030, compared to its 2019 baseline. These emission reduction targets cover all the Fund's real assets, private natural resources, equity and corporate credit holdings across public and private markets, including external managers." The press release continues: "By significantly growing our portfolio of green investments and working collaboratively with our portfolio companies to transform their businesses, we can make a positive impact by encouraging an inclusive transition that benefits our people, communities and portfolio companies." **Reaction by pension advocacy group Shift Action** acknowledges that this is "the strongest climate commitment we've seen yet from a Canadian pension plan", but called for OTPP to explain how it will eliminate its fossil fuel investments. The ShiftAction **Background** which accompanies the press release challenges the OTPP's own estimate that approximately 3% of their assets (\$6.6billion) are held in oil and gas assets, and compiles a list of company names and the extent of OTPP investments, including recent investments in 2020 and 2021.

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

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Ontario Teachers Pension Plan](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

In its recently released **Prosperous Transition Plan**, Iron and Earth calls for a \$61-billion federal investment in Canada's just transition process, including \$10 billion over 10 years to upskill over one million workers, at \$10,000 per worker on average. New I&E Director Luisa Da Silva and Board Director Bruce Wilson wrote "**Most oil patch workers believe Canada needs to pivot to a net-zero economy**" (Corporate Knights, Aug. 31), summarizing the plan. In addition to the retraining programs, the Prosperous Transition strategy calls for: 1. rapid refocusing and repositioning of 10,000 Canadian enterprises to meet the emerging demand in net-zero industries. (costed at \$20 billion over 10 years); 2. retrofitting and repurposing initiatives for long-term infrastructure, including abandoned oil wells and remediation of well sites. This is

costed at the equivalent of \$10-billion, “in the form of incentives and tax offsets, with green strings to carbon-intensive industries investing in net-zero technologies.” And finally, 3. use of nature-based solutions to prioritize green infrastructure development, expand carbon sinks and revitalize ecosystems and biodiversity (costed at \$22 billion over 10 years).

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

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

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

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

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

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

How do the parties’ Platforms compare on climate change?

It is easy to summarize the differing GHG emissions reductions targets of the parties, with the **Green Party** committed to a target of 60 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels and net negative emissions in 2050. The **Liberal Party** commits to reducing emissions by 40-45 per cent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, which is the target they have committed to as a government in the Net-Zero Accountability Act. The **NDP** target is to cut its emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, and commit to establishing multi-year national and sectoral carbon budgets. The Conservative Party promising to retreat to the Harper-era target of 30% reduction by 2030 – which would violate Canada’s obligation under the Paris Agreement.

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

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

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

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

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

[“What the parties are promising so far”](#) (Ecojustice, Sept. 7), which uniquely includes the Bloc Quebecois in its comparison. Ecojustice emphasizes promises related to environmental justice – the strongest of which are from the Green Party (to establish an Office of Environmental Justice at Environment and Climate Change Canada, and to support Bill C-

230, the National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act); and the NDP, (to enshrine the right to a healthy environment in a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights and to create an Office of Environmental Justice) .

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Electrification of vehicles in Canadian mines

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

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

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

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **automation, Electric Vehicles, electrification, Job displacement, mining industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Labour unions divided on carbon capture

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

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

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

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

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

".....People threatened with job loss as a result of reduction in fossil fuel burning should not expect carbon capture to help protect their jobs any time in the next 10-20 years. There are strong reasons to doubt that it

will be either effective or cost competitive in the short run. Those adversely affected by reduction in fossil fuel burning can best protect themselves through managed rather than unmanaged decline in fossil fuel burning combined with vigorous just transition policies.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An excerpt:

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

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

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

The editorial initiative was coordinated by the [U.K. Health Alliance](#). The list of journals in which this statement appears is [here](#), and includes *The Lancet*, the *British Medical Journal*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *The Journal of Climate Change and Health*, and more than 200 other titles. Canadian participants include the *Canadian Journal of Respiratory Therapy* and the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) did not participate (not having its own journal), but on September 7 issued a echoed the same urgent concerns in [“A vote against fossil fuel subsidies is a vote for our health”](#).

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

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

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

Alongside the continuing disaster of North America’s heat, drought, and wildfires has come Hurricane Ida on the Gulf Coast, U.S. Northeast, even [as far as Quebec](#). Only [4% of broadcast media in the U.S. linked](#) Hurricane Ida to climate change – preferring to report on the flooding, storm surge, resulting power losses, evacuations, oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico, death and destruction. Yet with less media attention, scientists worldwide have published recent studies unequivocally linking such weather extremes with climate change and human activity. Notable examples over the summer :

1. [Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis](#), the first installment of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group I, 2. [The WMO Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes \(1970–2019\)](#) released by the World Meteorological Organization on August 31, and 3. The WMO [Air Quality and Climate Bulletin](#) , launched on September 1.

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

At almost 4,000 pages, the full IPCC report, [Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis](#), is a comprehensive compilation and assessment of the latest research by the world’s scientists. More readable and less technical: the [Summary for Policymakers](#) , or the official [Fact Sheet](#) . The U.N. [press release announcement](#) was accompanied by warnings of the “Code Red” situation: irreversible climate-related damage is already underway across the world, and immediate, strong and sustained reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are urgently

needed. The report was summarized widely: for example, in “[Global Climate Panel’s Report: No Part of the Planet Will be Spared](#)” (*Inside Climate News*, Aug. 9); by Carbon Brief [here](#) ; or by *The Guardian* [here](#) .

An analysis of coverage by 17 international newspapers found that Canadian news outlets, with the exception of the *Toronto Star*, were particularly poor at explaining the IPCC report – as summarized in “[When Dire Climate News Came, Canada’s Front Pages Crumpled](#)” in (*The Tyee*, Aug. 19). However, outside of the mainstream media, here are some noteworthy examples of Canadian news coverage:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, on September 3, the WMO also published the first issue of its [Air Quality and Climate Bulletin](#) , highlighting the main factors that influence air quality patterns in 2020 – including a section titled “[The impact of Covid-19 on air quality.](#)”

The Bulletin concludes that there is “an intimate connection between air quality and climate change. While human-caused emissions of air pollutants fell during the COVID-19 economic turndown, meteorological extremes fuelled by climate and environmental change triggered unprecedented sand and dust storms and wildfires that affected air quality.... This trend is continuing in 2021. Devastating wildfires in North America, Europe and Siberia have affected air quality for millions, and sand and dust storms have blanketed many regions and travelled across continents.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Benefits of wind energy exceed its cost

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

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

Health and climate benefits of Wind

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

A second new report from the U.S. Department of Energy is [Offshore Wind Market Report: 2021 Edition](#), which provides detailed information about technology and market trends in the U.S. and globally. The report describes the status of over 200 global operating offshore wind energy projects through December 31, 2020, with an update about the most significant domestic developments and events from January 1, 2020, through May 31, 2021. It also describes projects in various stages of development – stating that global offshore wind energy deployment is expected to accelerate in the future, and citing a forecast by Bloomberg New Energy Finance of a seven-fold increase in global cumulative offshore wind capacity by 2030. In the U.S., the expansion and growth of the offshore wind energy market is primarily attributed to increasing state-level procurement targets in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic, and growing infrastructure investments needed to keep pace with development. The Biden Administration’s national target goal of 30-GW-by-2030 goal is also noted (and is described in this [White House Fact Sheet](#) from March 2021). The report estimates that the average levelized cost of energy (LCOE) of fixed-bottom offshore wind energy installations is now below \$95/megawatt-hour (MWh) globally –a decrease ranging from 28-51% between 2014 and 2020. The experts surveyed for the report predict LCOE levels of approximately \$56/MWh by 2030, and a range of \$44/MWh to \$72/MWh by 2050.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada, electric vehicle manufacture, Electric Vehicles, Germany** | **Leave a reply**

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

Posted on **August 31, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

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

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

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

Recommendations for increased climate action by federal and provincial governments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Create an independent accountability body, and mandate independent evaluation and advice to the legislature, not the government of the day
- Legislate targets and carbon budgets for regular, short-term milestones between 2021 and 2050
- Mandate a requirement that climate mitigation plans, including actions to achieve legislated milestones, adaptation plans and evaluations, are tabled in their respective legislatures.

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

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

- Commit to monitoring, publicly reporting on, and mitigating the gendered, socio-economic and racial impacts of climate change and climate change policy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- "reduce scope 1 (direct) and scope 2 GHG emissions (from the generation of purchased electricity) by 30 per cent by 2030, measured against 2019 levels;
- use 100 per cent renewable electricity in its facilities by 2030; and

- engage with top suppliers and Canada Post's subsidiaries so that 67% of suppliers (by spend) and all subsidiaries adopt a science-based target by 2025."

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

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

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

Industrial policy in Europe and new "Fit for 55" proposals

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

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

The ETUI working paper was completed before the European Commission announced its ['Fit for 55' package](#) on July 14 – proposals for legislative reforms to reduce emissions by at least 55% from 1990 levels by 2030. Fit for 55 includes comprehensive and controversial proposals which must survive negotiation and debate before becoming law, but offer reforms to the Renewable Energy Directive, the Energy Taxation Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive, and the European ETS, including a carbon border adjustment mechanism. Also included: a circular economy action plan, an EU biodiversity strategy, and agricultural reform. *The Guardian* offers an [Explainer here](#); the *Washington Post* [calls](#) the scope of the proposals "unparalleled", and highlights for example the transportation proposals, which mandate reducing new vehicles' average emissions by [55 percent in 2030 and 100 percent in 2035](#), which "amounts to an outright ban of internal combustion engine vehicles by 2035".

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [European Emissions Trading System](#), [European Union](#), [Green Economy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

These are examples of environmental racism, “the idea that marginalized and racialized communities disproportionately live where they are affected by pollution, contamination, and the impacts of climate change, due to inequitable and unjust policies that are a result of historic and ongoing racism and colonialism.” Such locations, combined with such “structural determinants” of health as income and employment, come together to make residents more susceptible and sensitive to climate change impacts, and Waldron concludes the article with recommendations for policies to achieve “health equity”.

These include: environmental justice legislation focused on eliminating differential exposure to, and unequal protection from, environmental harms, (such as **Bill C-230**, the private member’s bill by Lenore Zann). Waldron also states: “health equity impact assessment must be incorporated into the environmental assessment and approval process to examine and address the cumulative health impacts of environmental racism in Indigenous and Black communities that are outcomes of long-standing social, economic, political, and environmental inequities.” More broadly, her **accompanying blog**, states: “To be effective, climate policy must focus on undoing the structural inequities that lead to power imbalances within society and, consequently, differential exposure to climate devastation.”

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and health, Climate change policy, Environmental Justice, environmental racism, Nova Scotia** | [Leave a reply](#)

Global heating, health, earnings, and environmental justice

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

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

Health, earnings, and environmental justice

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

Examining the economic impacts on workers, in mid-August the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) released **Too hot to work: Assessing the Threats Climate Change Poses to Outdoor Workers**. The UCS report is summarized in **“If we ignore climate change, it will be hell on outdoor workers”** in HuffPost, re-posted by the *National Observer* on August

24. One of its unique findings: a forecast that between now and 2065, (assuming no action to reduce global emissions), the exposure to hazardous levels of heat will quadruple, resulting in a potential loss of 10 percent or more of earnings annually for more than 7.1 million US workers. Economy-wide, this translates into up to \$55.4 billion of earnings at risk annually. In [Health Costs of Climate Change](#), published by the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices published in June 2021, the estimate for Canada was that the labour productivity impact of higher temperatures is projected as “a loss of 128 million work hours annually by the end of century—the equivalent of 62,000 full-time equivalent workers, at a cost of almost \$15 billion.”

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [climate change and health](#), [climate gap](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [health impacts](#), [Heat Stress](#), [outdoor workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate crisis a key issue in Canada’s election campaign

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

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

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

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

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

The [Canadian Labour Congress](#) hasn’t so far released specific statements regarding climate policies, but has spoken out against Conservative proposals which might lead to [privatization of pensions and restriction to EI](#) (also criticized by the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Posted on **July 22, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

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

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

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

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

change?”

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Canadian, Ontario governments launch youth consultations on climate issues

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

It's almost as if Canadian governments have noticed the international [Fridays for Future movement](#), or the [Sunrise Movement](#) in the U.S.! On July 21, both the federal and Ontario government announced the formation of youth councils, to engage with young people on climate issues. The federal Environment and Climate Change Youth Council was announced in this [press release](#), inviting Canadians between the ages of 18 to 25 to apply by August 18, to participate in consultations regarding climate change, biodiversity loss, and how to better protect the natural environment. “In particular, inaugural members will engage on Canada’s top priorities, including achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and zero plastic waste by 2030.” Applicants must be sponsored/nominated by an NGO or charitable organization which relates to the mandate of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Ten people will be chosen to serve a two-year term on a voluntary basis and meet every four months. The Youth Council website, with application information, is [here](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

The U.K. Trades Union Congress (TUC), which participated in the Taskforce, reacted with a blog post titled, [A greener economy can be positive for workers too](#), highlighting key recommendations – and pointing out real-world examples of best practice, including the example of collaboration between EDF and Unite, Prospect and GMB in the [successful creation of transition pathways for workers at Cottam coal power station](#) before it closed. The Senior Deputy General Secretary of the Prospect union was also member of the Green Jobs Taskforce, and summarized her thoughts in this blog: [“It’s time the government moved from lofty climate change ambitions to action”](#), saying “ I am pleased that the Green Jobs Taskforce not only uses the language of Just Transition, but recommends the establishment of a new national body to help shape this change and ensure that no worker or community is left behind in the race for net zero. That recommendation is one of many that we on the task force have made to the government, including establishing a ‘green careers launchpad’,

making sure that the curriculum reflects the green skills we will need in the future, and publishing a comprehensive net zero strategy ahead of November's COP26 summit."

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

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

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

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

Nova Scotia launches public consultation for Coastal Protection regulations

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

Recognizing the dangers of rising sea levels to their 13,000 km coastline, the government of Nova Scotia passed a **Coastal Protection Act** in 2019. On July 15 2021, two days before dissolving the Legislature and **calling a general election**, the provincial government **launched a new public consultation** on the Regulations, which, once passed, will enable the Act to come into force. Without duplicating the federal and municipal regulations which also exist to protect the coast, the proposed provincial regulations will define the "Coastal Protection Zone" where the act will apply; ensure that any construction on submerged Crown land (such as wharfs, infilling and shoreline protections) are designed, constructed, and/or situated where disruption of valuable coastal ecosystems is minimized. The Regulations will also apply to construction on private or public land (homes, cottages, commercial or industrial buildings), to minimize risk from sea level rise, coastal flooding and erosion. The consultation will run from July 15, and will continue until Sept. 17. Documentation is available at <https://novascotia.ca/coast/>.

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

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

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

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

A Program for Economic Recovery and Clean Energy Transition in California, released in June, is the ninth in a series of reports titled **Green Economy Transition Programs for U.S. States**, published by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), and written by researchers led by Robert Pollin. In this latest report, the authors address the challenge of economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and contend that it is possible to achieve California's official CO2 emissions reduction targets—a 50 percent emissions cut by 2030 and zero emissions by 2045—and at the same

time create over 1 million jobs. The investment programs they propose are based on the proposed national THRIVE Agenda, ([introduced into the U.S. Congress in February 2021](#)), and rely on private and public investment to energy efficiency, clean renewable energy, public infrastructure, land restoration and agriculture. The report discusses these sectors, as well as the manufacturing sector, and also includes a detailed just transition program for workers and communities in the fossil fuel industry.

In Chapter 6, “*Contraction of California’s Fossil Fuel Industries and Just Transition for Fossil Fuel Workers*”, the authors note that only 0.6% of California’s workforce was employed in fossil fuel-based industries in 2019 – approx. 112,000 workers. They model two patterns for the industry contraction between 2021-2030: steady contraction, in which employment losses proceed evenly, by about 5,800 jobs per year; and episodic contraction, in which 12,500 job losses occur in just three separate years, 2021, 2026, and 2030. After developing transition programs for both scenarios, they estimate that the average annual costs of episodic contraction would be 80% higher (\$830 million per year) than the costs of steady contraction (\$470 million per year). As with previous PERI reports, the authors emphasize the importance of the quality of jobs to which workers relocate: “It is critical that all of these workers receive pension guarantees, health care coverage, re-employment guarantees along with wage subsidies to insure they will not experience income losses, along with retraining and relocation support, as needed. Enacting a generous just transition program for the displaced fossil fuel-based industry workers is especially important. At present, average compensation for these workers is around \$130,000. This pay level is well above the roughly \$85,000 received by workers in California’s current clean energy sectors.” [Relief Programs for Displaced Oil & Gas Workers Elements of an Equitable Transition for California’s Fossil Fuel Workers](#) is a 2-page Fact Sheet summarizing the chapter.

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

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

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

Canada launches consultation for Just Transition legislation – updated

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

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

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

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

2. Policies and programs in support of a people-centred, just transition must create decent, fair and high-value work designed in line with regional circumstances and recognizing the differing needs, strengths and potential of communities and workers.
3. The just transition must be inclusive by design, addressing barriers and creating opportunities for groups including gender, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, Black and other racialized individuals, LGBTQ2S+ and other marginalized people.
4. International cooperation should be fostered to ensure people-centred approaches to the net-zero future are advancing for all people. ”

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

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

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

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Teaching climate change in Canada

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

Education International, which represents 32.5 million educators in 178 countries, launched a **“Teach for the Planet” campaign** in April 2021, with a **Manifesto for Quality Climate Change Education for All** . The **Canadian Teachers Federation** has endorsed the campaign, raising the profile of climate change amongst Canadian educators. Earlier, in January 2020, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) held its first **Climate Action Summit** in response to youth global climate strikes, which resulted in the launch of OISE’s **Sustainability and Climate Action Plan** in February 2021. Although much of that Plan relates to the operation or governance of OISE as a teaching faculty within the University of Toronto, it also sets out goals and strategies to conduct an inventory of sustainability and environmental content in courses, expand sustainability and environmental content in curriculum, encourage research by faculty, and “consider sustainability expertise as an asset in the hiring of new staff and faculty.”

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

three main barriers to more climate education: lack of time to include during class; lack of classroom resources; lack of professional knowledge.

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

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

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [teachers](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Big Cleanup: How enforcing the Polluter Pay principle can unlock Alberta's next great jobs boom was released in June by the **Alberta Liabilities Disclosure Project**. It makes thirteen recommendations, including the creation of an independent, non-profit Reclamation Trust to wind down end-of-life companies and use their remaining revenue to fund the cleanup of their wells. The report states that implementing all its recommendations will create 10,400 jobs and generate \$750 million in wages, and contribute nearly \$2 billion Alberta's Gross Domestic Product annually for the next 25 years. The report also includes new calculations and analysis on the growing crisis of Alberta's oil and gas well liabilities, stating that the average projected cost of cleaning up Alberta's over 300,000 unreclaimed oil and gas wells is \$55 billion dollars, with the top 20 Alberta municipalities alone facing \$34 billion in cleanup liabilities in their boundaries.

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

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

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

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

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

On July 14, Iron and Earth Canada released the results of online poll done on their behalf by Abacus Data , surveying 300 Canadians who currently work in the oil, gas, or coal sectors. The survey showed that 61% agreed with the statement: “Canada should pivot towards a net-zero emissions economy by 2050 to remain a competitive global economy”, and 69% answered “yes” to “Would you consider making a career switch to, or expanding your work involvement in, a job in the net-zero economy?”. The survey also measured workers’ interest in skills training and development for jobs in the net-zero economy, with 88% interested for themselves, and 80% supporting a National Upskilling Initiative .

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

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

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

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

Toronto passes new standards for new buildings, retrofits

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

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

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

- it will begin with voluntary emissions performance measures and targets, transitioning to mandatory requirements in 2025, at which time it will require annual emissions performance reporting and public disclosure;
- Expand and enhance retrofit financing;
- Support workforce development and training;
- City Council will lead by example with a plan to retrofit all City-owned buildings to net zero emissions by 2040.

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

gardens, native pollinator species plantings and a new requirement for "green streets" (roads or streets that incorporate green infrastructure)."

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

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

Related reading:

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

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

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

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

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

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Building Codes, energy efficiency, green buildings, retrofitting, Toronto** | **Leave a reply**

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

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

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

Here is a sampling from the cascade of news coverage:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some Context and discussion:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From a workers’ perspective:

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

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

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

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

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

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

And from the recent past:

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

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [climate change and health](#), [disaster response](#), [health impacts](#), [Heat Stress](#), [heat waves](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Build back Better begins with funding to green Algoma Steel

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

On July 5, the federal government [announced](#) that \$420 million in federal funding will go to [Algoma Steel](#) in Sault Ste. Marie Ontario, to enable the company to retrofit their operations and transform their coal-fired steelmaking processes to Electric-Arc Furnace production. The [press release](#) from the Prime Minister’s Office explains that Electric-Arc Furnace production is an electricity-based process, expected to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by more than 3 million metric tonnes per year by 2030, making Algoma the “greenest” steelmaker in Canada. At the same time, the transformation will create an estimated 500 construction and subcontracting jobs, as well as over 600 new co-op placements for students, and approximately 75 high-tech STEM jobs.

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

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

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

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

Groundbreaking moment as Canada passes climate accountability law

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

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

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

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

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

Feds announce mandatory zero emissions vehicle sales by 2035

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

On June 29, the federal government **announced** that it will set a mandatory target: all new light-duty cars and passenger trucks sales in Canada must be zero-emission by 2035. The federal **press release** continues: "the government will pursue a combination of investments and regulations to help Canadians and industry transition ...It will work also with partners to develop interim 2025 and 2030 targets, and additional mandatory measures that may be needed beyond Canada's light-duty vehicle greenhouse gas emissions regulations." As explained in Clean Energy Canada's 2020 Brief, **"What is a Zero Emission Vehicle Standard and why does Canada need one?"** this is a necessary step to address Canada's problem with electric vehicle supply (also recently discussed in **a report by Environmental Defence**). Environmental Defence **reacted** to the new standard with lukewarm enthusiasm saying, "A target is one thing, but it's an empty promise if it's not backed up by policy to ensure it's met."

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

The Pembina Institute has published a number of reports on the issue of decarbonizing urban freight, with electric vehicles as a major part of that puzzle. On June 22, Pembina organized a webinar (recorded [here](#)) which launched a "toolkit" directed to local government planners. **Building healthy cities in the doorstep-delivery era: Sustainable urban freight solutions from around the world** was jointly published by Pembina Institute, Bloomberg Associates, and the National

Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) in the U.S., and considers electric vehicle fleets amongst other options to reduce urban pollution and improve gridlock.

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

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

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

On June 29, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) **announced the closure of 79 salmon fisheries** on the Pacific coast. Along with the closures, the press release also announced a new Pacific Salmon Commercial Transition Program – described so far only as a voluntary program which offers harvesters the option to retire their licenses for fair market value, with the goal of permanently reducing the number of fishers and reducing the size of the industry. The government press release states: “Over the coming months DFO will be engaging with commercial salmon licence holders to work collaboratively on developing the program, assess the fair market value of their licences and confirm the design of the program. All commercial salmon licence holders will have an opportunity to participate in this initiative.” This is part of the **Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) announced on June 8**, and falls under the “Harvest transformation pillar” of the strategy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Telecommuting holds promise for decarbonizing Canada's economy

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

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

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

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

Avoiding Dangerous Distractions such as Net-zero emissions goals

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



Dangerous Distractions: Canada’s carbon emissions and the pathway to net zero is a newly published report by Marc Lee, of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – B.C. The report argues that “Net zero has the potential to be a dangerous distraction that reduces the political pressure to achieve actual emission reductions in favour of wishful thinking about future technologies and “nature-based solutions.... This permits business-as-usual to continue for longer than it should, perpetuating the era of fossil fuels including other adverse health and environmental impacts.” Instead, the Canadian government should invest in proven climate change solutions such as renewal energy.

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

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

What follows are several recommendations, the first of which is: “Plan to reduce domestic emissions to “real zero” and to phase out the extraction and production of fossil fuels for export.” He continues, “Don’t subsidize carbon capture and

storage (CCS) with public funds. Require CCS for any proposed fossil fuel projects and phase in requirements for CCS in current projects”, and “Fund conservation of intact forests and nature-based solutions recognizing their important carbon, biodiversity and other co-benefits but treat this as a global public service. They should not be counted towards the 2050 target”; “Reject international carbon markets and do not plan on meeting domestic GHG targets by buying credits from outside Canada.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

B.C.’s Dirty Dozen mines

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

State of carbon pricing in Canada, with recommendations for improvement

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

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

Their recommendations for improvement are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and Alberta governments to create the regulatory and policy certainty and fiscal framework needed to ensure the economic viability of this initiative.”

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

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

Clean energy jobs as a transition destination

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

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

Other news about renewable energy jobs:

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

A [report by the Global Wind Energy Council](#) forecasts a growth of 3.3 million wind jobs worldwide by 2025, and suggests that offshore wind energy jobs could offer a natural transition for workers dislocated from offshore oil and gas and marine engineering workers. According to the analysis, in 2020, there were approximately 550,000 wind energy workers in China, 260,00 in Brazil, 115,000 in the US and 63,000 in India. A related report, [The Global Wind Workforce Outlook 2021-2025](#) forecasts a large training gap: the global wind industry will need to train over 480,000 people in the next five years to construct, install, operate and maintain the world’s growing onshore and offshore wind fleet. That report is available for download [here](#) (registration required), and is summarized in [this press release](#).

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

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [automation](#), [Clean energy industry](#), [Job displacement](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"**Canada Boosts Finance Commitment As G7 Falls Short On Climate, Vaccines**" in *The Energy Mix* summarizes reaction, including from Oxfam Canada and Climate Action Network Canada – whose full statement is [here](#). It highlights

the “good news” of Canada’s largest-ever climate finance pledge, which doubles our climate finance to \$5.36 billion over the next five years for vulnerable nations.

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

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

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

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

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **climate change policies, coal mining industry, G7, International cooperation** | **2 Replies**

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

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

On June 9, British Columbia **released a new draft *Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy***, to launch a consultation process which will run until August 12 on the **government’s public engagement website** . The ***Draft Strategy Paper*** highlights current actions for 2021-2022, and proposes actions for 2022-25 to address increasing wildfires, more frequent flooding, longer summer droughts and heatwaves, as well as adaptation to slower issues such as changes in growing seasons, ecosystem shifts and sea level rise. This Strategy document is itself the result of a consultation process, documented **here**, all of which have been based on the substantive 2019 report, ***Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment for British Columbia***.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Adaptation, British Columbia, climate change impacts, Climate change risks, Flooding, wildfires** | **Leave a reply**

Keystone is dead!

Posted on **June 11, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

On June 9, TC Energy issued a **press release** announcing that the company, in consultation with the Alberta Government, has terminated the Keystone XL Pipeline project, although it will continue “to co-ordinate with regulators, stakeholders and Indigenous groups to meet its environmental and regulatory commitments and ensure a safe termination of and exit from the project.” The **Alberta government had invested over \$1 billion** in the project as recently as March 2020 , and **continued to defend it** even after U.S. President Biden rescinded the permit in January 2021. The WCR compiled sources

and reactions in January in [“President Biden’s Executive Orders and Keystone XL cancellation – what impact on Canada?”](#) A new compilation of Alberta Government statements is [here](#) . CBC Calgary describes [“Keystone XL is dead, and Albertans are on the hook for \\$1.3B”](#).

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

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

“after a comprehensive review of its options, and in consultation with its partner, the Government of Alberta, it has terminated the Keystone XL Pipeline Project. We remain grateful to the many organizations that supported the Project and would have shared in its benefits, including our partners, the Government of Alberta and Natural Law Energy, our customers, pipeline building trade unions, local communities, Indigenous groups, elected officials, landowners, the Government of Canada, contractors and suppliers, industry associations and our employees.

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

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

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

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

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

[The Health Costs of Climate Change](#) was released in June by the Institute for Climate Choices, the second in their series on the costs of climate change. This report attempts to quantify how air quality, increased cases of Lyme disease, and heat will impact people’s health, using two different GHG scenarios until the year 2100. The report also discusses broader issues such as the socio-economic factors which determine unequal health results, mental health impacts, impacts on Indigenous culture and food security, and the impacts on health infrastructure. Results show that Lyme disease will be the least costly of the projected impacts, but air pollution and heat threats will increase dramatically – even under the low-emissions scenario, heat-related hospitalization rates will increase by 21 per cent by mid-century and will double by the

end of the century. The labour productivity impact of higher temperatures is projected as “a loss of 128 million work hours annually by the end of century—the equivalent of 62,000 full-time equivalent workers, at a cost of almost \$15 billion.” Unlike most reports which focus on the impacts of heat on outdoor workers only, the report acknowledges the impact on indoor space too, and offers some analysis and cost analysis of the installation of green roofs and shading on manufacturing facilities. It concludes with recommendations for government policy, and includes a 10-page bibliography of Canadian health research. **“Climate change is set to cost Canada’s health system billions”** (The National Observer, June 3) summarizes the report.

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

Global vaccine justice seen as a test of climate justice at G7 meetings in June 2021

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

G7 finance ministers and the global financial elite issued an important **Communique** on June 5, and while the mainstream media (and **Finance Canada’s own press release**) focused mainly on a 15% minimum global tax rate for corporations, the Communique made ambitious statements regarding international climate finance too, with calls which seem to acknowledge the importance and inequity of climate risk to the global financial order. **“G7 Ministers Recommit to Climate Finance, Leave Details for Later”** in *The Energy Mix* summarizes the general reaction that the Communique is too vague and “unambitious”. The article states that the scale of global climate investment (both public and private) is estimated at \$100 billion per year, and that Canada’s fair share would be US\$4 billion per year.

The issue of global climate finance is seen as crucial to the success of the upcoming G7 meetings of world leaders in the U.K. on June 11-13. **“As leaders gather for G-7, a key question: Will rich countries help poor ones grapple with climate change?”** in *The Washington Post* (June 7) describes how global climate finance and the issue of global vaccine disparity are being conflated, for example in a quote from a senior advisor to Climate Action Network International: “The G-7 meeting will be a test for international solidarity. This implies solidarity on both ensuring equitable and rapid access to vaccines globally, as well as on finance and support for the climate crisis”. **“World Climate Deal Could Fail unless G7 Solves Vaccine Disparities”** (June 8, *The Energy Mix*) quotes the head of the international Chamber of Commerce: “We can’t have global solidarity and trust around tackling climate change if we do not show solidarity around vaccines.” *The Guardian* writes: **“Share vaccines or the climate deal will fail rich countries are told”** (June 5) – which points out that “Canada has the highest number of procured doses per head, with a total of 381 million procured vaccine doses for a population of just over 37 million.” – and contrasts Canada with the low vaccine availability in such countries as Columbia, Indonesia, South Africa, and Pakistan.

Climate Change is one of the **priorities of the G7 meetings**. Reports released in anticipation of the G7 meeting include:

Ranking G7 Green Recovery Plans and Jobs published by the U.K.’s Trades Union Congress, which shows that the U.S. had the highest level of green jobs and recovery investment per person, followed by Italy and then Canada. The U.K. ranks sixth, with Japan 7th. The report critiques specific U.K. policies and makes recommendations for improvements.

Oxfam International **posted analysis** on June 7 which estimates that the economies of G7 nations contracted by about 4.2 per cent on average in the pandemic, and compares that to the greater economic impacts which will result from extreme weather, the effects on agricultural productivity, and heat stress and health. The report includes estimates of GDP losses by 2050, assuming 2.6°C of warming, using the modelling of the Swiss Re Insurance **Economics of Climate Change Index**, and predicts the worst affected countries will be India, Australia, South Africa, South Korea, The Phillipines (with a 35% loss of GDP), and Columbia. Canada’s GDP loss is estimated at 6.9%. The report is summarized in **“Covid shrunk the economy but climate change will be much worse”** (The Guardian, reposted in *The National Observer*, June 8) and also in **“Climate inaction will cost G7 countries ‘billions’”** in *Deutsche Welle*.

The official G7 Ministers meeting website is [here](#) and will post official documents/news. The Resist G7 Coalition will present different information, and aims to coordinate protests on their [Facebook page](#) and their [website](#). A [Reuters article](#) states that police will number 6,500, and Extinction Rebellion alone estimates 1,000 protestors will be present.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate Justice](#), [Covid 19](#), [financial disclosure](#), [financial institutions](#), [Green Recovery](#), [International Climate Summit](#), [Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Labour Congress and Climate Action: Pre-convention event June 10; Policy discussion on June 18

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

The 29TH [Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress](#) will be held virtually from June 16 to 18. Some important [pre-convention events](#) are available – notably, [A Climate Action Agenda](#) on Thursday, June 10, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., hosted by Samantha Smith of the ITUC Just Transition Centre, with Keynote speaker Autumn Peltier, Wiikwemkoong First Nation. Panelists for a discussion of the role of workers and unions include: Lara Skinner, (Labor Leading on Climate Initiative, New York State Just Transition Working Group); Matt Wayland, (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers); Chris Wilson, (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists), and Grace Moyo, (Toronto Community Benefits Network QuickStart Graduate). To attend this event, download an [Observers registration form here](#).

The [Climate Action Policy Paper](#) is included in the compendium of policy papers , with the presentation and discussion scheduled for Friday June 18. Calling climate action “urgent union work”, the Policy Paper highlights renewable energy, green building and retrofitting, green industrial policy, Just Transition, and the importance of the public sector. The introduction sums it up with this:

“Labour’s Climate Action Agenda aims to achieve ambitious, enforceable renewable energy targets for electricity and transportation by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions in our economy by 2050. Crucial to this plan will be ensuring that the transition be democratic and worker-focused, leveraging the power of the public sector to lead the transition. A just transition that aims to create good jobs for workers and communities and that applies a gender, reconciliation and intersectional lens, is essential to all aspects and phases of a Climate Action Agenda.”

Climate Resolutions are included in the [242-page Resolutions document](#) , in the Economic and Social Policy section beginning on page 25.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New B.C. forest policy fails to defuse protests and journalists fight RCMP for access to Fairy Creek site

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

On June 1, the government of British Columbia released [Modernizing Forest Policy in British Columbia](#), an “Intentions Paper” which attempts to address the intense protests in the province over logging of old growth forests. The [government press release](#) includes several backgrounders, including highlights of how the policy addresses the Old Growth issue, but environmentalists are not satisfied. [“Five ways B.C.’s new forestry plan sets the stage for more old-](#)

growth conflict” in *The Narwhal* explains. **Stand.earth reacted** with an immediate call for deferral of logging for all at-risk old growth forests, and on June 4, after company bulldozers breached protest blockades, **Stand.earth repeated their call**, in order to “to reduce tensions and the threat of violence or injury in Fairy Creek and keep old growth forests standing — while the province undertakes a paradigm shift for forestry rooted in Indigenous rights and consent, ecological values, and community stability.”

Protests and unions

Protests began in Fairy Creek on Vancouver Island in August 2020, explained in **“The Fairy Creek blockaders: inside the complicated fight for B.C.’s last ancient forests”** (*The Narwhal*, March 2020) . Since then, protests have grown in size and intensity, with **five people arrested on May 17**, and 137 arrested by June 1. **“Three days in the theatre of Fairy Creek”** in *The Tyee* offers a lengthy personal front line account, as does **“Three weeks on the front line: The battle for Old Growth in B.C.”** in *Ricochet* , filled with photos. The forestry workers tell their side of the bitter story, as reported by CBC, **“Forestry workers and supporters from across Vancouver Island rally to denounce Fairy Creek blockades”** on May 30.

“BC’s Cynical Attack on Old-Growth Forests” in *The Tyee* (May 19) blames NDP Premier John Horgan for the prolonged dispute, and states that “John Horgan’s alliance with corporate and union logging interests is stalling protection for remaining ancient trees.” The criticism stems from **“A Strategy for B.C. Forests That Benefits All British Columbians”**, an article written jointly in April by Jeff Bromley, Chair of the United Steelworkers’ Wood Council, and Susan Yurkovich, president and CEO of the BC Council of Forest Industries, defending the government’s position. In contrast, in March 2021, co-authors Andrea Inness (a campaigner at the Ancient Forest Alliance) and Gary Fiege (president of the Public and Private Workers of Canada, formerly the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada) wrote a **Vancouver Sun Opinion piece** , calling on the government to live up to their promise to implement **the recommendations of their own Strategic Review** , and stating “We can protect old growth forests and forestry jobs at the same time”.

Protests and freedom

Amidst the heated protests, RCMP have been criticized for blocking journalists from covering the protests. In a May 26 **press release**, the **Canadian Association of Journalists** and a coalition of news organizations released a statement, demanding that the RCMP immediately stop applying “exclusion zones” to journalists, so that the media can freely access protest sites, and get close enough to record video and sound, conduct interviews and take photographs. The statement continues: “Journalists must be allowed to move freely on site, as long as they do not interfere with the execution of RCMP activities. This means that journalists should not be corralled or forced to move as a group or with a police escort; The equipment of journalists must not be seized or otherwise interfered with, and journalists should not be arrested or detained while trying to document protest events.”

Members of the journalists’ coalition are: the Canadian Association of Journalists, Ricochet Media, The Narwhal, Capital Daily, Canada’s National Observer, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, The Discourse and IndigiNews. The Narwhal explanation appears in **“Enough is enough: Canadian news organizations file legal action for press freedom at Fairy Creek”** ; **“The Other Fight at Fairy Creek: Press Freedom”** appeared in *The Tyee* (May 27); and **“We’re taking the RCMP to Court”** appeared in *Ricochet*.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia, environmental activism, Fairy Creek, Forestry Industry, Forestry Management, Labour and Greens, Protests & Rallies** | [Leave a reply](#)

A framework of six essential policies for the U.S. to THRIVE

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

A new report by Jeremy Brecher of the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) was released in May. [Making “Build Back Better” Better: Aligning Climate, Jobs, and Justice](#) is a cast as a “living document” to provide a framework for discussion by the labour and environmental movements. *Common Dreams* [summarizes it here](#). Brecher begins by identifying the range of climate-related policy proposals in the U.S.: “There are many valuable plans that have been proposed in addition to Build Back Better. The [original Green New Deal resolution](#) sponsored by Sen. Ed Markey and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; the [THRIVE \(Transform, Heal, and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy\) Agenda](#) ; the [Evergreen Action Plan](#); the Sierra Club’s [“How to Build Back Better” economic renewal plan](#); the AFL-CIO’s “Energy Transitions” proposals; the BlueGreen Alliance’s [“Solidarity for Climate Action,”](#) and a variety of others. All offer contributions for overall vision and for policy details.”

The contribution of this report from LNS is to frame these policy proposals around “six essential elements” : • Managed decline of fossil fuel burning • Full-spectrum job creation • Fair access to good jobs • Labor rights and standards • Urgent and effective climate protection • No worker or community left behind. The new report links to many of the previous LNS reports which have discussed these elements in more detail.

Labor Network for Sustainability has [endorsed the THRIVE Agenda](#), with its strong emphasis on climate justice. At the end of April, The [THRIVE Act](#) was introduced in the U.S. Congress, spearheaded by Representative Debbie Dingell of Michigan and Senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts, and supported by progressive Democrats, environmentalists, and unions. *The Rolling Stone* summarized the provisions [here](#) , stating: “Bold” may be an understatement. While President Biden’s [proposed infrastructure plan](#) calls for spending \$2 trillion over the next 10 years, the THRIVE Act green-lights the investment of \$1 trillion annually. The money would go toward creating an estimated 15 million “family-sustaining” union jobs, rebuilding the nation’s physical and social infrastructure, and cutting carbon emissions in half by 2030.”

The Green New Deal Network has compiled extensive documentation of the economic studies behind the THRIVE Agenda [here](#) , based heavily on the work of the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), led by Robert Pollin.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Climate Justice](#), [Green New Deal](#), [THRIVE Agenda](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s oil and gas industry provides Canada with declining royalty revenues, jobs

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

Earth scientist David Hughes argues that Canada cannot possibly meet its national GHG emissions targets while expanding exports in the oil and gas industry, building pipelines, and developing liquified natural gas in a new report, [Canada’s Energy Sector: Status, evolution, revenue, employment, production forecasts, emissions and implications for emissions reduction](#), released on June 1. Hughes documents the declining health and importance of the sector with economic statistics: “The energy sector’s contribution to Canada’s GDP, currently at 9 per cent, has declined over the past two decades, and government revenues from royalties and taxes have dropped precipitously. Despite record production levels, royalty revenue is down 45 per cent since 2000, and tax revenues from the oil and gas sector, which totalled over 14 per cent of all industry taxes as recently as 2009, declined to less than 4 per cent in 2018. Direct employment, which peaked at over 226,000 workers in 2014, was down by 53,000 in 2019 although production was at an all-time high due to efficiencies adopted by the industry.”

Combining statistics from the Petroleum Labour Market Information office with industry projections from the federal Canada Energy Regulator, Hughes concludes that energy jobs have peaked and previous levels of employment are unlikely to return.

“Jobs are often cited by industry proponents as a reason to support expansion of oil and gas production. Yet despite record production levels, jobs in the oil and gas sector are down from their peak in 2014 by 23 per centThanks to technological advances, the sector has become more efficient and is able to increase

production using fewer workers....This jobs scenario is particularly true in the oil sands, where much of the production growth is expected. Oil sands production per employee is 70 per cent higher than it was in 2011 (production per employee has increased by 37 per cent in conventional oil and gas and by 50 per cent in the sector overall since 2011). In Canada's overall employment picture, the oil and gas sector accounted for only 1 per cent of direct employment in 2019 (5.5 per cent in Alberta)."

At the same time, oil and gas production accounts for the largest portion of GHG emissions in Canada, at 26 per cent of the total – and **Canada's GHG emissions have actually increased by 3.3 per cent since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2016** – the highest increase of any G7 country. With such limited benefits and such serious negative consequences, Hughes argues against expansion of oil and gas exports – especially LNG in British Columbia and the TransMountain pipeline expansion, and Line 3.

Canada's Energy Sector: Status, evolution, revenue, employment, production forecasts, emissions and implications for emissions reduction is summarized by the *National Observer*, [here](#). Author David Hughes has written substantive reports previously, for example: ***A Clear Look at B.C. LNG*** (2015); ***Can Canada increase oil and gas production, build pipelines and meet its climate commitments?*** (2016); ***B.C.'s Carbon Conundrum: Why LNG exports doom emissions-reduction targets and compromise Canada's long-term energy security*** (2020); and ***Reassessment of Need for the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion: Project Production forecasts, economics and environmental considerations*** (2020).

The full report was published by the Corporate Mapping Project, a project of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in British Columbia and the Parkland Institute in Alberta. The report was co-published with Stand.earth, West Coast Environmental Law, and 350.org.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Ghg emissions reduction targets](#), [Labour Productivity](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Public consultation on climate policy underway in Nova Scotia

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

A **public consultation process** is underway until July 26 in Nova Scotia, managed by the Clean Foundation on behalf of Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change. Following the consultations, the government will update its climate policies, as well as emission reduction goals under the ***Sustainable Development Goals Act***, passed in 2019 but sidetracked by Covid-19. The current Nova Scotia GHG emissions reduction commitment calls for emissions at least 53 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050, with all coal plants closed by 2030 and 80 per cent renewable energy for the electricity sector by 2030. Although this is the toughest emissions reduction target in Canada to date, the Halifax-based Ecology Action Centre is advocating for a legislated GHG reduction target of 50% below 1990 levels by the year 2030. This, along with the other EAC priorities, is described in ***20 Goals to Advance the Environmental and Economic Wellbeing of Nova Scotia***. In 2019, when the legislation was being debated, EAC commissioned and published ***Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act: Economic Costs and Benefits of Proposed Goals (Sept 2019)***, which outlined six policy areas estimated to result in 15,000 green jobs per year by 2030.

The government provides two Discussion Papers to guide input for the consultation: a ***Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth Discussion Paper***, and the ***Discussion Paper for the Sustainable Development Goals Act***.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [public opinion](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

For Alberta oil workers facing a future of industry volatility- policy options include Just Transition, green tax reform

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

In Search of Prosperity: The role of oil in the future of Alberta and Canada was released on **May 26, that cataclysmic day** of bad news for the oil and gas industry when the Dutch courts ordered Royal Dutch Shell to reduce its emissions immediately, and shareholders at Exxon and Chevron defied management to press for climate-friendly policies. The future of the oil and gas industry is also grim in Canada, according to ***In Search of Prosperity***, published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). Using economic models, it concludes that “the volatility of the industry poses a much greater threat than low prices to the Alberta economy – more than five times worse than the effect of just low prices.” And further: “..... unless there are innovations in the uses of oil for non-combustion, also known as “bitumen beyond combustion,” the oil sector will contribute less and less to Alberta’s prosperity.” According to the modelling, employment in the oil sector will potentially decrease by an average 24,300 full-time jobs per year toward 2050 (accompanied by a potential 43% drop in royalties to the Alberta government).

How to cope with those upcoming job losses? Another report from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), also released on May 26, suggests the EU Just Transition Mechanism as one of its model strategies for the future. ***10 Ways to Win the Global Race to Net-Zero: Global insights to inform Canadian climate competitiveness*** offers an overview of the global policy literature and describes successful case studies, including the innovation of green steel in Sweden; hydrogen policy in Germany; collaboration in the form of the European Battery Alliance and the European Transition Commission; the Biden “all of government” approach to governance in the U.S.; New Zealand’s consultation with and inclusion of the indigenous Maori; and the EU’s Just Transition Mechanism as part of the European Green New Deal. The report’s conclusion offers five strategies, including that the Canadian government must take action as a “top priority” on its promised Just Transition Act.

The discussion of Just Transition in ***10 Ways to Win*** provides a brief, clear summary of the complexity of the EU Just Transition Mechanism, and states that the EU approach is consistent with the recent report, ***Employment Transitions and the Phase-Out of Fossil Fuels*** by Jim Stanford, published by the Centre for Future Work in January 2021. Stanford argues that a gradual transition from fossil fuels is possible without involuntary layoffs, given a “clear timetable for phase-out, combined with generous supports for retirement, redeployment, and regional diversification”.

The IISD also recently published ***Achieving a Fossil Free Recovery*** (May 17), an international policy discussion with a focus on ending subsidies and preferential tax treatments for the fossil fuel industry. The report concludes with a brief section on Just Transition as the predominant framework for the transition to a clean energy economy, and calls for a social dialogue approach. As in previous IISD reports (for example, ***Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform and the Just Transition*** in 2017), the authors argue that dollars spent to support and subsidize the fossil fuel industry could be better spent in encouraging clean energy industries. This argument also relates to an April 2021 IISD report, ***Nordic Environmental Fiscal Reform***, which offers case studies of the success of environmental taxes – for example, in the use of tax revenue to support the Danish wind energy industry which now employs 33,000 workers.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [phase-out of fossil fuels](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Victory for climate activists in the Dutch Courts and in Exxon and Chevron boardrooms

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

May 26 will go down in history as a very bad day for the fossil fuel industry for three reasons: in the Netherlands, the courts issued a **landmark decision that requires Royal Dutch Shell to cut its carbon emissions** – including Scope 3 emissions – by 45% by 2030. Also on May 26, activist shareholders won separate victories at the corporate annual meetings of **ExxonMobil and Chevron**. Bill McKibben reflects on all three events in “**Big Oil’s Bad Bad Day**” in *The New Yorker*, and Jamie Henn wrote “**A Landmark Day in the fight against fossil fuels**” in *Fossil Free Media*.

The case of **Royal Dutch Shell** is summarized by Friends of the Earth Canada in their **press release**, which also links to an **English-language version of the Court’s decision**.

“On May 26, as a result of legal action brought by Friends of the Earth Netherlands (Milieudefensie) together with 17,000 co-plaintiffs and six other organisations the court in The Hague ruled that Shell must reduce its CO2 emissions by 45% within 10 years.

.....“This is a turning point in history. This case is unique because it is the first time a judge has ordered a large polluting company to comply with the Paris Climate Agreement. This ruling may also have major consequences for other big polluters,” says Roger Cox, lawyer for Friends of the Earth Netherlands.

The verdict requires Royal Dutch Shell to reduce its emissions by 45% by the end of 2030. Shell is also responsible for emission from customers and suppliers. There is a threat of human rights violations to the “right to life” and “undisturbed family life”.

German news organization *Deutsche Welle* offers an excellent, more thorough discussion in “**Shell ordered to reduce CO2 emissions in watershed ruling**”, which points out that the case was argued on human rights grounds – much like the **precedent-setting Urgenda case** and the **recent German constitutional case**. In those cases however, governments were called upon to defend the human right to a future safe from the dangers of climate change. The Shell case is the first time such an argument has been tried against a corporation – and is seen as a harbinger of future legal action. The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) in Amsterdam also provides a succinct summary in “**The Shell climate verdict: a major win for mandatory due diligence and corporate accountability**”: “Shell must reduce its CO2 emissions by net 45% by 2030 (compared with 2019) regardless of the actions or policies of the Dutch government. But the ruling is historic for other reasons as well: the court based its verdict to a large extent on two soft law standards – the **United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)** and **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (OECD Guidelines)**. In addition, it asserts that companies have an individual responsibility to combat climate change throughout their value chains, and it very clearly links climate change to human rights. This means the judgment is likely to play an important role in the realisation of mandatory due diligence legislation”.

An even more thorough review of the decision comes from the Columbia University Sabin Center Law Blog : **Guest Commentary: An Assessment of The Hague District Court’s Decision In Milieudefensie et al. v. Royal Dutch Shell Plc** .

Shareholder Activism at ExxonMobil and Chevron Oil Majors: “**The Showdown over Exxon’s climate future is here**” appeared in *Axios* on May 24, anticipating “the highest-profile effort by climate activist investors to force any of the oil majors to diversify away from fossil fuels more quickly – targeting the highest-profile company.” The *Washington Post* also described the conflict in “**The fight for the soul – and the future – of ExxonMobil**” on May 22. As events unfolded at the annual shareholders meeting of ExxonMobil on May 26, the small activist investor group Engine No. 1 won a victory when two of the four Board members it nominated to the Exxon board were confirmed, against the company’s slate. (A **third Board member was also subsequently confirmed**). The victory was all the more impactful because Engine No. 1 was supported by the three biggest U.S. pension funds — the California Public Employees’ Retirement System, the California State Teachers’ Retirement System and the New York State Common Retirement Fund, as well as the giant BlackRock, the world’s largest asset manager. According to “**Exxon activist wins board seats in historic climate victory**” in *The Financial Post* (May 26) “The result is an embarrassment for Exxon, unprecedented in the rarefied world of Big Oil, and a sign that institutional investors are increasingly willing to force corporate America to tackle climate change.” The article concludes: “the message from shareholders is clear: The status quo cannot continue.” “**After Big Oil’s very bad week, the message for Alberta is clear**” by Mitchell Beer appeared in *Policy Options* (June 2), linking the May 26 events and the International Energy Association report, **Net Zero in 2050: A roadmap for the global energy system**.

While the Exxon battle grabbed most headlines because of the high-profile participants, a similar story played out at the Chevron Oil annual meeting, where 61% of shareholders rebelled against the company's board by voting in favour of an activist proposal from Dutch campaign group Follow This to force the group to cut its carbon emissions. The press release from Follow This [is here](#). The website of [Follow This](#) is titled: "Green Shareholders Change the World". It states that "Follow This compels oil majors to commit to the Paris agreement." and invites readers to "Buy a green share and become a co-owner of an oil company. Together we file green resolutions and get a vote in the future of the oil industry."

Much more will be written about these landmark events. For now, *The Guardian* offers : "[Climate activist shareholders to target US oil giant Chevron](#)" (May 20) and "[ExxonMobil and Chevron suffer shareholder rebellions over climate](#)".

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Chevron](#), [climate change litigation](#), [ExxonMobil](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [legal action](#), [Royal Dutch Shell](#), [Shareholder Activism](#), [Urgenda Decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How Canada can compete in the growing international battery supply chain

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

A new report, [Turning Talk into Action: Building Canada's Battery Supply Chain](#), summarizes a forum of experts convened in March 2021 by Clean Energy Canada. The resulting report discusses the existing state of electric vehicle and battery manufacturing in Canada, and makes a series of recommendations for action. Expert participants included the union Unifor, along with industry/employer groups: the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, The Battery Metals Association of Canada, the Delphi Group, Electric Mobility Canada, The Lion Electric Co., Dunsky Energy Consulting, Lithion Recycling, the Mining Association of Canada, Li-Cycle, E3 Metals, the Transition Accelerator, General Motors Canada, E-One Moli Energy (Canada), Magna International, Propulsion Québec, Blue Solutions Canada, and Polaris Strategy + Insight.

The experts argue that Canada has many advantages which allow it to seize this moment of opportunity and establish itself as a major player in the global battery sector – where the global market for lithium-ion batteries is growing rapidly and expected to exceed \$100 billion by 2030. Although 80 per cent of the world's batteries are currently produced in Japan, South Korea and China, the report sets forth ideas for an industrial strategy for an integrated North American industry, starting with an Interprovincial Battery Secretariat to bring together various provincial agencies within Canada, and an industry-led, government-supported task force to work with the Secretariat and deliver advice by the end of 2021. With a unified battery plan in place, Canada would then be able to enter a North American Battery Alliance with the U.S., modelled on the European Battery Alliance, to leverage the existing, highly integrated automotive market and emphasizing a "clean" advantage over Asian suppliers. Recommendations regarding the materials supply chain also emphasize sustainability and transparency in mining. Although there is already government funding available through an \$8-billion NetZero Accelerator Fund, the report states that "the federal government must create a \$15 billion battery supply chain fund dedicated to addressing challenges and investing in strategic projects along the Canadian value chain. The fund must be carved out specifically for the batteries versus being another stream within the Strategic Innovation Fund." Finally, noting that Canada already has technological and R&D expertise in batteries, the report calls for "a government-funded, industry-led Centre of Excellence focused on commercializing advanced battery technology and manufacturing R&D. The centre would cluster university researchers, mining companies, battery manufacturers, and auto OEMs into one hub to support testing, demonstration, and the commercialization of new technologies." Recycling would also be one of the areas included.

The report is summarized in this [Clean Energy Canada press release](#) .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [Lithium Ion Batteries](#), [mining industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Future skills for the energy efficient building workforce

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

A recent report from ECO Canada, [Assessment of Occupational and Skills Needs and Gaps for the Energy Efficient Buildings Workforce](#), focuses on the occupations and skills needed for designing, constructing, managing, and retrofitting energy efficient commercial and institutional buildings and multi-unit residential buildings. The report states that much of the technology, materials, and processes are in place, but workforce skills still need to be developed – for example, under a “building-as-a-system” approach, workers are increasingly called upon to function within multi-disciplinary teams, requiring soft skills such as collaboration and facilitation. Such a system also requires a workforce culture shift. A section called “Future-Proofing the Energy Efficient Building Sector” provides a summary of core and growing occupations and skills related to design, construction, operation, and retrofitting of energy efficient buildings. The report assesses specific occupation skills and gaps, and recommends ways to connect with workers– and includes unions amongst the stakeholder groups which can support skills acquisition. The 73-page report is available for [free download from this link](#) (registration required).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [architects](#), [construction occupations](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Skilled Workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s banks continue to finance oil and gas

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

A report released at the end of April examines the performance and the links between Canada’s oil companies and the big banks which form Canada’s “comfortable oligopoly”: Royal Bank (RBC), Toronto-Dominion Bank, Bank of Nova Scotia, Bank of Montreal, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and the National Bank of Canada. [Fossilized Finance: How Canada’s banks enable oil and gas production](#) is written by Donald Gutstein and published by the B.C. Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives as part of its Corporate Mapping Project. The report outlines the bank presence in the Canadian energy sector since the collapse of oil prices in 2014 – lending, underwriting, advising and investing. It also examines interlocking directorates, executive transfer, industry conference sponsorships and industry association memberships. This reveals different details than the international report, [Banking on Climate Chaos](#), published by BankTrack in late March.

While acknowledging that the banks have begun to invest in some renewable energy projects, [Fossilized Finance](#) shows that this leopard has not changed its spots:

“In contrast to the need to reduce financing of fossil fuels, banks actually increased their lending and commitments to the industry by more than 50 per cent—to \$137 billion—between 2014 and 2020. Toronto-Dominion, in particular, upped its lending by 160 per cent over the seven-year period, to nearly \$33 billion in 2020. As well, banks have invested tens of billions of dollars in fossil fuel and pipeline company shares. Here, Royal Bank leads the pack with nearly \$21 billion invested in the top 15 fossil fuel and pipeline companies as of November 2019. Banks continue to underwrite fossil fuel company stock and bond issues, and they continue to provide key advice on mergers, acquisitions and other corporate moves.”

Many of the researchers involved in the CCPA/Corporate Mapping Project have written chapters in [Regime of Obstruction: How Corporate Power blocks Energy Democracy](#), a book edited by William Carroll and published by Athabasca University Press. Readers of the WCR may be particularly interested in Chapter 15, “From Clean Growth to Climate Justice” by Marc Lee, but all the excellent chapters are available for [free download here](#). The publisher’s summary states: “Anchored in sociological and political theory, this comprehensive volume provides hard data and empirical research that traces the power and influence of the fossil fuel industry through economics, politics, media, and higher education. Contributors demonstrate how corporations secure popular consent, and coopt, disorganize, or

marginalize dissenting perspectives to position the fossil fuel industry as a national public good. They also investigate the difficult position of Indigenous communities who, while suffering the worst environmental and health impacts from carbon extraction, must fight for their land or participate in fossil capitalism to secure income and jobs. The volume concludes with a look at emergent forms of activism and resistance, spurred by the fact that a just energy transition is still feasible. This book provides essential context to the climate crisis and will transform discussions of energy democracy.”

If you are outraged by what these researchers reveal, a personal option to switch banks is now made easier through the [Bank Green website](#), launched in April in association with BankTrack. So far, [Bank.Green](#) covers more than 300 banks globally, including only two “ethical banks” in Canada: Vancity, and Duca Credit Union. The website provides information for customers and encourages them to switch banks and divest from fossil fuels.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [Corporate Climate Policy](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [industry capture](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IEA calls for a future without fossil fuel investment

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

Net Zero in 2050: A roadmap for the global energy system was released by the International Energy Agency on May 18, and has been described as a “bombshell”, and a “landmark”. Why? The normally conservative IEA describes the global energy future bluntly and urgently, calling for “... from today, no investment in new fossil fuel supply projects, and no further final investment decisions for new unabated coal plants. By 2035, there are no sales of new internal combustion engine passenger cars, and by 2040, the global electricity sector has already reached net-zero emissions.”

This special report claims to be “the world’s first comprehensive study of how to transition to a net zero energy system by 2050 while ensuring stable and affordable energy supplies, providing universal energy access, and enabling robust economic growth.” It sets out 400 indicators for “an economically productive pathway to 2050”, where energy production will be dominated by renewables instead of fossil fuels. The report also flags and discusses bioenergy, carbon capture, and behavioural changes as “key uncertainties” for the future.

Highlights from the discussion of employment in Chapter 4:

- In 2021, approx. roughly 40 million people work directly in the oil, gas, coal, renewables, bioenergy and energy network industries .
- By 2030 in the Net Zero scenario, 30 million more people will be working in clean energy, efficiency and low-emissions technologies.
- By 2030, employment in oil, gas and coal fuel supply and power plants will decline by around 5 million jobs.
- Nearly two-thirds of workers in the emerging clean energy sectors will be highly skilled by 2030, and the majority will require substantial training.
- The new jobs created in the net zero economy will have more geographic flexibility.
Around 40% are jobs located close to where the work is being done, e.g. building efficiency improvements or wind turbine installation, and the remaining are jobs tied to manufacturing sites.

Summaries and reaction to the IEA report:

[“Planet’s pathway to net-zero means no new oil and gas spending, IEA says”](#) in the *Globe and Mail*

[“Nations Must Drop Fossil Fuels, Fast, World Energy Body Warns”](#) in the *New York Times*

[“No new investment in fossil fuels demands top energy economist”](#) in *The Guardian*

“**IEA: Tripling the Speed of Efficiency Progress a Must for a Net-Zero Carbon World**” from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) outlines the report’s findings regarding energy efficiency

Reaction by Oil Change International describes the importance of the adjustment to the IEA modelling – it follows years of campaigning by climate advocates through the **FixTheWEO campaign**, calling for the IEA to align its annual World Energy Outlook (WEO) report with the 1.5 degree C Paris Agreement goals.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [employment impacts](#), [Fossil Free](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Climate Emergency Unit seeks to light a spark across Canada

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

The **Climate Emergency Unit** is a newly-launched initiative of the David Suzuki Institute, with the **Sierra Club B.C.** and the **Rapid Decarbonization Group** of Quebec as Strategic Partners. The Unit is led by Seth Klein and inspired by his **2020 book, *A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency***, which argues that climate mobilization requires an effort similar to what previous generations expended against the existential threat of fascism during the Second World War. (This is an approach shared with the U.S. group **The Climate Mobilization**, and others). The stated goal of the CEU is “to work with all levels of government and civil society organizations – federal, provincial, local and Indigenous governments, businesses, trade unions, public institutions and agencies, and industrial/sectoral associations” – to network, educate and advocate for the mobilization ideas in *A Good War*, to decarbonize and electrify Canadian society and the economy, while enhancing social justice and equity.

In **an article in *Policy Options* in November 2020**, Klein summarizes the four hallmarks of a government committed to an urgent, emergency response:

- It spends what it takes to win;
- It creates new economic institutions to get the job done;
- It shifts from voluntary and incentive-based policies to mandatory measures;
- It tells the truth about the severity of the crisis and communicates a sense of urgency about the measures necessary to combat it.

Seth Klein was the founding Director of the **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in British Columbia**, and continues to publish in the **CCPA Policy Note**, as well as in the **Climate Emergency Unit blog**, and as a columnist for *The National Observer* – for example, with “**Feds need to treat climate crisis like a national emergency**” on April 30.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Seth Klein](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Growth of ZEV’s impacts trucks, buses – and their drivers too

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

The International Energy Agency released its annual **Global Electric Vehicle Outlook** report for 2021 in April, providing data, historical trends and future projections. Despite the pandemic, there was a 41% increase in electric vehicle registrations in 2020 – compared to a 16% contraction of the overall global automobile market. There are now more than 10 million electric cars on the world’s roads, and for the first time, Europe overtook China as the centre of the global electric

car market. In addition, there are roughly 1 million electric vans, heavy trucks and buses globally. A separate forecast by Bloomberg New Energy Finance, as [summarized by The Guardian](#), projects that electric vehicles will reach price parity with internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles by 2027. Another April [report from Boston Consulting Group](#) forecasts that zero-emission vehicles will replace ICE vehicles as the dominant powertrain for new light-vehicle sales globally just after 2035.

Most policy discussions of the electrification of transportation focus on the potential for GHG emissions reductions, consumer preferences, and the economic impacts for the automotive industry. There has been a lack of attention on operational workers – with a few exceptions. A 2020 report from the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, [Jobs in green and healthy transport: Making the green shift](#), offers modelling of employment impacts in a broad definition of transportation, including personal vehicles, trucks and public transport. It focuses on Europe, and discusses the employment impacts in both manufacturing and operation.

A second notable report: [The Impacts of Zero Emission Buses on the Transportation Workforce](#) – is a Policy Statement regarding public transit, was released on April 21 by the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and the Transport Workers Union in the U.S.. Their statement warns that major job losses could occur and workers could be left without adequate training, and calls for the federal government in the U.S. to mandate worker protections, including: the Federal Transit Administration should require “advance notification of procurements and workforce impact assessments including potential job displacements or significant changes in responsibilities due to the introduction of new technologies to employee representatives”; a right of first refusal for existing employees to newly created jobs; and requirements for employers and employees to bargain in good faith over the terms of implementing the project. The Statement also call for a national workforce training center to be established to train current employees on the new systems, and a guarantee that workers will be represented on task forces and committees around climate change and technology.

These are policies which might be relevant to the response of the Amalgamated Transit Union in Toronto, where the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), announced a “green fleet expansion”, in partnership with Toronto Hydro and Ontario Power Generation. Their April 9 [press release](#) states: “The TTC is currently operating 60 battery-electric buses, the largest zero-emissions fleet in North America, made by three different manufacturers: BYD Canada Co. Ltd., New Flyer Industries Inc. and Proterra Inc. All three have been part of TTC’s innovative ongoing head-to-head evaluation The Board is expected to discuss the results of the evaluation and subsequently greenlight the procurement of approximately 300 long-range battery-electric buses that will be delivered between Q1 2023 and Q1 2025.”

Other EV News from Canada

British Columbia’s new report, [Zero-Emission Vehicle Update 2020](#), states that B.C. has the highest electric vehicle uptake in North America – with 54,469 light-duty ZEVs registered and over 2,500 public charging stations in the province at the end of 2020. On May 14, the province [announced](#) increased weight allowances for trucks, “to offset the loss of payload capacity that commercial operators experience with greener vehicles. Low-carbon options weigh more than standard diesel trucks due to the size of their battery packs and hydrogen tanks.” In Vancouver, a [draft Climate 2050 Transportation Roadmap](#) was presented to City Council on April 21 – the second in a series of ten Roadmaps that will guide the region’s climate actions to 2050. The Roadmap describes and recommends strategies to increase EV uptake – including an outreach program to large employers to encourage the installation of EV charging stations at workplaces, and facilitate fleet replacement.

In Ontario, two new reports from the Pembina Institute discuss fleet replacement: [Making the Case for Electric Urban Delivery Fleets in the GTHA](#) and [Making the Switch to Electric Urban Delivery Fleets in the GTHA](#). Both are directed at fleet managers, but act as useful overviews of the complex issues in such a conversion. *Making the Switch* acknowledges (though only briefly) the need for training for both drivers and maintenance workers. Information about the impact of driver attitudes and habits appears in [Long-haul trucking fleets take emission reductions into their own hands](#) – an April report with case studies of three companies with heavy-duty trucks. These reports are the latest in a series of reports from Pembina, reflecting their sustained interest in the transportation sector.

UNEP report: Reduce methane emissions to meet climate goals and save lives

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

An urgent message about the dangers of methane comes in [The Global Methane Assessment](#) – a new report from the United Nations Environment Program and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. Methane as ground-level ozone (smog) is a key culprit in air pollution, and is also 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a climate-changing greenhouse gas. In Canada, **methane constituted 13% of GHG emissions** in 2019, mainly from the oil and gas sector. [The Global Methane Assessment](#) documents the extent of the problem, but offers the prospect and a path for human-caused methane emissions to be reduced by up to 45 per cent this decade with known technologies. The result of the sectoral strategies recommended would be to avoid nearly 0.3°C of global warming by 2045, making it possible to limit global heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Those reductions would also prevent 260,000 premature deaths, 775,000 asthma-related hospital visits, 25 million tonnes of crop losses annually, and 73 billion hours of lost labour from extreme heat. For the oil and gas, the top strategies are: 1. Upstream and downstream leak detection and repair 2. Recovery and utilization of vented gas 3. Improved control of unintended fugitive emissions (including regular inspections and repair of sites); replacement of gas-powered devices or diesel engines with electric motors); capping unused wells. For coal, the report highlights: pre-mining degasification and recovery and oxidation of ventilation air methane; flooding abandoned coal mines.

The message is not new to Canadians. In 2017, Environmental Defence published [Canada's Methane Gas Problem: Why strong regulations can reduce pollution, protect health and save money](#). On January 1, 2020, **new Canadian regulations came into force** “in order to fulfill Canada’s commitment to reduce emissions of methane from the oil and gas sector by 40% to 45% below 2012 levels by 2025”. The December 2020 climate plan, [Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy](#) states that Canada is a member of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and “Together with the International Energy Agency, the Coalition is targeting a 45% reduction in methane emissions by 2025 and 60-75% by 2030.” and promises “The Government will publicly report on the efficacy of the suite of federal actions to achieve the 2025 methane target in late 2021.” (page 38). In October 2020, the **Minister of Natural Resources announced a \$750-million Emissions Reduction Fund**, providing loans to the oil and gas industry to promote investment in greener technologies to reduce methane and other GHG emissions. But how to measure progress? The problem of under-reported methane emissions is widely recognized, and was documented in 2020 in Canada by two reports [summarized by the CBC here](#) .

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) presents the industry side of the story on its [webpages relating to innovation and technology](#). It states: “Industry is serious about meeting Canada’s commitment to reduce methane emissions from oil and natural gas operations by 45% from 2012 levels by 2025. An array of technologies and approaches are being developed and implemented, such as using solar panels to power pumps installing systems to capture vented gases, including methane, which can then be used as fuel, providing a supplemental power source for the facility. Within the industry, the **Petroleum Technology Alliance of Canada (PTAC)** is “a neutral non-profit facilitator of collaborative research and development and technology development”, with current projects including the **Advanced Methane Detection, Analytics and Mitigation Project** and the **C-DER Centre for the Demonstration of Emissions Reductions**.

Related reading: Bill McKibben’s column, [“It’s Time to kick Gas”](#), comments on the UNEP report and reminds us that natural gas was once seen as a “bridge” fuel, but: “Now we understand that natural gas—which is primarily made of methane—leaks unburned at every stage from fracking to combustion, whether in a power plant or on top of your stove, in sufficient quantities to make it an enormous climate danger.” He also cites the new Australian report, [Kicking the Gas Habit: How Gas is Harming Our Health](#), which estimates that children living in houses with gas stoves is were 32 per cent more likely to develop asthma than those who didn’t – comparable to living with a smoker.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#), [Methane Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Utility Workers Union and UCS estimate costs to transition U.S. coal miners and power plant workers in joint report

Posted on **May 12, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Hard on the heels of the April statement by the United Mine Workers Union, *Preserving Coal Country: Keeping America's coal miners, families and communities whole in an era of global energy transition*, the Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) **jointly released a report** with the Union of Concerned Scientists on May 4: *Supporting the Nation's Coal Workers and Communities in a Changing Energy Landscape*. This report is described as “a call to action for thoughtful and intentional planning and comprehensive support for coal-dependent workers and communities across the nation.” The report estimates that in 2019, there were 52,804 workers in coal mining and 37,071 people employed at coal-fired power plants – and that eventually all will lose their jobs as coal gives way to cleaner energy sources. Like the United Mine Workers, the report acknowledges that the energy shift is already underway, and “rather than offer false hope for reinvigorated coal markets, we must acknowledge that thoughtful and intentional planning and comprehensive support are critical to honoring the workers and communities that have sacrificed so much to build this country.”

Specifically, the report calls for a minimum level of support for workers of five years of wage replacement, health coverage, continued employer contributions to retirement funds or pension plans, and tuition and job placement assistance. The cost estimates of such supports are pegged at \$33 billion over 25 years and \$83 billion over 15 years —and do not factor in additional costs such as health benefits for workers suffering black lung disease, or mine clean-up costs. The report states: “we must ensure that coal companies and utilities are held liable for the costs to the greatest extent possible before saddling taxpayers with the bill.” Neither do the cost estimates include the recognized needs for community supports such as programs to diversify the economies, or support to ensure that essential services such as fire, police and education are supported, despite the diminished tax base.

The report points to the precedents set by [Canada's Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities](#) (2018), the [German Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment](#) (2019), as well as the [New Mexico Energy Transition Act 2019](#) and the [Colorado Just Transition Action Plan](#) in 2020. The 12-page report, *Supporting the Nation's Coal Workers and Communities in a Changing Energy Landscape* was accompanied by a [Technical Report](#), and summarized in a [UCS Blog](#) which highlights the situation in Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota. A 2018 report from UCS [Soot to Solar](#) also examined Illinois.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [coal transition](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Job creation potential of nature-based solutions to climate change

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

U.K. think tank [Green Alliance](#) commissioned research to measure the economic impact of nature-based investments for a green recovery, and released the results on May 4. The full report, *Green Renewal – The Economics of Enhancing the Natural Environment*, was written by WPI Economics, and states: “Looking at just three types of enhancement (woodland creation, peatland restoration and urban green infrastructure) we find that an expanded programme of nature restoration could create at least 16,050 jobs in the 20% of constituencies likely to face the most significant employment challenges. We present place-based analysis of the labour market and nature based solutions, which can also be found on an interactive webpage [here](#).” The report emphasizes that nature-based interventions can create jobs in areas that need

them the most – stating that two thirds of the most suitable land for planting trees is in constituencies with worse than average labour market challenges.

Jobs for a Green Recovery is a summary report written by Green Alliance, based on the economic WPI report. It emphasizes the impact of Covid on youth employment, stating that 63% of those newly unemployed in 2020-21 are under 25, argues that nature-based jobs are long-term, skilled and productive, and makes specific recommendations for the British government so that such jobs can become part of the U.K. green recovery. Green Alliance estimates that investments in nature-related jobs have a high cost-benefit ratio, with £4.60 back for every £1 invested in peatland, £2.80 back in woodland, and £1.30 back for salt marsh creation.

Jobs for a Green Recovery includes brief U.K. case studies. An interesting related Canadian example can be found in the new **Seed the North** initiative, described in *The Tyee* [here](#). **Seed the North** is a small start-up company in Northern B.C., with big ambition to scale up. Currently, the project collects wild seed from Canadian trees, uses innovative technology to encase the seed in bio-char, and then uses drone technology to plant seeds in remote forest areas. The result: increased regeneration of disturbed land, restored soil health, a statistically significant contribution to carbon sequestration, and economic benefits flowing through co-ownership to the local First Nations communities who participate.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Forestry Industry](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [local job creation](#), [nature-based solutions](#), [Sustainable Forestry](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Covid-19 causes decline in solar, clean energy jobs in the U.S.

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

The 11th annual **National Solar Jobs Census** was released by the U.S. Solar Energy Industries Association on May 6, reporting that 231,474 people worked across all sectors of the industry in 2020 – a 6.7% decrease from 2019. The decrease in jobs is attributed to the impacts of Covid-19, as well as an increase in labour productivity – up 19% in the residential sector, 2% in the non-residential sector and 32% in the utility-scale sector. Thus, despite employing fewer workers, the solar industry installed record levels of solar capacity in 2020, with 73% of installations in “Utility-scale installations”.

According to the **2020 Solar Jobs Census**, 10.3% of solar workers in the U.S. are unionized, above the national average and compared to 12.7% of all construction trades. The report offers details about demographic, geographic, and labour market data – for example, showing an improvement in diversity in the workforce. Since 2015, it reports a 39% increase for women, 92% increase for Hispanic or Latino workers, 18% increase for Asian American and Pacific Islander workers, and a 73% increase for Black or African American workers. Wages for benchmark solar occupations are provided, showing levels similar to, and often higher than, wages for similar occupations in other industries.

The 2020 Solar Jobs Census defines a solar worker as anyone who spends more than 50% of their working time in solar-related activities. It is a joint publication of the Solar Energy Industries Association, the Solar Foundation, the Interstate Renewable Energy Council and BW Research Partnership. It uses publicly available data from the 2021 **U.S. Energy and Employment Report (USEER)**, produced by BW Research Partnership, the Energy Futures Initiative (EFI), and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO). Solar is included in their reports, which cover the broader energy industry (**The U.S. 2020 Energy & Employment Report** and the supplementary report, **Wages Benefits and Change**).

The reported decrease in solar jobs is also consistent with the message in **Clean Jobs America 2021**, published by E2 Consultants in April. That report found a decrease in total clean energy jobs from 3.36 million in 2019 to 3 million at the end of 2020, although despite the decline, the report states: “clean energy remains the biggest job creator across America’s energy sector, employing nearly three times as many workers as work in fossil fuel extraction and generation.” The report includes renewable energy, energy efficiency, and electric vehicle manufacturing in their coverage.

Calls for sustainable and responsible mining for the clean energy transition

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

An important Special Report by the International Energy Association was released in May: [The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions](#). Reflecting a mainstream view of the importance of the raw materials for clean technologies such as electric vehicles and energy storage, the IEA provides “a wealth of detail on mineral demand prospects under different technology and policy assumptions”, and discusses the various countries which offer supply – including Canada. The main discussion is of policies regarding supply chains, especially concerning responsible and sustainable mining, concluding with six key recommendations, including co-ordination of the many international frameworks and initiatives in the area. The report briefly recognizes the Mining Association of Canada’s [Towards Sustainable Mining \(TSM\)](#) protocols as internationally significant, and as one of the first to require on-site verification of its standards. The [Towards Sustainable Mining \(TSM\)](#) initiative was established in 2004, requiring member companies to “demonstrate leadership by reporting and independently verifying their performance in key environmental and social areas such as aboriginal and community engagement, biodiversity conservation, climate change, tailings management.”

On May 5, the Mining Association of Canada updated one of its TSM protocols with the release a new [Climate Change Protocol](#), a major update to its 2013 Energy Use and GHG Emissions Management Protocol. It is designed “to minimize the mining sector’s carbon footprint, while enhancing climate change disclosure and strengthening the sector’s ability to adapt to climate change.” The Protocol is accompanied by a new [Guide on Climate Change Adaptation for the Mining Sector](#), intended for mine owners in Canada, but with global application. *The Guide* includes case studies of such mines as the Glencore Nickel mine in Sudbury, the notorious Giant Mine in the Northwest Territories, and the Suncor Millennium tailings pond remediation at its oil sands mine in Alberta. The [membership of MAC](#) is a who’s who of Canadian mining and oil sands companies / – including well-known companies such as ArcelorMittal, Barrick Gold, Glencore, Kinross, Rio Tinto, Suncor, and Syncrude. Other documentation, including other Frameworks and progress reports, are compiled at a dedicated [Climate Change Initiatives and Innovations in the Mining Industry website](#).

The demand for lithium, cobalt, nickel, and the other rare earth minerals needed for technological innovation has been embraced, not only by the mining industry, but in policy discussions – recently, by Clean Energy Canada in its March 2021 report, [The Next Frontier](#). The federal ministry of Natural Resources Canada is also supportive, maintaining a [Green Mining Innovation Initiative](#) through CanmetMINING, and the [government joined](#) the U.S.-led Energy Resource Governance Initiative (ERGI) in 2019 to promote “secure and resilient supply chains for critical energy minerals.”

Alternative points of view have been pointing out the dangers inherent in the new “gold rush” mentality, since at least 2016 when Amnesty International released its [2016 expose of the use of child labour](#) in the cobalt mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Most recently, in February 2021, Amnesty released [Powering Change: Principles for Businesses and Governments in the Battery Value Chain](#), which sets out specific principles that governments and businesses should follow to avoid human rights abuses and environmental harm. Other examples: MiningWatch Canada has posted their April 2021 webinar [Green Energy, Green Mining, Green New Deal?](#), which states: “The mining sector is working hard to take advantage of the climate crisis, painting mining as “green” because it supplies materials needed to support the “green” energy transition. But unless demand for both energy and materials are curtailed, environmental destruction and social conflicts will also continue to grow.” MiningWatch Canada published [Turning Down the Heat: Can We Mine Our Way Out of the Climate Crisis?](#) in 2020, reporting on a 2019 international conference which focused on the experience of frontline communities. Internationally, the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre maintains a [Transition Minerals tracker](#), with ongoing data and reports concerning human and labour rights in the mining of “transition minerals”, and also compiles [links to recent reports and articles](#). Two recent reports in 2021: [Recharge Responsibly: The Environmental and Social Footprint of Mining Cobalt, Lithium, and Nickel for Electric Vehicle Batteries](#) (March 2021, Earthworks) and [A Material Transition: Exploring supply and demand solutions for renewable energy minerals](#) from the U.K. organization War on Want.

Jim Stanford lauds Canadian unions for their climate activism

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

Well-known Canadian unionist Jim Stanford gave a shout-out to Canadian labour unions in “[Canada’s Secret Weapon in Fighting Climate Change: Great Trade Unions](#)”, posted in the *Progressive Economics Forum* on May 3. Stanford is well-placed to make the observations and analysis, after a long career and wealth of experience at Unifor – for example, he correctly recalls the genesis of “Just Transition” here : “For example, it is significant that one of the [first uses of the phrase ‘just transition’](#) was by a Canadian union activist, Brian Kohler: a member of the former CEP who coined the phrase in 1998 to refer to the needed combination of planned energy transition, alternative job-creation, and income supports and transition assistance.”

In this brief [Great Trade Unions](#) article, he specifically cites the work of Unifor, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the Alberta Federation of Labour, and supports his assessment of “greatness” partly by citing the work of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change research project – specifically, the Green Agreements database. He states:

“...Many other unions in Canada have used their voices, their bargaining clout, and their political influence to advance progressive climate and jobs policies in their workplaces and industries. [This database](#), compiled by the York University-based ACW research project, catalogues many innovative contract provisions negotiated by Canadian unions to improve environmental practices at workplaces, educate union members and employers about climate policy, and implement concrete provisions and supports (like job security and notice, retraining, and adjustment assistance) as energy transitions occur. It confirms that Canadian unions are very much ahead of the curve on these issues: playing a vital role in both winning the broader political debate over climate change, but then demanding and winning concrete measures (not token statements) to ensure that the energy transition is fair and inclusive.”

Stanford concludes with high praise for Canada’s unions

“Of course, the approach of Canadian unions to climate issues has not been perfect or uniform: there have been tensions and debates, and at times some unions have supported further fossil fuel developments on the faint hope that the insecurity facing their members could be solved by approval of just one more mega-project. But in general the Canadian union movement has been a consistent and progressive force in climate debates. The idea of a Canadian union endorsing a pro-jobs climate plan (like Biden’s) wouldn’t be news at all here. And that has undoubtedly helped us move the policy needle forward in Canada.

I have worked with unions in several countries around climate, employment and transition planning issues. In my experience, Canada’s trade union movement sets a very high standard with its positive and proactive approach to these issues. Our campaigns for both sustainability and workers’ rights are stronger, thanks to our union movement’s activism, vision, and courage.”

Stanford now focuses on both the Canadian and Australian scenes, and posts his thoughts at the [Centre for Future Work](#), where he is Director.

Environmental groups and Unifor agree: 60% emissions reduction goal is Canada's Fair Share

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

Towards Canada's Fair Share is a new report endorsed by seven of Canada's leading environmental advocacy groups. It was released just before Prime Minister Trudeau's announcement at the international Climate Summit on April 22-23 that **Canada will increase its emissions reduction target to 40 – 45% of 2005 levels by 2030**. Although this is an improvement on the target mentioned in Canada's April 19th federal budget (36% below 2005 levels, it fails to match U.S. President Biden's announcement of a 50% target, and is far below the more ambitious target proposed in ***Towards Canada's Fair Share*** – a 60% emissions reduction by 2030. The report was based on **modelling by EnviroEconomics and Navius**, and endorsed by Climate Action Network Canada, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, Ecology Action Centre, Environmental Defence, Equiterre, Stand, and West Coast Environmental Law.

A recent CBC report, "**Union representing energy workers backs stronger emissions cuts — as long as there's a transition plan**" (April 27), states that Unifor agrees with the Fair Share target of 60% by 2030 – "provided the right framework is in place to help its 12,000 members move out of the oil and gas sector." The CBC quotes Unifor representative Joie Warnock: "Our members in the energy sector have a lot to say about the path to decarbonization. The pathway to a lower carbon economy goes directly through their livelihoods, through their lives, through their communities,.....We're very concerned that the government hasn't done the work to plan for a just transition." The union accepts that an energy transition is underway, and is working to "get in front of it" – and not only for its members in the oil fields, but also for **members in the auto industry, facing the transformation to electric vehicles**.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#), [labour union policies](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trudeau pledges 40 to 45% GHG emissions reductions at Climate Summit

Posted on **April 22, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Expectations are high for the U.S.-led **Climate Summit** on April 22-23, which President Joe Biden opened by announcing a new U.S. target for GHG emissions reductions – 50% to 52% by 2030, based on 2005 levels. The Summit is described by the U.S. State Department as "a key milestone on the road to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) this November in Glasgow and is designed to increase the chances for meaningful outcomes on global climate action at COP26." The **world's leaders (and major emitters) are present** at the virtual meeting — including Chinese President Xi Jinping – and even in advance of the Summit, other nations announced new Nationally Determined Contributions : for example, **the U.K., which has pledged to cut carbon emissions by 78%** from 1990 levels by 2035.

Prime Minister Trudeau took his turn at announcing an even higher goal at the Summit to a 40% to 45% reduction in emissions by 2030, based on 2005 levels. **"Trudeau pledges to slash greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030"** from the CBC summarizes the statement and includes a video of Trudeau's announcement; the **PMO press release is here** . CBC also offers a lengthy analysis in **Canada's past climate promises have been a flop. Could that change at this summit?** .

Canada's new target of 40 to 45% – although an improvement from the 36% below 2005 levels mentioned in the April 19th federal budget – will disappoint many, and still falls short of the 60% emissions reduction called for in ***Towards Canada's Fair Share***, a new report endorsed by seven of Canada's leading environmental advocacy groups. The report forecasts the path forward, based on modelling by EnviroEconomics and Navius, and was endorsed by Climate Action Network Canada, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, Ecology Action Centre, Environmental Defence, Equiterre, Stand, and West Coast Environmental Law.

The Summit continues for two days. The U.S. State Department offers [live coverage of the event here](#), and there will be plenty of global media attention to this high-profile event. The Guardian is reporting closely – for example, with an overview in [“US 2030 goals will take world closer to holding global heating below 2C”](#). In Canada, in addition to the CBC coverage, Canada’s [National Observer](#) is a member of the global [Climate Desk collaborative](#) and will no doubt be reporting and analysing Canadian developments.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#), [International Climate Summit](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Status quo B.C. Budget 2021 neglects old growth forests

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

The government of British Columbia tabled its [2021 Budget](#) on April 20, including topical Backgrounders such as [Preparing B.C. for a Greener Recovery](#), which states that “Budget 2021 investments brings the total funding for CleanBC to nearly \$2.2 billion over five years.” Also highly relevant, [“Investing in B.C. Now for a Stronger Economic Recovery”](#), which summarizes skills training, infrastructure, and youth employment investments. Reaction to the Budget from climate advocates could be described as general disappointment- for example, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. Office reacting with [“BC Budget 2021: Stay-the-course budget misses the mark on key areas of urgency outside health”](#); The Pembina Institute with [“B.C. budget takes small steps toward clean economy goals”](#), and Clean Energy Canada with [“B.C. budget builds on its climate and economic plan, but could do more to seize net-zero opportunity”](#). [The Tyee](#) provides a good summary and compiles reactions from environmental groups and labour unions [here](#).

The greatest disappointment of all in the B.C. Budget relates to lack of action to protect Old Growth Forests, summarized by [The Tyee](#) in [“No New Money for Old Growth Protection in BC’s Budget”](#). The spokesperson from the Wilderness Committee is quoted as saying that the Budget “absolutely shatters” any hopes that province is taking changes to forest industry seriously. (Budget allocation to the Ministry of Forests is actually cut). This, despite the active blockade on at Fairy Creek, Vancouver Island, [recent expert reports](#), and a [Vancouver Sun Opinion piece](#) by co-authors Andrea Inness (a campaigner at the Ancient Forest Alliance) and Gary Fiege (president of the Public and Private Workers of Canada, formerly the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada) who wrote, “We can protect old growth forests and forestry jobs at the same time”. They call for the government to live up to their promise to implement [the recommendations of their own Strategic Review](#) .

Forest management has a long history of conflict in British Columbia – with the CCPA’s [Ben Parfitt](#) a long-standing expert voice who continues to document the issues – most recently in [“Burning our Way to a new Climate”](#). Another good overview appears in a 2018 article in [The Narwhal](#), [“25 Years after the War in the Woods: Why B.C.’s forests are still in crisis”](#). The [WCR summarized](#) the recent situation in March. For more on the current Old Growth protests: [An Explainer](#) by Capital Daily in Victoria details the Fairy Creek Blockade, underway since the Summer of 2020 and continuing despite an injunction against the protestors upheld by the B.C. Supreme Court on April 1. [The Tyee](#) also produced a special report, [The Blockaders](#) on March 25, which compares the current Fairy Creek Blockade to the 1993 protests in the Clayoquot Sound, where 900 people were arrested in one of Canada’s largest acts of civil disobedience- known as the “War in the Woods”. (This updates an September 2020 3-part series about that history, [Part 1](#) ; [Part 2](#); and [Part 3](#)).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Climate Activism](#), [Forest Management](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [Green Recovery](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Don't call it a Just Transition – United Mineworkers announce Principles for Preserving Coal Country

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

United Mine Workers of America president Cecil Roberts was accompanied by West Virginia's senior Senator Joe Manchin on April 19 when he announced the UMWA's new principles for addressing climate change and the energy transition.

Preserving Coal Country: Keeping America's coal miners, families and communities whole in an era of global energy transition is built on three goals: "preserve coal jobs, create new jobs, and preserve coalfield families and communities." The UMWA statement calls for specific steps to achieve those goals, including enhanced incentives for carbon capture and storage research, with a goal of commercial demonstration of utility-scale coal-fired CCS by 2030; tax incentives for build-out of renewable supply-chain manufacturing in coalfield areas, with hiring preference for dislocated miners and families; and provision of wage replacement, family health care coverage, and pension credit/401(k) contribution, as well as tuition aid. For the community, the principles call for direct grants to coalfield counties/communities/school districts to replace lost tax revenues for 20-year period, as well as targeted investment in infrastructure rehabilitation and development – roads, bridges, broadband, schools, health care facilities.

The document concludes with a statement of willingness to work with Congress, President Biden, and other unions, and with this: "This cannot be the sort of "just transition" wishful thinking so common in the environmental community. There must be a set of specific, concrete actions that are fully-funded and long-term. The easiest and most efficient way to fund this would be through a "wires" charge on retail electric power sales, paid by utility customers, which would add about two-tenths of one cent per kilowatt hour to the average electric bill. This would amount to less than \$3.00 per month for the average residential ratepayer."

Summaries appeared in: "***Miners' union backs shift from coal in exchange for jobs***" from Associated Press, published in the *Toronto Star*; "***Surprise news from the miners union gives Democrats an opening against Trumpism***" in the *Washington Post*; "***A coal miners union indicates it will accept a switch to renewable energy in exchange for jobs***" in the *New York Times*, and "***America's largest coal mining union supports clean energy (with conditions)***" in *Grist*.

At the same press conference on April 19, West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin announced that he will co-sponsor the ***Protecting the Right to Organize Act, or PRO Act***, as reported by Reuters [here](#). Passage of the PRO Act is also one of the action items in the Mine Workers ***Preserving Coal Country*** statement, and a key goal for American unions.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **coal transition, Just Transition, labour union policies, United Mine Workers of America** | [Leave a reply](#)

\$17.6 Billion announced for Green Recovery in Canada's new Budget- but still not enough to meet the Climate Emergency – updated

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

On April 19, the federal government tabled its much-anticipated 2021 Budget, titled ***A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience***, announcing \$30 billion over five years and \$8.3 billion a year afterward to create and maintain early learning and child-care programs – stating: "It is the care work that is the backbone of our economy. Just as roads and transit support our economic growth, so too does child care". COVID-19 wage subsidy, rent subsidy and lockdown support programs will be extended until September, depending on how long the crisis continues, the maximum sickness benefit

period for Employment Insurance will be extended from 12 to 26 weeks, and a new Canada Recovery Hiring Program will provide employers with funding to hire new workers between June 6, 2021 and November 20, 2021. A new \$15 federal minimum wage will apply in federally regulated private businesses.

Green Recovery and the Climate Emergency: The Budget still falls short

In an article in *Policy Options* in March, Mitchell Beer laid out the challenge: ***Chrystia Freeland must pick a lane with next budget – climate change or oil and gas?*** Climate activists laid out what they were looking for in ***Investing for Tomorrow, Today: How Canada's Budget 2021 can enable critical climate action and a green recovery***, published on March 29 and endorsed by nine of Canada's leading environmental organizations: Pembina Institute, Nature Canada, Climate Action Network Canada, Environmental Defence, Équiterre, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, Ecology Action Centre, Leadnow, and Wilderness Committee.

Yet it appears that the federal Budget is still trying to maintain one foot on the oil and gas pedal, while talking about GHG emissions and clean technologies. The reactions below indicate such concerning elements – incentives on the unproven technologies of carbon capture and storage and hydrogen, no signs of an end to fossil fuel subsidies, no mention of a Just Transition Act, and, despite hopes that the Prime Minister would announce an ambitious target at the U.S. **Climate Summit convened by President Biden**, a weak new GHG reduction target increasing to only 36 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The Budget summary announces “\$17.6 billion in a green recovery that will help Canada to reach its target to conserve 25 per cent of Canada's lands and oceans by 2025, exceed its Paris climate targets and reduce emissions by 36 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and move forward on a path to reach net-zero emission by 2050.” ***This Backgrounder*** summarizes some of the Green Recovery highlights, which include :

- \$4.4 billion to support retrofitting through interest-free loans to homeowners, up to \$40,000
- \$14.9 billion over eight years for a new, permanent public transit fund
- \$5 billion over seven years, to support business ventures through the Net Zero Accelerator program – which aims to decarbonize large emitters in key sectors, including steel, aluminum, cement—and to accelerate the adoption of clean technology. Examples given are aerospace and automobile manufacture industry.
- \$319 million over seven years “to support research and development that would improve the commercial viability of carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies.” This would be in the form of an investment tax credit, with the goal of reducing emissions by at least 15 megatonnes of CO₂ annually.
- a temporary **reduction by half in corporate income tax rates** for qualifying zero-emission technology manufacturers, such as solar and wind energy equipment, electric vehicle charging systems, hydrogen refuelling stations for vehicles, manufacturing of equipment used for the production of hydrogen by electrolysis of water, production of hydrogen by electrolysis of water and others
- \$63.8 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Public Safety Canada to work with provinces and territories to complete flood maps for higher-risk areas.
- \$2.3 billion over five years to conserve up to 1 million square kilometers more land and inland waters, and an additional \$200 million to build natural infrastructure like parks, green spaces, ravines, waterfronts, and wetlands.

Reactions

“Watershed moment for child care, long-term care: Budget 2021: But pharmacare, tax reform and climate change remain in limbo”, from CCPA states: “Budget 2021 delivers on a number of previously-announced emission reduction initiatives and green infrastructure projects, including \$14.9 billion over eight years for a new, permanent public transit fund.....Unfortunately, while the budget makes big strides toward a greener economy, it fails once again to tackle Canada's dependence on fossil fuel production. Without a clear plan and timeline for winding down oil and gas extraction we simply cannot meet our net zero emission target.”

“Federal Budget React: Canadian Civil Society Responds” compiles reactions from Canada's major climate advocacy groups, including Climate Action Network's own statement: “... Some investments made by budget 2021 are extremely helpful – particularly investments in clean transportation, energy efficient homes, resilient agriculture, and Canada's first green bonds. Some investments made by budget 2021 are extremely worrisome – investments in carbon capture and

storage risk perpetuating our dangerous addiction to fossil fuels, and some of the forestry investments perpetuate a transactional relationship with nature that treats it like a commodity we can trade. Yet the big take away is this: we are in a time of changing norms, and Budget 2021 does not present a vision for climate-safe transformational change”

“Budget 2021 is a healthy dose for the clean economy, but climate measures lack potency” from the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, which points out “There is no way to reach our near-term or net zero targets without retrofitting practically all of Canada’s homes and buildings. That’s why the lack of mention of energy efficiency and deep retrofits for buildings beyond single-family homes is surprising ... There is no mention in the budget of strategic incentives or financing for municipalities or developers to ensure new construction is near-zero construction.”

The Canadian Labour Congress press release, **Canada’s unions welcome ‘crucial’ funding for child care, skills training and \$15 federal minimum wage** doesn’t mention any of the green recovery elements. The CLC later released a Summary and Analysis of the Budget, [here](#).

From NUPGE: **Federal Budget 2021: Lofty ambitions need details** , which follows NUPGE President Larry Brown’s letter to Environment and Climate Change Minister Wilkinson, titled **No more delays on climate action, justice**.

“Federal Budget Leaves Out Transit Workers and Riders as Operational Transit Funding Completely Left Out, Says ATU Canada” from the Amalgamated Transit Union

“If not now, when?” Liberals waste another shot at equitable recovery with Budget 2021 from Canadian Union of Public Employees

And from the *National Observer*: **“Critics throw shade at federal budget cash for home retrofits”** and **“Will Trudeau’s wager on carbon capture help or hurt the environment?”** .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [carbon capture and storage](#), [clean technology industry](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Green Recovery](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Two new reports call for end to subsidies and phase-out of Canada’s oil and gas industry

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

Two new reports expose Canada’s continuing financial support of the fossil fuel industry and call for a phase-out. These appeared in the same week as the federal government reported Canada’s latest **National Inventory of Emissions** to the United Nations’ UNFCC, showing that the oil and gas industry is the top source of carbon emissions in Canada.

The first report, by Environmental Defence, is **Paying Polluters: Federal Financial Support to Oil and Gas in 2020** , released on April 15. It estimates that the government has provided or promised at least \$18 billion to the oil and gas sector in 2020 alone, including \$3.28 billion in direct subsidy programs and \$13.47 billion in public financing. **Paying Polluters** decries the lack of transparency – especially for funding through Export Development Canada – but nevertheless attempts to list the tax subsidies and direct spending programs, in an Appendix at the end of the report. In addition to obvious subsidies, the tally includes loans for pipeline construction, research into new technologies for cleaner processes, job subsidies for reclamation of oil wells, and even policing costs for pipeline construction – think \$13 million taxpayer dollars paid to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to protect the construction site of the Coastal GasLink pipeline.

Environmental Defence concludes with five recommendations, including a call for greater transparency, and for “a roadmap to achieve Canada’s commitment to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies before 2025, and shift these investments and public finance towards supporting a path to resilient, equitable zero-carbon societies.” It should be noted that the government first pledged to phase out these subsidies in 2009. The report is summarized, with reactions, [by Sarah Cox in *The Narwhal*](#), on April 16.

A second report, [Correcting Canada's "One-eye shut" Climate Policy](#), was released on April 16 by the [Cascade Institute](#). It summarizes Canada's history of fossil fuel production, and refutes those who argue that we are a small country whose emissions don't compare to those of China or the U.S. Calling on Canada to accept its global responsibility, the authors state that "Canada's 2021-2050 oil and gas production would exhaust about 16 percent of the world's remaining carbon budget. Canada is indeed a "carbon bomb" of global significance." This is the first of many hard-hitting, frank statements in the report, including a highly critical discussion of the "fool's gambit" of hydrogen production, and an assessment that "A highly resourced and well-organized "regime of obstruction" has developed in Canada to block effective climate action and ensure increased fossil fuel extraction."

[Correcting Canada's "One-eye shut" Climate Policy](#) references the Environmental Defence [Paying Polluters report](#), agreeing with the call for a phase-out of government support and subsidies. It also offers more information about subsidies – for example, an estimate that the provincial supports, including royalty credits, constitute an additional estimated \$4.2 billion a year. Other less-than-obvious examples of support for oil and gas: subsidies that encourage fossil fuel consumption, like aviation or mobility investments, and over \$250 million directed to four oil sands major companies under Canada's Emergency Wage Subsidy during Covid-19. The report states that Imperial Oil alone received \$120 million in wage support while concurrently issuing \$320 million in dividends. Yet on the issue of oil and gas jobs, the authors state that in 2019, the oil and gas sector represented just 1 percent of direct employment in Canada, and 5.5 percent in Alberta. "To save costs, the industry has aggressively cut jobs, by 23 percent over the 2014 to 2019 period, even as oil and gas production increased by 24 percent, reaching record highs, over that same period."

The One-Eye Shut report goes further, offering specific policy options within the federal jurisdiction to phase out the industry, including: "prohibiting the leasing of federal lands and waters for fossil fuel production and infrastructure; implementing a "climate test" on all new fossil fuel projects and removing federal impact review exemptions; canceling the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline; divesting federal public investment funds from fossil fuel production; and removing federal subsidies and public financing that supports fossil fuel exploration, production, or transportation, including federal funding for technologies that delay a transition away from oil and gas."

[Correcting Canada's "One-eye shut" Climate Policy: Meeting Canada's climate commitments requires ending supports for, and beginning a gradual phase out of, oil and gas production](#) is a Technical Paper written by University of Waterloo professor Angela Carter and PhD. Student Truzaar Dordi, and published by the [Cascade Institute](#). Participating Institutions include the Corporate Mapping Project, University of Waterloo, Royal Roads University, and the McConnell Foundation.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change policies](#), [energy policies](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [green hydrogen](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and Gas Lobby](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Sierra Club green recovery plan calls for "ironclad labor and equity standards"

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

The Sierra Club U.S. report [How to Build Back Better: A 10-year Plan for Economic Renewal](#) is a blueprint for economic renewal – in which the environmental advocacy group continues to demonstrate clear support for the needs of workers. Released in March, [this report](#) includes a call for public investments which "must come with ironclad labor and equity standards to curb racial, economic, and gender inequity instead of reinforcing the unjust status quo." To support the job quality theme, the Sierra Club also released a 1-pager titled [Cross-cutting environmental, labor and equity standards](#) and a 3-page summary titled [Why Standards Matter, an overview of job quality issues](#) .

Briefly, the Sierra Club recommends a pandemic recovery plan which would create over 15 million good jobs, based on public investment of \$1 trillion per year for ten years. Investments would go to many sectors including infrastructure and clean manufacturing, but also the care sector and the public sector. In addition to job creation, the plan addresses systemic racism, supports public health, and cuts climate pollution nearly in half by 2030. The economic renewal plan is based on

the **THRIVE Agenda**, which is itself based on job projections and modelling by academics at the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), led by Robert Pollin. Their latest analysis was published by PERI as **Employment Impacts of Proposed U.S. Economic Stimulus Programs** (March 2021). Sierra Club released a **3-page summary of job projections**; an **interactive Jobs Calculator**; and Fact Sheets for each of the sectors considered: regenerative agriculture, clean energy, care and public sector, transportation, manufacturing, buildings, and clean water for all, and pollution-free communities. All these accompanying documents, along with the full report, are available [here](#).

THRIVE stands for “Transform, Heal, and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy” and is summarized in the **Sierra Club press release** of March 25. The coalition has grown out of the **Green New Deal Network**, itself a coalition of 15 U.S. organizations that are focused on combating social inequity and environmental destruction through political action.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [employment impacts](#), [Green New Deal - U.S.](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Job Creation](#), [Job Quality](#), [Labour and Greens](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Government committee recommends further study for support for workers amid transition to electric vehicle production

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

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development presented their report, **The Road Ahead: Encouraging the Production and Purchase Of Zero-Emission Vehicles In Canada** to the House of Commons on April 13. The Committee had received eighteen briefs and heard from twenty-one witnesses since the Fall of 2020 – available [here](#). The importance of reducing transportation emissions was accepted, and the topics of discussion included purchase incentives, expanding ev charging infrastructure and the impact on the electricity sector, the potential of hydrogen-powered vehicles, and more. The resulting report makes thirteen recommendations, to which the government is requested to respond. Amongst the recommendations: the existing federal incentive program for EV purchase be continued and expanded to include used EV’s, that the price cap be eliminated, with eligibility geared to income; that the Government of Canada build on existing initiatives, like the Green Mining Innovation program, to improve the environmental performance of Canadian minerals used in battery and hydrogen fuel cell production; and that the federal government work with provincial and territorial governments to develop recycling and end of life management strategies for ZEV batteries.

Recommendation #6 addresses the concerns of workers: “The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada study opportunities to support automotive sector workers while facilities are transitioning to produce ZEVs, and consider dedicated funding to retrain automotive sector workers for ZEV production.”

Most of the input to the Standing Committee was from industry representatives, but the report attributes Recommendation #6 largely to the testimony of Angelo DiCaro, Research Director of Unifor on November 23, 2020. From the report: “Witnesses cautioned that it will be challenging to reorient Canada’s automotive sector to produce ZEVs. It takes time for producers to bring vehicles to market, and to retool facilities and retrain workers to produce ZEVs. Angelo DiCaro

suggested that the Government of Canada should ensure that the employment insurance system will support workers during plant retooling. He also noted that the transition to ZEVs could threaten jobs in Canada's automotive parts sector, especially among businesses that produce parts for the powertrains that propel ICEVs. To compensate, Mr. DiCaro said that Canadian governments should set rules about the afterlife of vehicles that could create jobs in vehicle disassembly and recycling."

Specifically, when asked later by NDP MP Laurel Collins, "what kind of retraining and income supports do Canadian auto workers need to support a just transition to a zero-emissions future?" DiCaro identified the powertrain segment of the auto parts industry as the most vulnerable, and continued.... "as plants transition, as will happen with Oakville, we have to see how long these transition times will take in our next round of bargaining. I can assure you that, if this is going to be a two-year or a 16-month transition to get that plant retooled, there are going to be questions about income supports for those workers as they retrain and wait for these cars to come online..... This is front and centre. I think the act of collective bargaining gives us an opportunity to explore that. Certainly our employment insurance system and our training systems are going to have to be looked at more carefully."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Auto Industry, auto manufacturing industry, Electric Vehicles, Just Transition, Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Right to a healthy environment recognized in new amendments to Canadian Environmental Protection Act

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

On April 13 the Government of Canada announced proposed amendments to the [Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 \(CEPA\)](#), the cornerstone of federal environmental laws. [Bill C-28 Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act](#) promises to fast-track the regulatory process for particularly harmful chemicals; encourage companies to avoid toxic chemicals entirely and to phase-in mandatory product labelling, beginning with cosmetics, household cleaning products and flame retardants in upholstery. The Act also recognizes and protects the right of Canadians to a healthy environment.

The government press release is [here](#); and a [Backgrounder](#) and [Plain language summary of key amendments](#) is provided. In addition, the government's talking points about the CEPA amendments are highlighted in an [Opinion piece by John Wilkinson](#), Canada's Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, in *The National Observer*. The amendments are the culmination of a long process, including [hearings by the House Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development](#), which received 66 submissions. The Standing Committee report, [Healthy Environment, Healthy Canadians, Healthy Economy: Strengthening the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999](#) made 89 recommendations when it was released in 2017. A summary appeared in the WCR [here](#).

Right to Healthy Environment proposals

["Is a healthy environment a right? New CEPA bill says so"](#), in *The National Observer* (April 14, re-posted in [The Toronto Star](#)) quotes Joe Castrilli, legal counsel for the Canadian Environmental Law Association. He states: "This bill does not create a right to a healthy environment" "There's a preamble provision which says the government recognizes that ... it has the duty to protect the right to a healthy environment. But it doesn't actually create a remedy for any individual seeking to protect the environment."

A [Joint statement](#) released by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) Breast Cancer Action Quebec, EcoJustice, the David Suzuki Foundation, and Environmental Defence acknowledges the importance of Bill C-28, points out some weaknesses, and alludes to the debates which clearly lies ahead. From the Joint Statement :

“Bill C-28 includes amendments to CEPA recognizing – for the first time in federal law – the right to a healthy environment . 156 UN member states already recognize this right in law, treaties and constitutions. The recognition of a right to a healthy environment in CEPA is an important step forward. However, the bill should ensure that this right has a positive impact on the lives of everyone in Canada, especially vulnerable populations who have long been denied environmental justice and disproportionately experience cumulative impacts of multiple interacting hazards.Bill C-28 is important as we continue to face the COVID-19 pandemic. A strengthened CEPA will be the backbone of a green and just recovery.All political parties must now make Bill C-28 a political priority.”

The Right to a Healthy Environment: even more is required to address environmental racism

The environmental rights and protections in **Bill C-28** on April 13 come on the heels of private member's Bill C-230, **A National Strategy to Redress Environmental Racism (Bill C-230)** , which was debated and passed 2nd Reading on March 24. C-230 will now come before the House Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, with **the first meeting scheduled for April 14**. C-230 goes further than the CEPA amendments regarding on environmental justice, and calls for the the government to

- Examine the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk
- Collect information and statistics relating to the location of environmental hazards
- Collect information and statistics relating to negative health outcomes in communities that have been affected by environmental racism
- Assess the administration and enforcement of environmental laws in each province

In addition, it calls for possible amendments to federal laws, policies, and programs, with the involvement of community groups, and with compensation for individuals or communities. A new article (published before the House of Commons vote) appears in *Our Times* in **“Here for all Seasons: A Coalition to Confront Environmental Racism”** (Feb. 21 2021). It describes some of those community and advocacy groups fighting on this issue, including the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). The Labour Day 2020 issue of *Our Times*, summarized **here**, describes the role of labour unions in the struggle against environmental racism – in which CBTU has been prominent.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, environmental racism, environmental rights, toxic chemicals** | **Leave a reply**

72% of surveyed oil and gas workers in Canada want career transition – with many willing to accept wage reduction

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

A survey of over 2,000 respondents from across Canada who had previously worked in the oil and gas industry found that 72% indicated that their career priority was to make a career transition. Of that 72%, “35% indicated their desired employment situation was in a different role or industry; 14% were seeking a different work arrangement such as self-employment; and 12% planned to seek employment after additional training.” The survey results are summarized in two blogs on March 30, **Untapped Talent: Opportunity to Transition**, and **Untapped Talent, Transitioning Opportunity** , from Canada's oil and gas labour market organization, **PetroLMI**. The survey was conducted from October 2019 to December 2020.

While a resistance to lower wages is frequently cited as a barrier to Just Transition, the PetroLMI survey showed that: “the wage expectations of respondents were not out of line given their education, experience and skills. When asked about their salary expectations, 61% indicated a salary of less than \$100,000, and 28% were willing to take a reduction in their salary for stable employment. In Alberta more than 35% of respondents said they were willing to take a salary reduction.” 42% of

respondents were over the age of 55; 77% had over 15 years of experience; 86% had post-secondary education – in Alberta, most held a university, while in the rest of Canada, trade certification was most cited.

From the industry point of view: “While layoffs rarely have a silver lining, these workforce reductions mean there is a robust pool of talent available for hire.” “The layoffs that occurred among respondents were broad and impacted a wide range of job families and occupations from trades, truck drivers, technologists and technicians to geoscientists, engineers and information technologists. The talent pool also included occupations that tended to be transferable across industries including finance, accounting, human resources, health and safety, sales, marketing and business development. They also included field operations and drilling workers with transferable skills such as working in safety-sensitive workplaces, critical thinking and problem-solving. As a result, construction and renewable energy companies have begun hiring from this talent pool.”

Canada's **Petroleum Labour Market Institute** (PetroLMI- formerly the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada) produces ongoing labour market analysis, recently stating: “The cumulative impacts of a six-year economic downturn, lower demand due to COVID-19 health restrictions, and structural shifts in the oil and gas industry, mean there is a smaller oil and gas workforce in Canada – down 26%, or 58,700 jobs from its peak in 2014.” Their latest detailed labour market data, sourced from Statistics Canada, [is here](#). Analytical reports are [compiled here](#), including a four-part series titled **“The Impact of COVID-19 on Canada’s Energy Workforce: A four-part series on work practices, productivity and opportunities”**. On that topic, Norwegian consultancy Rystad Energy ranks Canada, U.S. and Australia as hardest hit in **“Covid-19 job toll: Top O&G employer China resilient, US takes larger hit than European peers”**, a March 9 newsletter. (The Canadian Energy Research Institute also published **Economic Recovery Pathways for Canada’s Energy Industry: Part 2 – Canadian Crude Oil and Natural Gas** in September 2020, modelling employment and economic impacts) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [attitudes of workers](#), [Covid-19](#), [Job displacement](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Can Biden unite Labour and climate activists with his American Jobs Plan ?

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

On March 31, U.S. President Biden announced his “American Jobs Plan,” which outlines over \$2 trillion in spending proposals, including \$213 billion to build, modernize and weatherize affordable housing, \$174 billion for incentives and infrastructure for electric vehicles; \$100 billion for power grid modernization and resilience; \$85 billion investment in modernizing public transit and bringing it to underserved areas; \$35 billion investment in clean technology research and development, including incubators and demonstration projects; \$16 billion employing union oil and gas workers to cap abandoned oil and gas wells and clean up mines, and \$10 billion to launch a Civilian Climate Corps to work on conservation and environmental justice projects. All of these are proposals, to be subject to the political winds of Washington, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi suggesting a date of July 4 for a vote on legislation.

The **White House Fact Sheet** outlines the specifics . Robert Reich calls the plan “smart politics” in **“Joe Biden as Mr. Fix-it”** in *Commons Dreams*, and according to **“Nine Ways Biden’s \$2 Trillion Plan Will Tackle Climate Change”** in *Inside Climate News*, “President Joe Biden aims to achieve unprecedented investment in action to address climate change by wrapping it in the kind of federal spending package that has allure for members of Congress of both parties.” **David Roberts offers a summary and smart, informed commentary** in his Volt blog, stating: “Within this expansive infrastructure package is a mini-Green New Deal, with large-scale spending targeted at just the areas energy wonks say could accelerate the transition to clean energy — all with a focus on equity and justice for vulnerable communities on the front lines of that transition. If it passes in anything like its current form, it will be the most significant climate and energy legislation of my lifetime, by a wide margin.”

Julian Brave NoiseCat writes in the National Observer on April 6, summing up the dilemma: *...” Each policy has the potential to unite or divide the Democrat’s coalition of labour unions, people of colour,*

environmentalists and youth activists. Some policies, like the creation of a new Civilian Climate Corps are directly adopted from demands pushed by activists like the youth-led *Sunrise Movement*. Others, like investments in existing nuclear power plants and carbon capture retrofits for gas-fired power plants, will pit labour unions against environmental justice activists from the communities those industries often imperil. Uniting the environmental activists who oppose the development of fossil fuel pipelines with the workers who build them will be among the Democrats' greatest challenges."

Some Specific U.S. statements:

Generally favourable reaction comes in a **brief statement from the AFL-CIO**. The **BlueGreen Alliance** states: "This is a historic first step, and yet we know this and more will be needed to deliver the scale of investment needed, particularly in disadvantaged communities and for workers and communities impacted by energy transition." Similarly, Kate Aronoff writes "**Biden's Infrastructure Plan Needs More Climate Spending**" in *The New Republic*; and the Climate Justice Alliance response is titled "**Grassroots, Environmental Justice Communities call on Biden To Go Bigger, Bolder And Faster For A Climate, Care And Infrastructure Recovery Package That Meets The Moment**".

The **Sunrise Movement press release** commends Biden for calling for passage of the PRO Act, for clean energy initiatives, and environmental justice aspects, and has a mixed reaction to Biden's version of the Civilian Climate Corps: "This gives our movement a starting place, and with a foot in the door we can fight to expand and strengthen the CCC over the coming years." "The plan Biden rolled out today would create about 10,000-20,00 jobs in a Civilian Climate Corps, which would train and employ young people to build clean energy and decarbonize the economy. When FDR rolled out a similar Civilian Conservation Corps, it employed around 300,000 people per year, and that was back when the US population was ~40% of its current size ."

Will Biden's Plan push Canada's climate ambitions?

The CBC published "**Here are four ways Biden's big climate bill touches Canada**". Mitchell Beer compiles reactions in "**Biden Jobs, Infrastructure Plan Aims to 'Turbocharge the transition' off Fossil Fuels**" in *The Energy Mix*, including Adam Radwanski's response in the *Globe and Mail*, "**Joe Biden's new climate plans should jolt Ottawa**" (restricted access). And the Canadian United Steelworkers alludes to the "Buy American" elephant in the room for Canadians, in its press release titled, "**Build Back Better Through Infrastructure Spending on Both Sides of the Border**" (April 1) "the United Steelworkers union (USW) sees U.S. President Joe Biden's American Jobs Plan as an opportunity to maintain and create jobs, bolster manufacturing and make our communities safer.A decade ago, the USW worked with the Obama administration and the Canadian government to create a North American strategy that benefited workers in the United States and Canada.... Canada is not the problem facing U.S. manufacturing and workers. Co-operation between Canada and U.S. will build on our longstanding and productive trading relationship."

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Civilian Climate Corps](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [Joe Biden](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition policies in Canada, EU and OECD countries – including unique case studies

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

How Can we Manage a Just Transition? A comparative review of policies to support a just transition from carbon intensive industries was released by the University of Victoria , Institute for Integrated Energy Systems in late March 2021. The researchers examined national Just Transition policies in Canada and in twenty-five European Union and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, along with EU-level and regional entities. Seven main thematic areas were identified: i) governance mechanisms; ii) climate and sustainability planning; iii) workforce development; iv) economic development; v) regional and rural development; vi) innovation and research; vii) social security. Amongst the key findings: Jobs and environment-focussed initiatives are the most common, with well-developed workforce and skills strategies evident. However, the researchers highlight many deficiencies, including a lack of

social justice language in policies; a lack of targeted strategies, excepting for the coal industry; a lack of proactive planning – with the exception of workforce development measures; and a lack of integrated planning at the industrial/economic planning level. The report points to best practice examples – in New Zealand for its proactive approach, and in Scotland and Ireland, for accountability through Just Transitions Commissions.

The report provides a thorough literature review, international analysis, and identifies areas where further research is needed. It also provides ten brief, unique case studies which include, but go beyond fossil-fuel related transitions, consisting of: Ontario, Canada; Grand-Est, France; Saarland, Germany; Western Macedonia, Greece; Piedmont, Italy; Incheon, Capital Region, Korea; Bay of Plenty, New Zealand; Basque Country, Spain; Kalmar, Småland with Islands, Sweden; and Wales, United Kingdom.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [case studies](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trans Mountain pipeline protests continue as a new report estimates costs up to \$13 billion for Canadian taxpayers

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

As construction of the Trans Mountain expansion continues and the British Columbia government **weighs the risks of potential oil spills**, protests against the project continue. “***Tiny House Warriors And Braided Warriors Accomplishes Lock Down On Trans Mountain Site***” (Sparrow Project, April 3) describes the protest by those supporting the resistance of the Secwepemc First Nations – also as described in “***We Will Not Stop: First Nations Land Defenders Take Direct Action Against Trans Mountain Pipeline***” in *Common Dreams* (April 3) . In what they call a “deep dive”, *The Tyee* and Investigate West co-published “***For BC’s Two Pipeline Fights, It’s Spring Forward***”, which delves into the many actors in the continuing opposition to Trans Mountain and the Coastal Gas Link pipelines. Also in *The Tyee*, “***Youth Climate Activists Aim to Rally Support for Indigenous Land Defenders***” describes the March 19 Global Climate March protest by Sustainabilityteens in Vancouver. *The National Observer* maintains an archive of articles documenting Trans Mountain developments, [here](#). Amidst it all, the provincial government weighs granting an environmental certificate re protections for oil spills, as explained in “***B.C. relying on the federal shoreline protections for Trans Mountain pipeline it previously called inadequate***” in *The Narwhal* .

An academic report, released on March 31, supports the protests with financial and cost benefit analysis, as summarized by the [CBC here](#). ***Evaluation of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project*** is written by lead author Thomas Gunton, Director of Simon Fraser University’s [School of Resource and Environmental Management](#). The report concludes that continuing the construction of the Trans Mountain Expansion project will bring a net cost to Canada of \$6.8 billion under base case assumptions – with the possibility of costs running as high as \$13.3 billion “...because the TMEP capacity is not required and therefore does not generate a benefit. Oil transported on TMEP could have been transported on other pipelines without expending funds building TMEP. Therefore, **continuing to build TMEP as currently proposed is not in Canada’s public interest and the project should not proceed further.**”

Much has changed since Professor Gunton’s previous [evaluation in 2017](#) of the Trans Mountain expansion project, including the federal government’s purchase of Trans Mountain in 2018. The 2021 report, ***Evaluation of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project*** is highly critical of the previous assessments by the National Energy Board, used to justify the purchase – and makes specific note of how the NEB distorted job projections provided by the Conference Board of Canada to overestimate the job benefits. The ***December 2020 report of the Parliamentary Budget Office*** found that the Trans Mountain Expansion profitability was dependent on climate change policies – so the Gunton report updates the PBO analysis by taking into account the climate change policies announced in the December 2020 ***Healthy Environment Healthy Economy*** climate plan. Finally, it provides detailed cost benefit analysis both for completion and for termination of the TMX project – incorporating environmental costs, including the risks of pipeline spills. Regarding employment benefits, the analysis finds modest positive benefits, given the existing recession in the oil and gas sector.

“A potential benefit of TMEP is providing employment to workers. As discussed in Section 3.2.6 of this report, the measure of employment benefits is not the gross number of jobs generated by TMEP but is instead the net employment and income gain of employees of TMEP relative to what they would have made if TMEP did not proceed. Historically, the economy of Western Canada has been characterized by tight labour markets in which most employees are employed. Under full employment, projects like TMEP would simply draw employees from other jobs with little to no net employment benefit. However, given the current recession and recent slowdowns in the energy sector and the potential of TM training and hiring employees through impact benefit agreements, there will likely be an employment benefit, with some hiring of persons who would otherwise be unemployed or employed at a lower wage.” (p.45).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change activism](#), [employment impacts](#), [First Nations](#), [Job Creation](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Finally, a roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act

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

In 2019 at COP25, Canada’s federal politicians **pledged to enact a Just Transition Act**, and even **included the promise in the Liberal election platform**. Yet the December 2020 federal climate plan, ***A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy***, makes little mention of Just Transition, and the absence of follow-through has not gone unnoticed – for example, in a January 2021 article in the *Toronto Star* which asks: ***“The Liberals promised help for oil workers as their jobs disappear. So where is it?”***

On April 1, a new report, ***Roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act: A path to a clean and inclusive economy*** advances the issue by offering a framework and costed proposals for essential provisions. *The Roadmap* is built on an overview of the international research and best practices, and makes proposals which are meant to be comprehensive and ambitious, and commensurate with the scale of the problem- costed as “in the order of \$16.5 billion per year (declining over the lifetime of the transition).”

The Roadmap proposes the following components for a Just Transition Act for Canada:

-
- *Enshrine fundamental just transition principles, rights and definitions;*
 - *Establish a Just Transition Commission to oversee and guide the government’s transition agenda;*
 - *Establish a Just Transition Benefit to support workers in affected communities;*
 - *Establish an Economic Diversification Crown Corporation to invest in job-creating projects in affected communities;*
 - *Establish a Just Transition Training Fund that ensures access for historically marginalized groups to employment in the lower-carbon economy; and,*
 - *Establish a new federal-provincial/territorial Just Transition Transfer to deliver funding for these new social programs.*
-

The role of the **Just Transition Commission** is central, coordinating the activities that will be administered through federal departments, encompassing the entire Canadian economy and workforce. The commission should represent and engage with “a wide variety of stakeholders, including labour unions, civil society groups, Indigenous peoples, business associations, independent experts, and public servants from governments of all levels.It should lead the development of regionally specific roadmaps for Canada’s transition away from fossil fuels—plans that map out a timeline for the wind down of fossil fuel production and the scaling up of alternative industries for affected provinces and communities. It should propose and monitor policies related to decarbonization and workforce transition to ensure the principles of a just transition are respected at all stages of implementation. The commission should play a role in developing skills inventories and recommending investments in training for affected regions and workers. It should also work with employers and workers to facilitate job shifting and job bridging to avoid layoffs wherever possible.”

Regarding a Just Transition Benefit for individuals, the authors state: “Unlike some existing transition supports, eligibility for this benefit should not be conditional on direct employment in an emissions-intensive industry. Instead, anyone suffering a significant drop in income due to the wind down of fossil fuel production in a qualifying region should be able to claim it. The benefit should be available, for as long as necessary, to help displaced workers to seek re-training and/or re-employment.”

Regarding **proactive economic diversification**, the report notes that “the amount spent by Canadian governments on economic diversification in the context of decarbonization is woefully inadequate” and calls for the creation of a new federal Economic Diversification Crown Corporation, distinct from the existing Western Economic Diversification Fund or the Canada Infrastructure Bank. It would play “a crucial and distinct role in accelerating economic diversification away from fossil fuels through direct public ownership of new infrastructure ...At least initially, new public investments in economic diversification must be on the scale of the industries being phased out—in the order of \$15 billion per year at first and declining as the transition unfolds.”

Regarding training, the report calls for the legislation to “create a Just Transition Training Fund that has the explicit purpose of training new workers from historically marginalized groups for good, green jobs in a lower-carbon economy. Offering preferential support to certain groups, including women, Indigenous peoples, disabled people and people from racialized communities, is consistent with the principle of employment equity and protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.” The report calls for “a significant portion of the Just Transition Training Fund should be allocated directly to expand training infrastructure, including through public colleges, labour union training centres and on job sites across the country.”

Roadmap to a Canadian Just Transition Act: A path to a clean and inclusive economy was written by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood and Clay Duncliffe, and co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) Research program . Mertins Kirkwood summarizes the contents in an **Opinion piece in the *National Observer*** .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Just Transition Act](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Massachusetts climate legislation almost derailed by opposition to greener building code provisions

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

An Act creating a next-generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy was signed into law on March 26, summarized in Governor Charlie Baker’s press release, [here](#) . It is a sweeping and ambitious bill which sets emissions reduction targets, including six sectoral goals, culminating in net-zero emissions for the state by 2050; sets appliance efficiency standards; incentivizes electric vehicles; includes environmental justice protections; and orders funding for a

clean energy equity workforce and market development program to support employment opportunities for certified minority- and women-owned small business and individuals living in environmental justice communities.

And as described in [“What You Need To Know About The New Mass. Climate Law”](#) (NPR, WBUR, March 26) ,the Roadmap legislation also authorizes the development of stretch energy codes for net-zero energy buildings. The Department of Energy Resources will announce the final version after public consultations for the next 18 months, after which municipalities can choose to adopt the model codes. The building code provisions were the major sticking point in the political battle over this legislation, and triggered a Governor’s veto in 2020, thanks to organized opposition from the natural gas industry and real estate industry, both of whom see a potential threat of natural gas bans.

This Massachusetts example is explained in [“Sweeping Mass. climate law revives gas ban battle”](#) (Mar. 29). The broader battle which is forming across the U.S. is described in [“Developers clash with U.S. Cities on vote for greener building codes”](#) in *The Energy Mix*, and in [“A Texas city had a bold new climate plan – until a gas company got involved”](#) in *The Guardian* (March 1). The [American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy \(ACEEE\)](#) describes how this conflict is playing out at the International Code Council (ICC), which sets model building code standards, and which “just threw out the elections process by which state and local government officials recently overcame powerful commercial interests to secure large energy savings.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Building Codes](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Natural Gas](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Historic court decision in Mathur v. Ontario government – Youth Charter challenge for stronger GHG emissions reductions can proceed

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

Although the Supreme Court decision about Canada’s carbon pricing system on March 25 was undoubtedly historic, it overshadowed the news of another historic legal decision on that date, when an Ontario Divisional Court dismissed the provincial government’s second attempt to stop the youth-led challenge to its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. In [“Youth climate case forges ahead after court affirms historic decision”](#), EcoJustice describes that the case of [Mathur et. al. v. Her Majesty in Right of Ontario](#), which has now become the constitutional challenge to climate change that has advanced the furthest in Canada.

Some background: The case of [Mathur et. al. v. Her Majesty in Right of Ontario](#) was first brought by seven youth in November 2019, following the Conservative government’s passage of the *Cap and Trade Cancellation Act*. The plaintiffs, represented by Ecojustice and Stockwoods LLP, claimed that Ontario’s GHG emissions reduction target is insufficiently ambitious, and that the province’s failure to set a more stringent target infringes the constitutional rights of youth and future generations, under Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In November 2020, the Superior Court of Ontario [upheld the claims](#), in the decision which the provincial government sought to overturn. As of March 25, the case can now proceed to a full hearing, though no date has been set.

[Climate Change and the Right to a Healthy Environment in the Canadian Constitution](#) is a legal article which appeared in the *Alberta Law Review* in 2020. The authors describe and contrast the legal approaches used in the Mathur case and in the [LaRose case](#), which was [dismissed by Canada’s Supreme Court](#) in October 2020. [Ecojustice has posted](#) frequently on the case, and Alberta’s Environmental Law Centre also featured the Mathur case in a [detailed blog in November 2020](#).

The first and most high-profile youth climate case in the world, is [Juliana v. U.S. Government](#) . A timeline is [here](#), reflecting the progress from the initial filing in 2015 till March 9 2021, when Our Children’s Trust filed a [motion to amend](#) the

complaint and adjust the remedy sought, after repeated roadblocks in the case.

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), [climate change and youth](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Juliana v. United States](#), [Mathur case](#), [youth litigation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Supreme Court affirms federal government's constitutional right to enact carbon pricing legislation

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

On March 25, the **Supreme Court of Canada released a majority decision** stating that the federal government of Canada was within its constitutional rights when it enacted the *2018 Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* — which required the provinces to meet minimum national standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The decision enables the federal government to move on to more ambitious climate action plans, since it ends a two-year battle with the provinces, and affirms the importance of the climate change issue. The **majority decision** states that national climate action “is critical to our response to an existential threat to human life in Canada and around the world.” Summaries and reaction to this hugely important decision include an **Explainer** in *The Narwhal*, and **“Supreme Court rules federal carbon pricing law constitutional”** (National Observer). Mainstream media also covered the decision, including a **brief article** in the *New York Times* which relates it to U.S. policy climate.

The Canadian Labour Congress issued a press release **“Canada's unions applaud Supreme Court decision upholding federal carbon pricing”** – pointing out that the carbon tax is only one piece of the puzzle in reducing GHG emissions. **Unifor** emphasized next steps, calling on the provincial premiers of Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and the federal Conservative leader, to “stop complaining” and devise their own climate action plans. Similar sentiments appeared in the reactions of other advocacy groups: for example, **Council of Canadians**; the **Pembina Institute**; **Clean Energy Canada**, and the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment** (CAPE).

Political reactions

The reaction and explanation of the case from the federal government is **here**. The CBC provides a survey of political reaction **here**. Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta were the three provinces who lost their Supreme Court case: in a **press release**, Alberta's Premier Jason Kenney pledged that his government will continue to “fight on”, and will now begin to consult with Albertans on how to respond to the court's decision – as reported in the *National Observer*, **“Alberta has no carbon tax Plan B, was hoping to win in court: Kenney”** (March 26). Kenney further stated, “We will continue **to press our case challenging Bill C-69**, the federal ‘No More Pipelines Law,’ which is currently before the Alberta Court of Appeal.” [Note Bill C-69 is actually titled **An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act**... and was enacted in June 2019]. Ontario's “disappointment” is described in **this article** in the *Toronto Star* and Saskatchewan's government reaction is described **here by the CBC**. A sum-up Opinion piece appears in The Tye: **“Sorry Cranky Conservatives! Carbon Pricing Wins the Day”** (March 29).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse gas pollution pricing act](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A vision and action plan to make Canada's heavy industries our low-carbon “Next Frontier”

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

Clean Energy Canada's new report, [The Next Frontier](#), sees Canada's heavy industries—including steel, mining, cement, and wood—as the “Next Frontier” – already employing more Canadians than the oil and gas industry (300,000 in heavy industry compared to 237,000 in oil and gas), and poised to increase exports to the rest of the world. The report contends that Canadian heavy industries have a competitive advantage over their global peers, largely because our electricity sector is now 83% emissions-free. And according to the introduction, the time is now: “The production of certain metals and minerals could increase by up to nearly 500% over the next three decades to meet growing demand for clean technologies, according to the World Bank Group. Global steel demand, meanwhile, is projected to increase by up to 55%; Canadian steel and aluminum are among the world's cleanest and could be even cleaner. Mining companies such as Vancouver based Teck are also global leaders in copper production, while Canada is the world's fifth-largest nickel producer—both key metals for electrifying transportation. And Albertan companies like E3 Metals and Summit Nanotech are finding ways to recover lithium from oilsands wastewater.”

[The Next Frontier](#), released on March 24, calls for an action plan to allow Canada to capitalize on the convergence of global market trends and climate imperatives. The report Canadian strengths and provides more examples of existing companies. It concludes with an action plan to move towards this lower-carbon economy, including recommendations: to expand domestic markets through clean procurement policies for government infrastructure materials; to identify strategic directions such as “establishing a self-sufficient battery and critical minerals supply chain to build and grow domestic battery and clean technology manufacturing”; investment and research and development in well-positioned industries; and establishing standards which will support a “Clean Canada” brand to the world.

And regarding our largest and most important trading partner, the U.S., the bottom line message is: “If we want Biden's “Buy American” approach to include an asterisk beside Canada, we must adapt to what this new administration wants more of (clean energy and low-carbon goods) and what it wants less of (fossil fuels and emissions-intensive products).”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [cement industry](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Decarbonization](#), [Green Economy](#), [industrial policy](#), [mining industry](#), [steel industry](#), [wood products industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: Supreme Court upholds legislation underpinning Canada's carbon pricing system

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

On March 25, majority of [Canada's Supreme Court](#) ruled in what EcoJustice [calls a “monumental” decision](#), that the federal [Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act](#) does not violate the Canadian constitution. The Summary decision is available at the Supreme Court website as of March 25, [here](#). The Justices noted that global warming causes harm beyond provincial boundaries and that it is a matter of national concern under the “*peace, order and good government*” clause of the Constitution. The Justices further noted that the term “carbon tax” is a misnomer, and the fuel and excess emission charges imposed by the Act were constitutionally valid regulatory charges and not taxes.

The federal government's constitutional right to set the framework for pollution pricing lies at the heart of our national policies to fight climate change – originally, through the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) (2016) and now, through the [Healthy Environment Healthy Economy](#) Plan released in December 2020, which proposes to raise the existing carbon tax to \$170 per tonne by 2050.

The [Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act](#) allows the federal government to impose a carbon price, a “backstop”, in any province or territory which fails to design their own policies to meet the federal emission reduction targets. The provinces of Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Alberta all filed separate challenges to the federal jurisdiction – with the provincial appeals courts in [Saskatchewan](#) and [Ontario](#) both upholding the federal government's constitutional right to enact the law. In February 2020, the [Alberta Court of Appeal](#) upheld the provincial challenge, and appeals to the Supreme Court from all three provinces were heard in Fall 2020. A more complete chronology of the legal cases is [here](#).

The Supreme Court decision is [summarized here](#) – with a link to the full Decision (the Court notes that the Full Decision is so lengthy that it may cause an error message when trying to download it).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Greenhouse gas pollution pricing act](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Protests continue over old growth forests in British Columbia

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

British Columbia has no shortage of environmental flashpoints: the [Trans Mountain and Coastal Gas Link pipelines](#), the [Site C dam](#), [LNG terminals](#) – and protection of old growth forests. Before the 2020 provincial election, *The Tyee* published [a substantive overview](#) of the political policies and issues, now updated with [“BC Promised to Protect Old Growth. How Is It Doing?”](#) (March 11) .

B.C. environmentalists have actively called for protections, based on the recommendations of [A New Future for Old Forests: A Strategic Review of How British Columbia Manages for Old Forests Within its Ancient Ecosystems](#) , an independent report submitted to the government in fall 2020 and summarized [here](#). The Sierra Club B.C. published a report card on the government’s progress in implementing the Strategy Report recommendations, [here](#) , and conducted its own research, published as [Intact Forests, Safe Communities: Reducing community climate risks through forest protection and a paradigm shift in forest management](#), written by Dr. Peter Wood and released in February. The *Intact Forests* report documents the relationship of forestry practices and climate related disasters like flooding, droughts, fires and heatwaves, and makes a series of recommendations to reform B.C.’s forestry practices , and apply Indigenous knowledge before the climate crisis worsens.

Protests over the government’s inaction continue, with a high-profile hunger strike and blockade at Fairy Creek on Vancouver Island, summarized [here](#) . The third annual [Forest March B.C.](#) was held on March 19, organized by a [grassroots coalition](#) of community groups, and described in [“In B.C., communities march to protect old growth forests”](#) in *The National Observer* (March 19) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Forestry Management](#), [old growth forests](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s youth return to the streets to support global climate protests on March 19

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

Fridays for Future, the youth-led climate movement inspired by Greta Thunberg, has survived and adapted to Covid [with creative online activism](#). On March 19, 2021, with the theme “ #NoMoreEmptyPromises”, some youth returned to the streets in modest, socially-distanced demonstrations – 48 strikes across Canada, according to [the official FFF statistics](#). Media coverage included: *The National Observer*, [“Youth activists shut down Bay Street, demanding climate promises be kept”](#) (March 19) , which summarizes actions in Toronto, focused on banking; [“Youth Climate Activists Aim to Rally Support for Indigenous Land Defenders”](#) in *The Tyee* described the Sustainabilityteens protest in Vancouver, focused on the Trans Mountain Pipeline; and [“Fridays for Future Sudbury to take part in Global Climate Strike”](#) in the *Sudbury Star*.

Follow Canada’s FFF movement on Twitter [here](#), on Facebook [here](#) . A Fridays for Future Newsletter (subscribe [here](#)) is a new addition to the ongoing global social media presence.

“#Fridaysforfuture: When youth push the environmental movement towards climate justice” appeared in *The Conversation Canada* in September 2019, describing Canada’s movement before Covid hit. Since then, some notable articles have appeared, including:

“The Future Is in Our Hands— Not Theirs” on pages 22-23 in the *CCPA Monitor*, (February 2020), describing the youth-led Our Time movement.

The **Starfish list of the Top 25 Environmentalists under 25**, which profiles young climate leaders across Canada. The youth-led Starfish organization also publishes its own **online journal**, which provides an insight into the issues which are top of mind for youth.

The National Observer maintains a series titled **Youth Climate Voices**. It includes a profile of the Indigenous-led project **Let’s Sprout** in **“How to grow a young climate leader”** (March 8). **“A simple life will make you happy, says young Albertan who traded oil for solar”** (March 1) profiles the career transition of a 31-year old former oil and gas worker, and highlights his solar training at the **Northern Alberta Institute of Technology** in Edmonton.

The IISD (International Institute for Sustainable Development) maintains a research theme called Youth voices, which published **“What the Next Generation Needs From a Green Recovery”** (Feb. 25), an interview with Aliénor Rougeot , leader of Fridays for Future Toronto. She states that “youth would like to be a part of a constant feedback process— instead of us needing to give unsolicited feedback in the streets.” Her thoughts on Canada’s current climate change policies: “...I’m a little bit afraid of the government seeing youth councils as junior partner councils. They shouldn’t treat it as a separate consultation, but more as “these are the main people we need to get to.” “If you do want a Youth Advisory Board or something similar, simplify the process by making sure to give us a time commitment that is clear Try to compensate when you can—it makes a big difference for students or people that do a lot of this work unpaid.”

Another IISD interview appears in **“Solving the Injustices Caused by Climate Change”** (Feb. 25), in which Jhannel C. Tomlinson focuses on the concerns of rural Jamaicans, particularly women. Ms. Tomlinson is an active participant in at least four youth-led activist groups in Jamaica while she pursues her PhD.

And a report commissioned by the Alberta Council for Environmental Education was released by Climate Outreach in February, reporting on the climate literacy and attitudes of 170 Alberta students in grades 4 – 12 (ages approx. 8 to 16). The report, titled **Youth Narrative and Voice** offers 10 principles and suggested climate narratives to address the eco-anxiety of students which was identified in workshops across the province. The recommendations have been forwarded to the provincial Minister of Education, in the hopes they will be considered in the curriculum review currently underway.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and youth, fridays for future, Greta Thunberg, Youth and climate** | [Leave a reply](#)

Nordic and German unions collaborate, aim to be Just Transition “frontrunners”

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



The Council of Nordic Trade Unions, the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung and the German Trade Union Confederation have collaborated to publish six country reports under the project banner, **The Road to a Carbon-Free Europe**. Each country report, about 25 pages, summarizes the national climate goals and policies, especially as related to Just Transition, for **Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden**. A **Synthesis Report** brings together the main findings, and presents the resulting policy recommendations, jointly adopted by the Council of Nordic Trade Unions (NFS) and the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) in November and December 2020.

The **Synthesis Report** calls for holistic climate change policies to navigate the broad-based transformation of society that will result from climate change, incorporating Just Transition principles as outlined by the ILO Decent Work Agenda and its four pillars: social dialogue, social protection, rights at work and job creation. Because Germany and the Nordic countries are export-oriented economies dependent on trade, and facing similar challenges in the emissions-heavy sectors of their economies, the report sees many common opportunities for zero-emission innovations and technology.

“This report suggests that a collaboration between the Nordic countries and Germany on Just Transition can help the countries to reach the climate targets, and that they should aim to become Just Transition frontrunners. Because of their social models, their technological expertise and their ambition to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, they have the right conditions to do so.”

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

U.K. guide to pension fund divestment includes a role for unions

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

Divesting to protect our pensions and the planet: An analysis of local government investments in coal, oil and gas was released in February by Platform, Friends of the Earth Scotland and Friends of the Earth England Wales and Northern Ireland.

The report details the extent of fossil fuel investment by local governments in the U.K., and their progress in divestment. However, of broader interest, it summarizes the financial status of the declining fossil fuel industry, explains the process which lead to stranded assets, and describes the financial dangers for all pension funds in quite understandable terms: “pension funds exposed to the fossil fuel system in the coming decade will face a rollercoaster ride of disruption, write-downs, financial instability and share price deratings as markets adjust.” In an explanation very relevant to Canadians, whose own **Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board still clings to the “staying invested and ‘engaging’” approach** – the report uses the example of investing in Blockbuster videos vs. Netflix, to debunk the “engagement” approach: “The argument for ‘engagement’ tends to be one made by asset owners who employ investment managers who won’t or can’t accept that there is a technology-driven transition occurring. this approach of ‘we’ll decarbonise when markets decide to decarbonise’ is clearly not a risk management strategy. It is a ‘do nothing, and hope a few meetings will help’ strategy.”

Divesting to protect our pensions and the planet offers practical steps for local councillors, community members, and labour unionists. For unions, it points to the leadership of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which passed a **climate action motion in 2017 which included support for divestment**, based on a motion by their constituent unions representing food workers, communication workers, fire brigades, train drivers, and other transport workers. Unison, the primary union representing U.K. government workers, also passed a **strong divestment motion** in 2017 – meaningful because in the U.K., union members in government workplaces are usually entitled to some form of representation on their pension fund committee and board. The report urges union members to become knowledgeable about financial issues and to speak up in committee meetings – advocating for divestment and re-investment in lower-carbon, socially just funds which benefit their local communities and economies, especially after Covid. The report cites inspiring examples, such as investment in wind farms by Manchester and London Councils, the U.K.’s first community-owned solar power cooperative by Lancashire County Council, and social housing in the Forth Valley and in London Councils.

An earlier guide for unions was ***Our Pensions, Our Communities, Our Planet: How to reinvest our pensions for our good?*** published by the Trade Union Group within **Campaign against Climate Change**. The 6-page, action-oriented fact sheet lacks all the up-to-date statistical detail in *Divesting to protect our pensions and the planet* but makes many of the same arguments for divestment, and includes links to U.K. resources, as well as a model motion for local unions.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Divestment, Pension Fund management, pension plans, United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

Wales TUC releases a Just Transition toolkit

Posted on **March 17, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**

Greener workplaces for a Just Transition is a toolkit published in March by the Wales Trades Union Congress, aiming to provide information, tools and ideas for union representatives working towards climate solutions. Intended as a training resource, the 202-page manual includes case studies, bargaining checklists, action plans, and sample documents which workplace reps can adapt to use for their own workplaces. Workplace issues addressed include homeworking, procurement and ethical supply chains, waste and conservation measures, financial disclosure and pension management, among others. The sample documents include a workplace survey, and a joint environment and climate change agreement, which includes language for workplace Joint Environment Committees and Green Workplace Representatives.

The toolkit is quite specific to Wales, although the topics are relevant to any jurisdiction. It follows the 2020 policy publication by the Wales TUC, ***A Green Recovery and a Just Transition***.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Just Transition, Labour Training, training materials, Wales, Workplace greening** | [Leave a reply](#)

Lessons learned from unjust transitions – and a call for cooperation amongst unions and

climate activists

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

On March 17, Labor Network for Sustainability released an important new report: ***Workers and Communities in Transition***, which summarizes the results of their Just Transition Listening Project across the U.S. in 2020. The Listening Project comprised over 100 in-depth interviews with workers and Indigenous and community leaders – 65% of whom were union members, 12% of whom were environmental justice and climate justice activists, and 23% of whom were members of other community groups. Their demographic characteristics were diverse, but all had first-hand experience of economic transition, not only from the current transition in the fossil fuel industry, but also from automation, globalization, and other causes, as well as a variety of industries. Their thoughts and experiences are summarized, along with seven case studies, to describe the problems of unjust transitions and to arrive at the lessons learned. The report concludes with specific recommendations for action by policy-makers, recommendations for future research, and uniquely, recommendations for labour and movement organizations.

In general, the recommendations are summarized as: “Go Big, Go Wide, Go Far.” Under the category of “Go Big”, the authors state: “We will need a comprehensive approach that addresses the impacts on workers and communities across geographies, demographics and industries. The federal government will need to play a lead role. There are promising state and local just transition models, but none have access to the resources to fully fund their efforts. Strengthening the social safety net, workers’ rights, and labor standards will also be critical to supporting workers and communities equitably.” About “Go Wide”: “...A common theme throughout the interviews ... was the trauma individuals and families experienced as their economies were devastated. Several people referenced suicides, drug addiction, and depression among friends and co-workers who struggled with a loss of identity and relationships”. And about “Go Far”: “Just transitions require a longer-term commitment of support and investment in workers and communities. Just transitions also require attention to generational differences: a younger, more diverse workforce has been growing into energy industries that will likely not offer long-term careers. It is essential to create good career alternatives for this generation.”

The specific recommendations for Labour and Movement Organizations are:

- “Labor unions, workers’ rights organizations, and advocacy organizations should build cross-movement relationships by forming labor-climate-community roundtables, networks and/or committees at the state and/or local levels to build and sustain genuine personal and political relationships over time.
- Labor unions should establish or expand any pre-existing environmental and climate committees, task forces, or other entities that can develop and deploy educational programs for members on issues of climate change; social, economic, and environmental justice; and just transition.
- Environmental and other advocacy organizations should create labor committees to develop and deploy educational programs on issues of labor, job quality standards, and just transition.
- Labor unions should adopt environmental and climate policy concerns as part of their advocacy agendas, and community organizations should adopt the right to organize and the promotion of strong labor standards as part of their advocacy agendas.
- All organizations should create more mentorship and leadership development opportunities, especially for women, people of color, Indigenous people, and immigrants.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [attitudes of union members](#), [attitudes of workers](#), [Just Transition](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Corporate net zero goals: solution or deception?

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

Climate change superstar Mark Carney set off a media flurry in a **video interview** with *Bloomberg Live* on February 10, in which he claimed that Brookfield Asset Management is a “net zero” company because its renewables investments offset emissions from its other holdings. Carney reflects a new trend of corporate aspirational statements, for example: Jeff

Bezos' corporate network [The Climate Pledge](#) claimed in February that 53 companies across 18 industries have committed to working toward net-zero carbon in their worldwide businesses, most by 2050. Recent high profile examples include [Royal Dutch Shell](#), Canada's [TD Bank](#) and [Bank of Montreal](#), and [FedEx](#), which on March 5 announced its goal to be carbon-neutral by 2040 as well as an initial investment of \$2 billion to start electrifying its delivery fleet and \$100 million to fund a new research centre for carbon capture at Yale University.

Will these corporate goals help to reach the Paris Agreement target? Many recent articles are skeptical, labelling them “sham”, “greenwash”, and “deception” which seeks to protect the status quo. Some examples:

[“The climate crisis can't be solved by carbon accounting tricks”](#) (*The Guardian*, March 3) which offers a concise explanation of why “Disaster looms if big finance is allowed to game the carbon offsetting markets to achieve ‘net zero’ emissions.”

[“Global oil companies have committed to ‘net zero’ emissions. It's a sham”](#) by Tzepeora Berman and Nathan Taft (*The Guardian*, March 3) – which instead advocates for an international [Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty](#).

[“Call the Fossil Fuel Industry's Net-Zero Bluff”](#) by Kate Aronoff in *New Republic*. She writes: “This isn't the old denialism oil companies funded decades ago. ... Instead of casting doubt on whether the climate is changing, this new messaging strategy casts doubt on the obvious answer to what should be done about it: i.e., rapidly scaling down production..... For now, it's one part creative accounting and many parts a P.R. strategy of waving around shiny objects like biofuels, hydrogen, and carbon capture and storage.”

[“Can the market save the planet? FedEx is the latest brand-name firm to say it's trying”](#) in the *Washington Post*, which quotes Yale Professor Paul Sabin, warning that “carbon capture research also should not become an excuse for doubling down on fossil fuel consumption, or delaying urgently needed policies to move away from fossil fuel consumption, including the electrification of transportation.”

[Chasing Carbon Unicorns: The Deception of Carbon Markets and Net Zero](#) –



a hard-hitting report by Friends of the Earth International which argues that net zero pledges are “a new addition to the strategy basket of these actors who are fighting hard to maintain the status quo.” The report names these actors, led by the financial community's new [Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets](#) (TSVCM) – established by Mark Carney and the led by the CEO of the Standard Chartered Bank, with a goal to develop standards for “credible offsets”. FOE International also names a group of Oxford academics which is supporting the TSVCM work by developing the [Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting](#), and conservation agencies which have endorsed the work: Conservation International (CI), Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

[Chasing Carbon Unicorns](#) concludes:

“Net zero” is a smokescreen, a conveniently invented concept that is both dangerous and problematic because of how effectively it hides inaction. We have to unpack “net zero” strategies and pledges to see which are real and which are fake. Fake zero strategies rely on offsets, rather than real emission reductions. Real zero strategies require emissions to really go to zero, or as close to zero as possible.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [accounting](#), [Business positions on climate change](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [Carbon Offsets](#), [net zero policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International roadmap to guide the auto industry through disruptive times

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

The International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted government, employer, and union representatives at a **Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Automotive Industry**, from February 15th to 19th. Canada's auto industry union, Unifor, participated in the meeting. As reported in a **press release from the union confederation IndustriALL**, the virtual meetings were at times "confrontational", but the resulting **final document** is called a roadmap for the industry to guide it through its current disruptive transformation.

The final document, which will proceed to the Governing Body of the ILO in November 2021, sketches out the challenge:

"The industry is at a turning point: technological advances, climate change, demographic shifts, new consumer preferences and mobility concepts, and a transformative era of globalization are rapidly changing the organization of production and work in the industry. The transition to a carbon neutral economy, new mobility patterns and changing consumer preferences are driving investments in new mobility solutions, electric and autonomous vehicles, cleaner production with alternative materials, and greater circularity."

The **Conclusions of the Technical Meeting**, agreed-upon by union, management and government, includes the concepts of Just Transition, decent work, gender equality and lifelong learning. Amongst the conclusions, this recommendation for future actions:

"Governments, employers' and workers' organizations should: (a) support the industry navigate through its transformation, accelerated by the COVID19 crisis, and mitigate the impact on enterprises and jobs; (b) advance decent and sustainable work in the automotive industry; (c) promote the acquisition of skills, competences and qualifications and access to quality education for all workers throughout their working lives to address skills mismatches now and in the future and encourage more women to study STEM; (d) jointly engage in formulating and implementing coherent and comprehensive economic, trade, fiscal, education and sustainable industrial policies, incentives and actions, in accordance with national law and practice, to: (i) create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, increased productivity and for sustainable enterprises of all sizes to grow and generate decent and productive work; (ii) improve working conditions and safety and health at work and extend social protection to all workers in order to promote decent work; and (iii) facilitate a just transition to a future of work that contributes to sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions."

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing industry](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [international agreements](#), [social dialogue](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal Advisory Committee on Net Zero policies appointed to augment existing research and recommendations

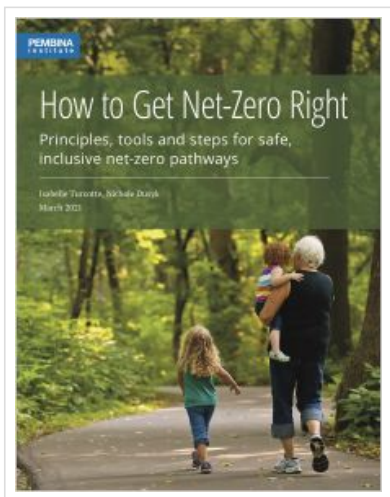
Posted on **March 15, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In late February, the federal government **appointed a Net Zero Advisory Committee** with fifteen expert members, including Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuf and Climate Action Network-Canada (CAN-Rac) Executive Director Catherine Abreu, as well as Linda Coady, Executive Director of the Pembina Institute, climate scientist Simon Donner from University of British Columbia, Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Kluane Adamek, and others from government and industry. As explained in **"Canada's new Net Zero Advisory Body and Bill C-12"** (March 4) by the Climate Action Network Canada, this Advisory Committee was a platform promise made by the Liberals during the 2019 election, and is intended to provide ongoing expert advice until 2050 to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Its mandate, [here](#), is to provide advice on the next framework for Canada's climate change policies, as currently before the House of Commons in Bill C-12, the [Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act](#).

An [article](#) in *The Energy Mix* emphasizes the independent nature of the advisory body, and the fact that there are no current oil and gas industry representatives included. However, in "[Accountability Bill Lacks 'Clear Path' To Net-Zero Targets, Climate Scientist Warns Ottawa](#)", Catherine Abreu is quoted as saying that despite the Advisory Committee, Canada still lacks clear accountability in climate policy, and that Bill C-12 is "not the robust piece of legislation we need to make sure Canada never misses another climate target. To make sure it's set up to drive up ambition, especially in the near term, we need the 2025 goal and a stronger 2030 goal enshrined in law."

Other policy voices on the Net Zero ambition are found in [Canada's Net Zero Future: Finding our way in the global transition](#), released on February 8 by the [Canadian Institute for Climate Choices](#), and described by the Institute as "the first in-depth scenario report to explore how Canada can reach net zero emissions by 2050". It advocates for two pathways: "safe bets" in the short term, and in the long term, "wild cards" which include negative emission technologies that are not yet commercially available.



On March 11, the Pembina Institute released [How to Get Net-Zero Right](#), which recommends top priority for "early, deep, sustained, and technologically feasible direct emissions reductions in every sector.Canada's pathways must define an appropriate role for carbon removal and offsets. Achieving net-zero will require the use of carbon removal to address hard-to-decarbonize sectors or essential end uses that cannot yet be decarbonized. Carbon removal and offsets, however, cannot be approached as an alternative to mitigation, but rather in addition."

[How to Get Net-Zero Right](#) is the first of a promised series of reports on the issue by Pembina, and will consider social justice and equity concerns.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change policies](#), [Decarbonization](#), [net zero policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Only 18% of global Recovery spending in 2020 was green

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

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) released [Are We Building Back Better? Evidence from 2020 and Pathways for Inclusive Green Recovery Spending](#), on March 10. It estimates that in 2020, the world's fifty largest economies announced USD14.6tn in fiscal measures to address the pandemic economic crisis, and states: "Excluding currently uncertain packages from the European Commission, 18.0% of recovery spending, and only 2.5% of total spending, is expected to enhance sustainability. The vast majority of green spending has come from a small set of high-

income nations” with France, Germany and South Korea highlighted for their relatively high percentage of green recovery spending. Canada’s spending is small, with only brief references which state that we have focused on “cleaning dirty energy assets”, and have made fossil fuel investment. (no details or examples given). It is notable that the report covers 2020, so that U.S. spending is also low, though hope is expressed for the Biden/Harris administration. Notably, the report looks to the future: “..... the largest window for green spending is only now opening, as nations shift attention from short-term rescue measures to recovery. Using examples from 2020 spending, we highlight five major green investment opportunities to be prioritised in 2021: green energy, green transport, green building upgrades & energy efficiency, natural capital, and green research and development.”

Each of those topics is analyzed, with some exemplary policies highlighted. Some overarching issues: “Of particular note, despite continuing high global unemployment and widespread damage to human capital, spending on worker retraining in 2020 was small and almost exclusively non-green. Nations transitioning to a low-carbon economy must invest in human capital to enable and match future growth priorities. Structural changes in major sectors, including energy, agriculture, transport, and construction, require shifts in the structure and capabilities of the domestic labour force.”

Also, regarding “green strings”: “Although some dirty rescue-type expenditure may have been necessary to ensure that lives and livelihoods were saved, many of the largest of these policies could have included positive green attributes. For instance, airline bailouts in nations all over the world, including South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States could have included green conditions. Green conditions tied to liquidity support, like requirements to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 or mandates to increase sustainable fuel use, can ensure short term relief while also promoting investment in long-term technological development and acting as a strong guide in national efforts to meet climate targets.”

The report is supported by the United Nations UNEP, the [International Monetary Fund](#) and GIZ through the [Green Fiscal Policy Network](#) (GFPN). The data was collected by the [Oxford University Economic Recovery Project](#) and is now available through the [Global Recovery Observatory](#), a new database which will be updated regularly (most recently at the end of February).

The report cites many other studies and reports, notably: “[Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change?](#)” by Cameron Hepburn, Brian O’Callaghan, Nicholas Stern, Joseph Stiglitz, and Dimitri Zenghelis, which appeared in the *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* in May 2020.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Covid-19](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Sheet Metal Workers International Association](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green Recovery includes proposals for Green Apprenticeships, Opportunity Guarantees for youth

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

In the midst of rampant youth unemployment in the U.K., [An Emergency Plan on Green Jobs for Young People](#) was released on March 1, commissioned by Friends of the Earth U.K. and prepared by Transition Economics consultants. The report puts flesh on the bones of a youth jobs guarantee – discussing the many issues, identifying green jobs and skills related to infrastructure, and estimating the level of funding required. That level of funding is compared to the cost of youth unemployment – the “wage scarring”. Individual scarring is estimated at a loss of £42,000 – £133,000 in future wages over the next 20 years for an 18-20 year old who experiences one year of unemployment. The economic loss to the U.K. as a whole, if all currently unemployed youth stayed unemployed for 1 year, is estimated at £32 – £39 billion.

The solution proposed in the [Emergency Plan](#) is the creation of 250,000 green apprenticeships in infrastructure-related jobs, rapidly rolled-out in England and Wales at an estimated cost of £6.2 – £10.6 billion over 5 years – a “tiny” cost compared to the burden of wage scarring. The report calls for “a green opportunity guarantee” that commits to ensure that all young people are offered a job, an apprenticeship, or training, and estimates that “A government funded £40 billion-a-

year green infrastructure programme would create over 1 million jobs, and deliver significant co-benefits.” The report further calls for apprentice pay rates above the minimum wage, negotiated nationally with U.K. trade unions.

The idea of a green opportunity guarantee has also been advanced in Canada – notably in July 2020 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in its [Alternative Federal Budget Green Recovery Plan](#). The CCPA proposed a National Decarbonization Strategy with public investments in electricity generation, public transit, forestry and building and home retrofitting; part of the Strategy included “a Green Jobs Corps at a cost of \$10 billion per year to create good green jobs that advance Canada’s decarbonization agenda. Among the corps’ priorities will be climate adaptation and environmental reclamation projects identified under the National Decarbonization Strategy. All youth under the age of 25 in Canada will be guaranteed either a job in the corps or access to subsidized training through the Strategic Training Fund.”

Similarly, a [Submission by the Canadian Labour Congress](#) in August stated: “Following the experience of the European Union, the federal, provincial and territorial governments should establish a guarantee that all young people under the age of 25 will receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. This could include a focus on providing decent jobs in land remediation and restoration, climate adaptation, and energy efficiency. It should also include green skills training and learning opportunities through partnerships with public education and training providers, with an emphasis on women, marginalized, low-income and at-risk youth.” A similar proposal was made by the Smart Prosperity Institute, calling for the creation of a Conservation and Adaptation corps as part of its [Green Recovery proposals](#). Smart Prosperity stated that the federal government funded **900 green internships** in 2020 through the Science Horizons Youth Internship Program for STEM students, and calls on the government to go further with a youth Conservation and Adaptation corps which “would offer the workforce needed to meet a number of environmental targets, including planting 2 billion trees, and could build the infrastructure needed to improve community resilience to climate impacts from flooding, fires and sea level rise.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Apprenticeship](#), [Covid-19](#), [green apprenticeship](#), [Green Recovery](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Younger workers](#), [youth jobs guarantee](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How phasing out fossil fuel subsidies can contribute to Canada’s green recovery

Posted on **March 2, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Recovery Through Reform is a new series by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, assessing Canada’s green recovery spending from COVID-19 with a focus on the issue of fossil fuel subsidy reform, and an eye on the upcoming federal Budget 2021 consultations. The first of three Briefs, [Assessing the climate compatibility of Canada’s COVID-19 response in 2020](#) evaluates energy-related spending in Canada in 2020 – specifically federal government commitments for electric vehicles, public transit, building retrofits, hydrogen, and fossil fuels. Using data from the global [Energy Policy Tracker](#), the Brief quantifies federal government recovery spending, noting that transparency is a problem – especially in the case of the financing provided by Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada. Spending trends in Canada are compared to flagship policies France, Germany, and the United Kingdom – including a discussion of the financial support for fossil fuels. The Brief concludes with recommendations – including a call “to apply the principles from the IISD report [Green Strings: Principles and Conditions for a Green Recovery From COVID-19](#) (2020), including transparency and inclusion of support for just transition for workers and communities. Other recommendations are to end fossil fuel subsidies, and to measure recovery ambition against international standards rather than “domestic precedence”.

The second Brief in the Recovery through Reform series is [Advancing a Hydrogen Economy](#). This report examines the question of promoting and incentivizing hydrogen, and calls for the government to ensure that any subsidies for hydrogen are in line with the government’s commitments to phase out “inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2025” and meet net-zero by 2050. “Based on IISD’s analysis, subsidies for hydrogen based on natural gas without significant levels of carbon capture and storage (CCS) should not be eligible for government assistance. Subsidies for blue hydrogen should only occur if blue hydrogen can meet the same level of environmental performance (including emission intensity) and is at or below the cost

of green hydrogen.” (a more thorough discussion appears in a January 2021 blog from IISD: [Should Governments Subsidize Hydrogen?](#)).

The third report in the Recovery through Reform series is [Export Development Canada's role in fossil fuel subsidy reform](#), which argues that despite EDC's well-known history as a supporter of the oil and gas industry, it could be an important actor in Canada's green recovery. The Brief documents the existing situation of poor transparency and dirty investments, stating: the EDC “provides an average of over CAD 13.2 billion in support for oil and gas every year, representing over 12% of finance committed by the institution.” It also notes: “So far, EDC has provided over CAD 10 billion in loans for the Trans Mountain Pipeline and expansion via the Canada Development Investment Corporation.” Further, “When it comes to fossil fuel support, EDC is one of the worst-performing export credit agencies in the world, as it has provided more oil and gas finance than any other G20 export credit agency.” Despite this track record, the Brief calls on the EDC to change its ways by matching the performance of other international financial institutions, phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, and setting clear targets for climate action-related investments.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [Energy policy](#), [Export Development Canada](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [green hydrogen](#), [Green Investment](#), [Green Recovery](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Electric vehicle, retrofitting incentives announced by new Nova Scotia government

Posted on **March 2, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Nova Scotia's new government under Premier Iain Rankin was sworn in on February 23, and immediately sent a message that it was committed to climate change action. A press release titled [Province Invests in Climate Change Action, Supports Jobs and Commits to Renewable Future](#) announced a rebate program for new and used electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids and e-bikes, ranging from \$3,000 per new vehicle to \$500 for electric bikes. An additional \$9.5 million will be directed to support energy efficiency improvements through retrofitting for low-income families. Further, the Department of Energy and Mines will release a new Renewable Electricity Standard in March, aiming to achieve 80% renewable energy by 2030. Symbolically, the former Department of the Environment was renamed to the Department of Environment and Climate Change. Environmental advocacy group Ecology Action expressed optimism in [this press release](#) (Feb. 25). The CBC also reported on the new government [here](#).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Energy policy](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Natural gas drives GHG emissions increase for Toronto region and Ontario

Posted on **March 2, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is home to 7.4 million people in six municipalities: the City of Toronto, City of Hamilton, Halton, Peel, York and Durham regions. According to a new report released by The Atmospheric Fund (TAF), the region produces 44 per cent of total carbon emissions in the province of Ontario. Top level findings from the report, [Reality Check: Carbon Emissions Inventory for the GTHA](#): “Total carbon emissions in the GTHA increased 5.2% in 2018, reaching 55.5 Mt. . . . showing that since the completion of the coal phase out, emissions are slowly increasing across all regions and nearly all sources.” The report zeroes in on each municipality, and also on sectors, showing that buildings (42.8%), transportation (34.3%), and industry (18.9%) are the most significant sources of emissions in the region.

The key take-away from the report: “Natural gas is a fossil fuel (methane) and it is the most significant source of emissions in the GTHA and Ontario. In 2018 natural gas increased about 10.6%, or 2Mt CO2 eq. Achieving net zero by 2050 will

require phasing out virtually all natural gas from both heating and power production.” An associated blog , [“Toronto has an embarrassing gas problem”](#) (Feb.18) states: “the City’s latest emissions inventory showed an increase of 68% from natural gas from 2017 to 2018, and plans are afoot to increase gas-fired electricity which will make emissions skyrocket by over 300%. Toronto cannot meet its 2030 climate goals or the council-approved TransformTO plan if Ontario’s electricity is increasingly generated with fossil gas.”

Based on this analysis, TAF makes policy recommendations for all three levels of government, calling for near zero emissions standards for new building, acceleration of deeper retrofits for existing buildings, and electrification of heating and transportation while decarbonizing electricity production. Detailed recommendations regarding retrofitting measures are provided in [TAF’s submission to the Federal Budget 2021](#), and summarized in [“Four ways the government should boost the retrofit market”](#) (Feb. 23). At the municipal level, TAF is supporting one City of Toronto Councillor’s [motion](#) which calls for the provincial government to phaseout all gas-fired electricity generation as soon as possible. The City of Toronto deferred a vote on that motion, and voted in February on a budget which appears to downgrade the priority for climate initiatives. [“We can’t afford to lose a year’: Worries abound over Toronto’s plan to reduce climate funding”](#) (CBC, Feb. 18) provides details.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Electricity industry](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Natural Gas](#), [Ontario Green Energy Act](#), [retrofitting](#), [Toronto](#), [Toronto Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. offers incentives for charging infrastructure for EV fleets

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

British Columbia continues to lead Canada in electric vehicle ownership, with more than 36,000 light duty electric vehicles in 2019. On February 1, the government [announced](#) a new program to encourage fleet ownership, which offers rebates for the purchase and installation of level 2 and direct-current fast-charging stations for fleets of one or more EVs. “For a limited time, eligible businesses purchasing and installing level 2 charging stations can access a higher rebate of up to \$4,000 per station, representing an increase from 50% to 75% of basic rates. Those purchasing EVs for a fleet are eligible for the same \$3,000 point-of-purchase vehicle rebates as the general public in B.C.”. An overview of all the B.C. incentives for EV vehicles [is here](#). [Electric Vehicle Update 2018 and 2019 Calendar Years](#) is the latest statistical report, which includes that as of 2019, B.C. counts direct employment of more than 6,000 full-time equivalent positions associated with ZEV-related activities, an increase from 3,850 in 2015.

A related report [released](#) in February by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy ranks the U.S. states on their policies to encourage the use of EV’s, and identifies the three policies that are likely to be most effective: ZEV mandates and electric vehicle deployment targets, financial incentives for vehicle purchases, and incentives for installing vehicle chargers. The report ranks California as the national leader as the only state to set deadlines for electrifying transit buses, heavy trucks, and commercial vehicles, and one of few to offer assistance for lower-income drivers to replace high-polluting cars with zero- or near-zero-emissions vehicles. [ACEEE State Transportation Electrification Scorecard](#) is available from this link (free, registration required).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [ev incentives](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How will electrification of vehicles impact auto workers?

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

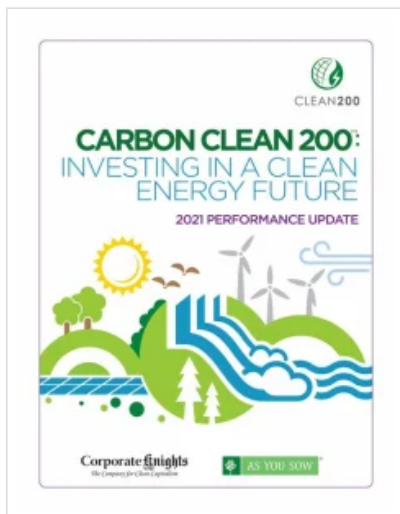
Threats to traditional auto manufacturers are outlined in **"The top trends killing the auto industry"** in *Corporate Knights* (Feb. 3), including the climate crisis, the fall of fossil fuels, electrification and autonomous EV fleets, unfunded pension liabilities (US\$14.4 billion for G.M., US\$10.2 billion for Ford), as well as shifting government policies, and dampened demand in general. All the more reason to celebrate the good **news about investment in EV production in Canada by GM, Ford and Fiat-Chrysler**, as well as GM's January 2021 **announcement that it will sell only zero emissions vehicles** by 2035. In February, **Ford announced its target to sell EV's only in Europe**. But the good news is complicated, as described in **"Auto industry peers into an electric future and sees bumps ahead"** (*Washington Post*, Feb. 6), and by **"Canada and the U.S. auto sector's abrupt pivot to electric vehicles"** (*National Observer*, Feb. 15). For Canada, the challenges include competition for the development of battery technology and the policy challenge of the new **"Made in America" Executive Order** by President Biden on January 25. Despite the brief and optimistic overview presented in **"Jerry on the Job: How the president of Canada's largest union, Jerry Dias, is driving the country's electric vehicle push"** (*Corporate Knights*, Feb. 4), our highly integrated North American auto industry has a complicated path forward.

One of the most important issues ahead is how the conversion to electric vehicles will impact the jobs of current auto workers. In late 2020, Germany's Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering conducted a detailed study of this issue on behalf of the Sustainability Council of the Volkswagen Group. ***Employment 2030 Effects Of Electric Mobility And Digitalisation on the Quality and Quantity of Employment at Volkswagen*** (Nov. 2020) is an English-language summary of the full, detailed study, which modelled the impacts of digitization and electrification in the industry. Although the study is specific to VW production in Germany, its findings are instructive, and include that job losses will be less than anticipated, (a decrease of 12 percent in this decade, mainly due to planned output volumes and higher productivity). Digitization will result in a need for new skills, "will necessitate a profound change in corporate culture", and will include higher employee expectations for job flexibility. A **summary appearing in Clean Energy Wire** states: " there is no uniform employment trend in the 'transformation corridor' over the coming decade. Instead, there will be a complex, interconnected mixture of job creation, job upgrading and job cuts. It argues that it will be vital to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do not fall victim to this reorganisation, and warns that Germany's automotive sector must establish new forms of cooperation so as not to "recklessly surrender the field of mobility to new market players." The study is also summarized in a **press release by VW** (with links to the full study in German).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing industry](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Job Quality](#), [layoffs](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean200 list of global companies released

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



Corporate Knights **released the 2021 edition of its annual Clean200 list** of publicly traded companies on February 18 – a list of global companies with total revenues over \$1 Billion annually, ranked by green energy revenues. According to **the press release**: “The Clean200 utilizes Corporate Knights Clean Revenue database which tracks the percent of revenue companies earn from clean economy themes including energy efficiency; green energy; electric vehicles; banks financing low-carbon solutions; real estate companies focused on low-carbon buildings; forestry companies protecting carbon sinks; responsible miners of critical materials for the low-carbon economy; food and apparel companies with products primarily made of raw materials with a significantly lower carbon footprint; and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) companies that are leading the way on renewable energy while also being best-in-sector according to currently accepted privacy benchmarks.” Certain companies are automatically excluded from consideration: weapons and military arms manufacturers, palm oil, paper/pulp, rubber, timber, beef and soy producers (as identified by As You Sow’s **Deforestation Free Funds**), as well as companies using child or forced labour, and companies that engage in negative climate lobbying.

According to the **introductory article**: “On average, 39% of revenues earned by Clean200 companies are classified as clean, which the majority of other revenues classified as neutral, compared to just 8% clean revenue for their peers.” Notably, the Clean200 companies also outperform others financially. Forty-six of the 200 Clean companies are headquartered in the United States; followed by Japan (26), China (17), France (15), and Canada and Germany (8 each). The top performing company is **Alphabet Inc.**, parent company of Google, with 83.33% percent green revenue for 2019. For Canada, the list includes the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways as well as Bombardier, Cascades Inc., Canadian Solar, Telus, Hydro One, and Brookfield Renewable Partners.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **clean industry, Green Business, Green Economy** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian lawyers reject resolution calling for professional and personal climate responsibility

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

Lawyers for Climate Justice, a Canadian group of lawyers and law students, tabled a Climate Leadership Resolution at the Canadian Bar Association annual general meeting on February 17, 2021. **The Resolution** adopts a definition of climate justice, requests that CBA members consider climate justice and the impacts of climate change in their submissions regarding potential law reform and in developing educational programming, and also urges lawyers to undertake individual actions, such as undertaking pro bono activities related to climate change, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions within their own practice operations. After heated debate, **the resolution was defeated**. **“Why we must reject the climate justice resolution”** is a lengthy article based on one person’s views about the virtues of Canada’s energy sector, and concludes: “I suggest that we leave social and political advocacy on divisive issues to those organizations and experts (some of whom are our clients), who are better equipped than the CBA.” Apparently, a majority agreed.

As described by **The National Observer**, this was the second attempt to pass this Resolution – it had also been defeated in 2020. In 2021, advocates gathered the support by the Aboriginal Law Section, Charities and Not-for-Profit Law Section, Labour and Employment Law Section, Municipal Law Section, and the Women Lawyers Forum of the Canadian Bar Association. They also lobbied through articles – notably, **Climate Conscious Lawyering**, a blog written by **David Estrin**, international environmental law expert and formerly Co-Chair of the International Bar Association Task Force on Climate Change Justice and Human Rights. The Estrin blog provides the context of international efforts to insert climate change into mainstream legal discussion, citing **The Climate Crisis Statement** by the International Bar Association (May 2020), which also calls on lawyers to take personal actions and to incorporate climate concerns in their professional activities and advice. It follows a report from the International Bar Association Human Rights and Climate Justice Task Force, **Model Statute for Proceedings Challenging Government Failure to Act on Climate Change**. Estrin also cites the international **Principles on the Climate Obligations of Enterprises**, a 2018 report (since revised) which addresses the legal responsibility of business organizations to respond to climate change.

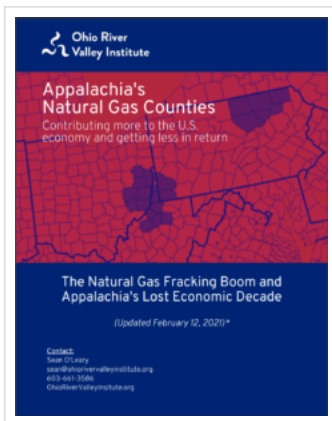
Estrin concludes his blog with this:

“As of 2021, there can be no doubt that an ordinarily competent and careful lawyer must be aware of climate change issues and impacts, current and changing climate laws and policies, as well as current climate litigation approaches and results as relevant to legal advice; and must use these insights in advising clients. This awareness must also include an understanding of how achieving justice and human rights for current and future generations is increasingly expected, and indeed demanded, by governments, business enterprises, pension plans, investors and lenders who are making decisions on approving or financing projects or plans which could result in new GHG emissions or in simply maintaining current emissions levels. A lawyer’s failure to provide relevant advice pertaining to the implication and impacts of climate change to the standard expected by a reasonably competent lawyer may not only be professional misconduct, but may also amount to professional negligence.”

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Fracking boom brings job and income loss to Appalachian communities: study

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



A February study examined the economic changes in 22 counties the authors call “Frackalachia” – home to the Utica and Marcellus shale gas industry. The report, ***Appalachia’s Natural Gas Counties: Contributing more to the U.S. economy and Getting less in return*** examines the period from 2008 to 2019, a time when the area went from producing a negligible portion of U.S. natural gas to producing 40%. The report summarizes the job forecasts provided by oil and gas industry economic impact studies, (over 450,000 new jobs for Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia), and shows the actual economic data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis – a 1.6% increase in jobs – at a time when the number of jobs across the U.S. grew by 9.9%. Detailed statistics demonstrate the differences amongst counties and states – with Ohio faring the worst and Pennsylvania faring the best. The report’s analysis shows that in the entire area represented by the 22 counties, the share of the national personal income fell by 6.3 percent, the share of jobs fell by 7.5 percent, and the share of the national population fell by 9.7 percent, while 90% of the wealth generated from fracking left the local communities.

The report was produced and published on February 10 by the **Ohio River Valley Institute**, a non-profit think tank based in Pennsylvania, founded in 2020 with the vision of “moving beyond an extractive economy toward shared prosperity, lasting job growth, clean energy, and civic engagement.” This report has been widely reported, including in **“Appalachia’s fracking boom has done little for local economies: Study”**(Environmental Health News, Feb. 12), which summarizes the report and adds context concerning the health effects of fracking, and the failed attempts to expand production to petrochemicals and plastics using ethane, a by-product of the fracked natural gas.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Appalachian Basin](#), [Fracking](#), [Job Creation](#), [Natural Gas Employment](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian university pension funds unite for low carbon goals, and public sector pension funds across the country act on sustainability

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

With the goal to leverage their collective financial clout, Canadian university endowment funds and pension plans launched the **University Network for Investor Engagement (UNIE)** on February 18. Working through **SHARE**, Canada's leading not-for-profit in responsible investment services, "The UNIE initiative will focus on key sectors where advocacy can make the biggest difference, including finance, transportation, energy and utilities, and manufacturing, focusing both on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating the transition to a low carbon economy." Initial participants include Carleton University, Concordia University, McGill University, McMaster University, Mount Alison University, Université de Montreal, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto Asset Management, University of Victoria, and York University.

This development follows on a number of statements and initiatives by Canadian pension administrators – most of which reflect this general strategy to prefer engagement as shareholders over divestment from fossil fuel holdings. Some examples:

In November 2020, the CEOs of Canada's eight major pension administrators, with approximately \$1.6 trillion in assets under management, issued a **press release** announcing their joint position statement, **Companies and investors must put sustainability and inclusive growth at the centre of economic recovery**. The text calls on companies to provide consistent and complete environmental, social, and governance (ESG) information, and continues: "For our part, we continue to strengthen our own ESG disclosure and integration practices, and allocate capital to investments best placed to deliver long-term sustainable value creation." The signatories included: AIMCo, BCI, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, CPP Investments, HOOPP, OMERS, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, and PSP Investments.

"Why are Ontario pensioners investing in future Alberta stranded assets?" (in *Corporate Knights*, December 16, 2020) describes investment by **OP Trust** (which holds the pension funds of Ontario civil servants, teachers and healthcare workers) in a natural gas electricity-generation plant in Alberta. The authors summarize **the growing global realization that fossil fuel investments are financially risky** and conclude, "The people at OPTrust have begun to recognize this. They've created multiple reports, with pretty graphs and rosy statements about supporting the Paris Agreement. But this statement rings out: "Emission reduction targets are not today's objective." Like many other organizations, they are unwilling to walk the talk."

Similarly, a **Net Zero Emissions Commitment** released by the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan on January 21 has been criticized as possible greenwashing. An article in *The National Observer*, **"Breaking down Ontario Teachers' 2050 net-zero emissions promise"** (Feb. 4) states: "With no clear definition for what net-zero means or how it will alter investment decisions, the commitment runs the risk of becoming a cynical example of greenwashing.....If OTPP is serious about adopting a globally significant climate-safe investment strategy, it needs a plan to exclude all new oil, gas and coal investments; a timeline for phasing out existing fossil fuel holdings; a commitment to decarbonize its portfolio by 2030; ambitious new targets for increasing investments in profitable climate solutions; and a requirement for owned companies to refrain from lobbying activities that undermine ambitious climate policy, set corporate timelines for reducing emissions, and link executive compensation to measurable climate goals." These goals reflect the position of the authors, who are members of **ShiftAction for Pension wealth and Planet Health**, which outlines the same demands in their **Open Letter campaign for teachers**. (In the **FAQ** statement accompanying the Net Zero statement, the OTPP states: "We favour engagement over divestment, since selling our stakes simply passes on the problem and causes us to lose our ability to influence for positive change.")

On February 19, the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI), which manages pensions for B.C. public sector workers, **announced** that it "will target a cumulative \$5 billion investment in sustainability bonds by 2025 and reduce the carbon exposure in its global public equities portfolio by 30 per cent by 2025" from 2019. BCI was a founding signatory to the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) in 2006, has supported the TCFD recommendations, and

issued its own Climate Action Plan in 2018. *The Energy Mix* summarized the B.C. developments in [this February 22 article](#).

Alberta public sector pensions lose more control over pension savings

A [joint press conference by union leaders](#) protested the January 4 2021 Ministerial Orders which build on [Bill 22 in 2019](#) by further weakening the decision-making powers of the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund. From the unions' press release: "..... not only will AIMCo be the monopoly provider of investment management services, they will also be able to ignore the wishes of the pension plans when it comes to decisions about how the retirement savings of workers and retirees should be invested.....We think Jason Kenney's end game is to use the retirement savings of hundreds of thousands of Albertans to prop up oil and gas ventures in the province that are having an increasingly difficult time raising money from global investors and international markets To be clear: we are not opposed to all oil and gas investments. What we ARE opposed to is a system in which the government gives itself the power to invest other people's money in risky ventures without their permission." The Alberta Teachers Association is preparing a legal challenge to the Ministerial Order, according to [a CBC report](#). The back story is described in ["Alberta's United Conservative Party Has Seized Control of Its Public-Sector Pension Funds"](#) (*Jacobin*, Feb. 2), an interview with Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund Board Chair Greg Meeker.

Climate Risk consultations by Canadian pension fund regulator

On January 11, 2011, the [Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions](#) (OSFI), Canada's regulator of banks and pension plans, [announced](#) a three-month consultation on the climate change risks to financial stability, based on a discussion paper, [Navigating Uncertainty in Climate Change: Promoting Preparedness and Resilience to Climate-Related Risks](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta Teachers Association](#), [Divestment](#), [government employees](#), [Ontario Teachers Pension Plan](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [public sector workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Lancet publishes a damning review of Trump's legacy, including damage to occupational health and the environment

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

A special issue of the prestigious British journal *The Lancet* was released on February 11, titled [Public policy and health in the Trump era](#), with an Editor's introduction which captures the broad scope and tone:

"President Biden must contend with the continued COVID-19 pandemic and economic fallout in addition to Trump's corrosive legacy. Each roll-back from regulation and every retreat from global cooperation that defined the Trump era has become an action item on a daunting but crucial list: racism, income inequality, immigration protection, universal health coverage, nutrition, the environment, workplace safety, reproductive rights, antiscience, and isolationism."

Discussion of ["The environment, workplace, and global climate"](#) starts on page 27, with a list of Trump's regulatory rollbacks related to air pollution and emissions, and toxic chemicals and occupational hazards. It states that Trump used the Covid-19 pandemic as a "cover" for rollbacks, and comes to some shocking conclusions, based on official data:

"Between 2016 and 2019, the annual number of environmentally and occupationally related deaths increased by more than 22000, reversing 15 years of steady progress", and "The Trump administration's regulatory rollbacks have increased disease, injury, and death among workers in the USA. Its weakening of mine health and safety standards and mine enforcement programmes has led to increased injury deaths among workers employed in mining, quarrying, and oil and

gas extraction and increased mortality from coal workers' pneumoconiosis ... Despite rising deaths from work-related silicosis, the administration terminated a silicosis prevention programme launched during the Obama era."

The Report concludes with a long list of recommendations for Executive Action (which includes rejoining the Paris climate agreement) and for Legislative Action, including: "Implement the Green New Deal, end subsidies and tax breaks for fossil fuels, and ban coal mining and single-use plastics." The all-encompassing scope of the review is reflected in these concluding paragraphs:

"The path away from Trump's politics of anger and despair cannot lead through past policies. President Biden must act for the people, not for the wealthy and the corporations they control. Resources to combat climate change, raise living standards, drop financial barriers to higher education and medical care, meet global aid responsibilities, and empower oppressed communities within the USA must come from taxes on the rich, and deep cuts in military spending.... For health care, overreliance on the private sector raises costs and distorts priorities, government must be a doer, not just a funder—eg, directly providing health coverage and engaging in drug development rather than paying private firms to carry out such functions."

This report was authored by a [Lancet Commission on Public Health and Policy in the Trump Era](#), comprised of thirty-three experts from medical, public health and law schools, universities, Indigenous communities, clinical settings, public health agencies, unions, and legislative bodies, in the U.S., the U.K., and Canada. The [Commission website](#) states: "Convened shortly after President Trump's inauguration in 2017, the *Lancet* Commission on public policy and health in the Trump era, offers the first comprehensive assessment of the detrimental legislation and executive actions during Trump's presidency with devastating effects on every aspect of health in the USA. The *Lancet* Commission traces the decades of policy failures that preceded and fueled Trump's ascent and left the USA lagging behind other high-income nations on life expectancy."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Donald Trump](#), [Environmental regulation](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [toxic chemicals](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta government backtracks, promising public consultations on coal mining policy

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

The province of Alberta [cancelled its own long-standing regulations](#) regarding coal mining exploration, leases and development in May 2020, but the government was forced to reverse course – as stated in a press release in February 8, [Alberta's 1976 coal policy reinstated](#). The policy was not only reinstated, but the government promises "we will implement further protections and consult with Albertans on a new, modern coal policy." *The Narwhal* provides an overview of events and the political miscalculations in ["How a public uprising forced a province built on fossil fuels to reverse course on coal mining"](#) – quoting a political science professor at the University of Alberta who calls the public pressure "unprecedented" – "The government simply did not imagine that this kind of mobilization could happen". The [Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society website](#) has monitored the issue in a series of news releases and hosts an online campaign against coal development, still [expressing concern about the government's intentions](#). The article in *The Narwhal* implies that the current Kenny government is out of touch with the diversity of opinion in Alberta – a diversity reflected in a poll released by Pembina Institute in February, showing [Albertan attitudes to the oil and gas industry](#) and to the goal of net-zero emissions.

In the interim before the consultation is launched, the *National Observer* published ["There is no such thing as a contamination-free coal mine, top scientist warns Albertans"](#) (Feb. 16) – summarizing [a 2019 evaluation of the Benga Mining proposal](#) for an open-pit coal mine at Grassy Mountain near the Crowsnest Pass in the Rockies, which concluded: "The Grassy Mountain Coal Project will create a ticking environmental time-bomb resulting from selenium pollution of high quality, high value aquatic habitats and culminate in poisoning of provincially and federally protected fish."

Federal government provides operational funding for public transit – as of 2026

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

In a [press release on February 10](#), Prime Minister Trudeau announced \$14.9 billion in new funding for public transit, framed as “part of our plan to create one million jobs, fight climate change, and rebuild a more sustainable and resilient economy.” A [Backgrounder](#) states that \$5.9 billion will be distributed on a project-by-project basis starting in 2021 to encourage active transportation projects (e.g. bike paths, walkways), rural transit, and zero-emissions transit vehicles and infrastructure. The bulk of funding – \$9 Billion – is dedicated to creating a permanent public transit fund of \$3 billion per year, but not until 2026. The Backgrounder states: “Over the coming months, Infrastructure Canada will work with provinces, territories, municipalities, local governments, Indigenous communities, transit agencies, policy experts and other stakeholders to develop programming for the \$3 billion in permanent public transit funding in a manner that offers the greatest benefits to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Consultations on the design of the new permanent transit funding will begin in the near future to address how all orders of government can work in partnership to get the most out of investments in public transit.”

This doesn't answer the demands of the [#Keep Transit Moving coalition](#), led by the Council of Canadians and the David Suzuki Foundation. The Council of Canadians' response was “[Trudeau's Transit Announcement throws Just Recovery under the Bus](#)”. It states: “Transit infrastructure spending is important and necessary, but the urgent need is for sustained operating funding. ... The federal government's focus on infrastructure at the expense of operational funding is a classic case of trying to appease social movements without making the needed changes.” The COC also repeats [its warnings against the use of public-private investment](#) to fund transit, if money is directed through the [Canada Infrastructure Bank](#). The Amalgamated Transit Union, facing historic ridership loss because of the pandemic, also expresses disappointment in [their press release](#), which states: “What's needed now is \$400 million per month into emergency operational funding to cover losses at the farebox.” The ATU acknowledges that the government has provided emergency operating funds [through the Safe Restart Agreement](#), but those will soon expire, and [other transit-related funding](#) has been for capital projects and to support the EV bus manufacturers.

The government's transit funding was more favourably received by others: “[Big City Mayors Cheer as Trudeau Offers Permanent Federal Transit Funding](#)” (*The Energy Mix*, Feb. 12); “[Support for public transit is key to decarbonizing transportation](#)” (Pembina Institute, Feb. 11); and “[Expanding and electrifying public transit exemplifies the recovery Canada needs](#)” (Clean Energy Canada, Feb. 11).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid-19](#), [pandemic response](#), [Transit Policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fast Fashion reliance on fossil fuels is eating up global carbon budgets and polluting our water

Posted on **February 12, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)



It turns out that recycling all those plastic water bottles into fleece isn't enough to solve the problems of "fast fashion". An eye-opening report released on February 3 documents the scope of the environmental damages caused by the global fashion industry, and makes recommendations for government regulation and consumer action.

Fossil Fashion: The hidden reliance of fast fashion on fossil fuels lays out the scale of the problem:

"The global fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world. Research from the European Environment Agency has highlighted that textiles are the fourth largest cause of environmental pressure after food, housing and transport. The fashion industry is responsible for a significant share of global water pollution, consumes more energy than shipping and aviation combined, and by 2050 is anticipated to be responsible for 25% of the world's remaining carbon budget. Furthermore, our clothes release half a million tonnes of microfibres into the ocean every year, equivalent to more than 50 billion plastic bottles."..... "Without prompt and radical legislative action and a considerable slowdown, fast fashion's quest for cheap clothing will create untenable volumes of waste and toxic microfibres, and emit more carbon than the planet can handle."

The report provides detail statistics related to production, recycling, and the environmental and pollution impacts, summarized by this overview: "Production of polyester has grown ninefold in the past 50 years, and the fibre has been widely adopted in the fashion industry as a low-cost material that allows brands to churn out a never-ending variety of cheap itemsPolyester is cheap, costing half as much per kilo as cotton, and has cemented itself as the backbone of today's throwaway fashion model. The trends speak for themselves, with the average consumer buying 60% more clothing compared to 15 years ago, yet wearing each item of clothing half as long. Polyester's flexibility as a material has seen it creeping into other materials too, with blends such as cotton and polyester increasingly being used, creating another set of problems when it comes to waste management.Recycling will not solve fast fashion's problems, nor will it curb the exponential growth in the use of synthetic fibres. Currently, less than 1% of clothes are recycled to make new clothes, and the share of recycled polyester is declining; while it accounted for 14% in 2019, this will in fact decrease to 7.9% of overall polyester production by 2030. Furthermore, virtually all recycled polyester in clothing comes not from recycled garments, but from recycled plastic bottles." Recycling also does nothing to solve a problem both microscopic and enormous: microfibres. These tiny fragments of plastic shed from our clothes when we wash them, wear them or throw them out, and leak into our bodies and the natural world. Microfibres are found throughout ocean ecosystems, with a recent study discovering that 73% of microfibre pollution in formerly pristine Arctic waters is from synthetic fibres that could be coming from textiles. Graver still, microplastics have even been found in the placentas of unborn babies, affecting the human body in ways that are not yet fully understood."

The main recommendations in this report deal with environmental/sustainability/pollution regulation in the EU – coinciding with January 2021 EU **consultations for a strategy "Roadmap"** to "shift to a climate-neutral, circular economy where products are designed to be more durable, reusable, repairable, recyclable and energy-efficient" in the Covid-19 recovery. Canada, like the EU, is mainly an importer of fast fashion, so the relevant recommendations from Fossil Fashion are those for the consumer. Relying on individual action and purchasing power, they call for people to stop compulsive shopping and buy only from brands which have made a clear and transparent commitment to sustainably sourced supply chains. The

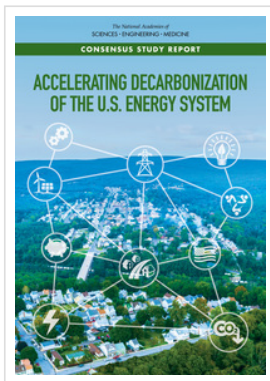
report also calls for consumers to join in “raising awareness of the issues surrounding fast fashion, and use their voices to highlight issues such as greenwashing, exploitative practices, environmental harm and unsustainable consumption.”

Fossil Fashion was published by the **Changing Markets Foundation**, whose focus is the environmental impacts of the fashion industry. In November 2020, they also published **Dirty Fashion: Crunch Time**, which updates their 2018 campaign to evaluate and rank individual fashion brands. Another advocacy group, the **Clean Clothes Campaign**, collaborates with Changing Markets and focuses on human rights and working conditions in the global fashion industry. Their latest report was released in January 2021, with a focus on the EU: **Fashioning Justice: A call for mandatory and comprehensive human rights due diligence in the garment industry**.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Circular Economy, clothing industry, fashion industry, fast fashion, microfibres, Oil and gas industry, Recycling, Water pollution** | [Leave a reply](#)

Roadmap for U.S. Decarbonization emphasizes job creation, equity in Transition

Posted on **February 11, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**



A Committee of Experts in the United States collaborated to produce a sweeping policy blueprint for how the U.S. can reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. **Accelerating Decarbonization of the United States Energy System** was published by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in February 2021, and discusses how to decarbonize the transportation, electricity, buildings, and industrial sectors. The Overview emphasizes goals of job creation and equity, with a need to build social license. This aspect of the report is drawn out in **“We risk a yellow vest movement”: Why the US clean energy transition must be equitable** a summary which appeared in Vox.

From the report overview

“The transition represents an opportunity to build a more competitive U.S. economy, increase the availability of high-quality jobs, build an energy system without the social injustices that permeate our current system, and allow those individuals, communities, and businesses that are marginalized today to share equitably in future benefits. Maintaining public support through a three decade transition to net zero simply cannot be achieved without the development and maintenance of a strong social contract. This is true for all policy proposals described here, including a carbon tax, clean energy standards, and the push to electrify and increase efficiencies in end uses such as vehicle and building energy use. “

The report recommendations are summarized in this **Policy Table**, and in a 4-page **Highlights document**. These include:

- Setting an emissions budget for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases
- Setting an economy-wide price on carbon (though a low price is set “because of concerns about equity, fairness, and competitiveness”)
- Establish a 2-year federal National Transition Task Force “to evaluate the long-term implications of the transition for communities, workers, and families, and identify strategies for ensuring a just transition”.
- Establish a new Office of Equitable Energy Transitions within the White House to act on the recommendations of the task force, establish just transition targets and track progress
- A new independent National Transition Corporation.
- A new Green Bank, initially capitalized at \$30 billion, to ensure the

required capital is available for the net-zero transition and to mobilize greater private investment • A comprehensive education and training initiative “to develop the workforce required for the net-zero transition, to fuel future innovation, and to provide new high-quality jobs” • Triple federal investment in clean energy RD&D at the Department of Energy over the next ten years, as well as the support for social science research on the socio-economic aspects of advancing the transition.

The full report, 210 pages, is available free for download [from this link](#) (registration required).

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Carbon Budget](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Decarbonization](#), [Green Finance](#), [Job Creation](#), [Just Transition](#), [Social License](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s net zero future should include policies to support technology “wild cards”: report

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

Canada’s Net Zero Future: Finding our way in the global transition is a policy document released on February 8 by the **Canadian Institute for Climate Choices**, the national research network created by Environment and Climate Change Canada in 2020. The report provides a simple definition of net zero: “shifting toward technologies and energy systems that do not produce emissions, and offsetting any remaining emissions by removing GHGs from the atmosphere and storing them permanently.” Based on **technical analysis by Navius Research** which examined more than 60 modelling scenarios, the report is announced as “the first in-depth scenario report to explore how Canada can reach net zero emissions by 2050”. It concludes that the goal is doable, using two pathways: “safe bets” and “wild cards”.

Most impact will be made by “Safe bets—commercially available, cost-effective, existing technologies like electric vehicles, heat pumps, and smart grids” which they estimate can generate at least two-thirds of the emission reductions required. In the longer-term, to reach the 2050 target, the authors rely on results from unproven “wild cards”— “high-risk, high reward technologies like advanced biofuels, zero-emissions hydrogen, and some types of engineered negative emission technologies that are not yet commercially available”. The conclusion: “To scale up safe bets, governments should continue to steadily increase the stringency of policies such as carbon pricing and flexible regulations. To advance wild cards, governments should spread their bets—supporting a portfolio of emerging technologies, without delaying progress on existing smart bet solutions over the next crucial decade.”

Of the four formal Recommendations, #4 is “Governments should work to ensure that the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive”. “It is vital that governments understand the full range of implications the transition will have on all of Canada’s regions, sectors, workers, communities, and income groups. This is necessary to ensure that policies successfully address adverse impacts and work to lift up groups who have historically been left behind, instead of exacerbating those inequalities. This will require direct engagement with all of those groups.”

The lead author of the report is Jason Dion, Mitigation Research Director at the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices, but the report is a “consensus document” involving many advisors who compose its Mitigation Expert Panel Working Group, as well as expert external reviewers. Two accompanying blogs condense the message in “***What puts the “net” in net zero?***” (regarding three means of negative emissions) and “***Net zero is compatible with economic growth if we do it right***” (emphasizing the importance of likelihood of GDP growth through the recommended policies.)

Related Recent reports:

The Carbontech Innovation System in Canada released in December 2020 by the Pembina Institute, along with CMC Research Institutes and the Alberta Clean Technology Industry Alliance. It reviews and evaluates Canada’s position in the global carbon capture and utilization marketplace.

Accelerating Decarbonization of the United States Energy System published by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in February 2021. Written by a committee of experts, this is a policy blueprint for the

U.S. to decarbonize its transportation, electricity, buildings, and industrial sectors, in order to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. See a summary [here](#).

Can Technology solve Climate Change? two brief essays debating the pro and con arguments, by Adam Dorr and Richard Heinberg.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean Technology](#), [Climate change policy](#), [disruptive technology](#), [Green Innovation](#), [negative emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Benchmarking corporate Just Transition policies gives auto manufacturers like Tesla a low score

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

The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) announced in February that will combine its existing [Corporate Human Rights Benchmarking](#) with its [Climate and Energy Benchmarking](#) of global corporations, to produce a **Just Transition Benchmark Assessment** . The WBA has a practical objective:

“Trade unions and civil society organisations can use the transparency provided by these assessments to hold companies accountable, and governments can use them as evidence to inform policy making for a just transition. Additionally, investors and the companies themselves will be able to use the assessments as a roadmap to move towards practices to ensure no one is left behind in the decarbonisation and energy transformation.”

[Assessing a just transition: measuring the decarbonisation and energy](#)



transformation that leaves no one behind outlines the methodology of this new assessment exercise and invites stakeholders to contribute in an ongoing process till 2023. The proposed outcome is to publish Just Transition Benchmark assessments of approximately 450 companies in high-emitting sectors – in publicly available rankings, as are the [many other reports](#) of the World Benchmarking Alliance. [Assessing a just transition](#) also includes results from a pilot project of the automotive sector to illustrate how the Just Transition assessments will be done. It synthesizes the findings from the WBA [Automotive Benchmarking for 2020](#) with its [Corporate Human Rights Benchmarking](#) .

Global auto manufacturers are racing to produce electric vehicles, but are they respecting workers' rights?

In combining the findings of the two existing benchmarking initiatives, [Assessing a just transition](#) states: “.... Some companies that demonstrated action on climate issues, such as low-carbon transition plans, emissions reduction targets and climate change oversight, disclosed very little, if any, information on how they manage human rights, and vice versa. This lack of correlation suggests that many automotive manufacturers still consider climate and human rights issues separately, to be addressed independently of each other, despite the fact that they are increasingly recognised as interconnected.”

A brief case study highlight of Tesla states: “.... when observing the company's approach to managing human rights, Tesla scores in the bottom third of companies assessed in the CHRB with an overall score of 6.3/100. This approach has come under recent scrutiny, with a 2020 shareholder resolution demanding Tesla improve its disclosures on human rights

governance, due diligence and remedy. While the resolution did not pass (24.8% voted in favour), it highlights that even when a company contributes to decarbonisation, a lack of essential human rights policies and processes to prevent abuse of communities and workers cannot be overlooked.”

Related reports:

The WBA [Corporate Human Rights Benchmarking Report for 2020 Key Findings](#) includes five sectors: Agricultural products, Apparel, Extractives & ICT manufacturing – and for the first time ever, 30 companies in the Automotive manufacturing sector. The report states: “The average score for automotive companies is 12%, the lowest score ever for a CHRB-benchmarked sector. Two thirds of the companies scored 0 across all human rights due diligence indicators. These poor results suggest implementation of the UNGPs is weak across the sector.”

Twenty-five “keystone” companies in the automotive industry have been benchmarked for their progress towards Paris goals since 2019. Results of the 2020 report are [here](#) , and a blog in December 2020 summarizes the results in [“A tale of two automotive companies: sluggish incumbents and opaque disruptors in the race to zero-emissions vehicles”](#).

Posted in [Business Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing industry](#), [benchmarking](#), [Corporate Climate Policy](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [decent work](#), [electric vehicle manufacture](#), [Just Transition](#), [Tesla](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Australian unions advocating for Just Transition, economic recovery, and decent jobs in renewables

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

As Australia endures more record-breaking heat in its current summer season, the Climate Council released a report in January: [Hitting Home: the Compounding Costs of Climate Inaction](#), which catalogues the natural disasters and their toll on the country. [New Climate Change legislation](#) was introduced in November 2020 which would legislate a net zero emissions target by 2050 and establish a system of emissions budgeting. A Parliamentary [House committee](#) has just concluded public hearings on the legislation, to which the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) submitted a brief: [No-one left behind: Australia’s transition to zero emissions](#) . The ACTU chiefly calls for improved supports for workers in an energy transition, and the establishment of a national Just Transition or Energy Transition Authority . (The ACTU passed a more detailed [climate and energy transition policy statement](#) in 2018)

In November 2020, the ACTU also published [Sharing the benefits with workers: A decent jobs agenda for the renewable energy industry](#), which provides an overview of the renewable energy sector in Australia, and features both best and worst workplace practices. The report proposes an agenda to improve the quality of jobs, with special attention to the small-scale solar industry. “Particular attention is paid to the current practice of outsourcing construction of renewable energy projects to labour hire contractors, which is where many of the poor employment practices occur, and to ensuring project developers are maximising local job creation through procurement, hiring and local content planning.”

In August, the Victoria Trades Hall Council, released [Transition from Crisis: Victoria Trades Hall Council’s Just Transition & Economic Recovery Strategy](#) which links climate change and Covid-19 in words that could apply in any country:

“...The scale of the fiscal response to COVID-19 shows that, when a government takes a problem seriously and commits to dealing with it, the finances to get the problem fixed can be found and the spending is supported by the general population. The implications for action on climate change are obvious.The trauma, disruption and dislocation caused by COVID-19 are unprecedented outside of war time. The

response, with its restrictions of civil liberties and suppression of economic activity, has been necessary, proportionate to the threat, and largely accepted by the population. The deep irony is that acting proportionately to deal with climate change would require none of those infringements of liberties and would produce an economic transformation that would leave Victorians better off. Hence this strategy is not simply for a just transition but for an economic recovery and the reconstruction of Victoria. In the period of recovery, after COVID-19 has been brought under control, we must learn the lessons from the virus response, continue to mobilise the resources we need, build on the incredible growth in community spirit and mutual aid, and get to work to deal with climate change with a determination that is based on hope and necessary action for a better world. “

The [Transition from Crisis](#) report has many purposes, but ultimately it is a comprehensive discussion of policy ideas to help the transition to a socially just and sustainable society, with workers at the centre. The strategy is built on eleven principles, which include inclusion of First Nations, gender equality, social equity, and new energy ownership models, among others. The report discusses the many ways in which unions can advocate for climate change action and protect their members: through participation in tri-partite industrial planning, training and retraining, occupational health and safety protection, collective bargaining, and union networking and cooperation. Regarding union cooperation for example, the VTHC pledges “to participate in, or establish if needed, national and state level just transitions committees to formulate policies around just transition, provide support to individual unions, engage with state climate and environment organisations, and provide a conduit into national-level decision making.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [climate change legislation](#), [Just Transition](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition for Pennsylvania estimated to cost \$115,000 per worker in latest report from PERI

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

In the latest of a series of reports titled [Green Growth Programs for U.S. States](#), researchers provide analysis and proposals for economic recovery for Pennsylvania, considering both the impacts of Covid-19 and a necessary transition to a cleaner economy. In [Impacts of the Reimagine Appalachia & Clean Energy Transition Programs for Pennsylvania: Job Creation, Economic Recovery, and Long-Term Sustainability](#), Robert Pollin and co-authors estimate that clean energy investments scaled at about \$23 billion per year from 2021 to 2030 will generate roughly 162,000 jobs per year in Pennsylvania. They detail those investment programs for sectors including public infrastructure, manufacturing, land restoration and agriculture, and including plugging orphaned oil and gas wells.

The report estimates that 64,000 people are currently employed in Pennsylvania in fossil fuel-based industries – including in fracking for natural gas from the Marcellus Shale regions, as well as other oil and gas projects, coal mining, and fossil fuel-based power generation. As the state transitions away from fossil-fuel industries, the authors estimate that about 1,800 workers will be displaced each year between 2021 – 2030, and another 1,000 will voluntarily retire each year. The authors estimate that the average costs of supporting these workers will amount to about \$115,000 per worker, with an overall cost of about \$210 million per year over the duration of the just transition program. The report emphasizes: “It is critical that all of these workers receive pension guarantees, health care coverage, re-employment guarantees, wage insurance, and retraining support, as needed”.

The full series of reports, [Green Growth Programs for U.S. States](#), includes similar analysis and proposals for Ohio, Maine, Colorado, New York, and the state of Washington. They are co-written by experts including Robert Pollin, Shouvik Chakraborty, Heidi Garrett-Peltier, Tyler Hansen, Gregor Semieniuk, and Jeannette Wicks-Lim. The series is published by the Department of Economics and Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Canadian steel, concrete, aluminum and wood – low carbon solutions for public infrastructure

Posted on **February 2, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a **February 1 press release**, Ken Neumann, National Director for Canada of the United Steelworkers says, “We need our governments to support the creation and retention of good jobs by strengthening Canadian industrial and manufacturing capacities in ways that support the low-carbon transition of the economy”. To support that point, **Blue Green Canada** has released a new report, ***Buy Clean: How Public Construction Dollars can create jobs and cut pollution***. *Buy Clean* calls for the use of Canadian-made building products in infrastructure in order to reap the dual benefit of reducing carbon emissions and supporting local industry and jobs. The USW press release continues: “Buy Clean makes sense for Canada because it leverages our carbon advantage. Whether its steel, aluminum, cement or wood, building materials sourced from within Canada are typically lower carbon than imported materials” – thanks largely to our low-emissions energy supply and reduced transportation costs. The report recommends that all levels of government continue and expand the use of Buy Clean policies for procurement. The report also calls for an Industrial Decarbonization Strategy to encourage technological innovation in the manufacture of steel, aluminum, concrete and wood, and for a “Clean Infrastructure Challenge Fund”, to act as a demonstration fund modelled on the **Low Carbon Economy Challenge**, but available only for public infrastructure projects, not to private industry.

Buy Clean: How Public Construction Dollars can create jobs and cut pollution is also available in a French-language version, ***Acheter Propre: Créer des emplois et réduire la pollution par une utilisation judicieuse des fonds publics en construction***. The report includes appendices for each of the sectors, providing brief but specific summaries of how Canadian industry has already achieved lower carbon processes than their competitors – particularly in steel and aluminum, and what further decarbonization opportunities remain.

The Buy Clean message seems closely related to the ***Stand Up for Steel*** national campaign by the United Steelworkers, which also calls for the use of Canadian-made steel in infrastructure projects. After the disruptive tariffs levied by the previous U.S. administration, the ***Stand up for Steel Action Plan*** also calls for the right for unions to initiate trade cases; for expanding the definition of ‘material injury’ in trade cases; and for a carbon border adjustment on imported steel.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [aluminum industry](#), [building materials](#), [cement industry](#), [Decarbonization](#), [Green Infrastructure](#), [Green procurement](#), [steel industry](#), [wood products industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Tidal wave of climate litigation: cases and trends examined in new report

Posted on **February 2, 2021** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On January 26 the United Nations Environment Programme and the Sabin Center at Columbia University published ***Global Climate Litigation Report: 2020 Status Review***, revealing a “growing tidal wave of climate cases” which show “how climate litigation is compelling governments and corporate actors to pursue more ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.”

The report states that as of July 1, 2020, at least 1,550 climate change cases have been filed in 38 countries around the world – nearly double the number of cases in the ***previous report published in 2017***, which had documented 884 cases brought in 24 countries. The report summarizes key trends in cases – “ongoing and increasing numbers of cases relying on fundamental and human rights enshrined in international law and national constitutions to compel climate action;

challenging domestic enforcement (and non-enforcement) of climate-related laws and policies; seeking to keep fossil fuels in the ground; claiming corporate liability and responsibility for climate harms; addressing failures to adapt and the impacts of adaptation; and advocating for greater climate disclosures and an end to corporate greenwashing on the subject of climate change and the energy transition.” The report also notes emerging issues in the next five years, including increased attention to attribution studies, and highlights significant and precedent-setting cases throughout.

Global Climate Litigation Report: 2020 Status Review is current to July 1, 2020. Since then, at least three more important cases have been decided: **1.** in December 2020, a U.K. coroner ruled that “**Air pollution a cause in girl’s death, coroner rules in landmark case**” (*The Guardian*, January 2021); **2.** an Appeals court in France overturned an expulsion order against an asthmatic man because he would face “a worsening of his respiratory pathology due to air pollution” in Bangladesh, his home country (the significance described in *The Guardian* in “**Air pollution will lead to mass migration, say experts after landmark ruling**”, with more details [here](#)). And **3.** on January 29, 2021, a Dutch Appeals court brought an end to a case begun in 2008, when it upheld a decision against Royal Dutch Shell petroleum, finding it responsible for multiple oil spills and leaks which poisoned farmland in the Niger Delta. A **Reuters report** quotes Friends of the Earth, saying “the ruling exceeded all expectations and marked the first time a multinational had been instructed by a Dutch court to uphold a duty of care for foreign operations.” The case is also summarized in “**After 13 years, Justice: Dutch court orders Shell to pay for harm done to Nigerian farmers** and in Deutsche Welle in “**Dutch Court rules Shell liable for Niger Delta oil spills**” .

And in the United States, a potentially landmark case of climate liability is underway as of January 2021. According to **a summary at NPR** the city of Baltimore is presenting its claim for the cost of climate-related damages against more than a dozen major oil and gas companies including BP, ExxonMobil and Shell. According to NPR: “The Supreme Court will announce its decision later this year on the narrow question of whether the Baltimore case should be considered in state or federal court. If the justices decide in favor of the companies and the case proceeds in federal court, it’s possible that the lawsuit will be eventually dismissed without a trial. However, if the justices decide in favor of Baltimore, it is likely that the case will proceed in Maryland state court, which could require the companies in the case to turn over vast troves of documents about their businesses and marketing practices over the decades.” A multitude of legal documents have been compiled since the case began in 2018, and are available at the **Sabin Center for Climate Change Law here**.

Posted in **Climate Change Law and Litigation** | Tagged **air pollution, attribution, climate change and health, climate liability, Climate litigation** | **1 Reply**

President Biden’s Executive Orders and Keystone XL cancellation – what impact on Canada?

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

Incoming U.S. President Biden exceeded expectations with the climate change initiatives announced in week 1 of his term, and many have important repercussions for Canada. The most obvious came on Day 1, January 20, with **an Executive Order** cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline and taking the U.S. back into the Paris Agreement. Also of potential impact for the Canadian clean tech and auto industries – the Buy American policies outlined in **Executive Order on Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America’s Workers** (Jan. 25). On January 27 (“Climate Day”), the **Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at home and abroad** (explained in **this Fact Sheet**) announced a further series of initiatives, including a pause on oil and gas leases on federal lands, a goal to convert the federal government’s vehicle fleet to electric vehicles, and initiatives towards environmental justice and science-based policies. Essential to the “whole of government” approach, the Executive Order establishes the White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy to coordinate policies, and a National Climate Task Force composed of leaders from across 21 federal agencies and departments. It also establishes the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, “to be co-chaired by the National Climate Advisor and the Director of the National Economic Council, and directs federal agencies to coordinate investments and other efforts to assist coal, oil and natural gas, and power plant communities.”

The **New York Times** summarized the Jan. 27 Orders as “a sweeping series of executive actions while casting the moves as much about job creation as the climate crisis.” A sampling of resulting summaries and reactions: **‘We Need to Be Bold,’ Biden Says, Taking the First Steps in a Major Shift in Climate Policy** in *Inside Climate News* (Jan. 28); **‘Fossils ‘stunned’, ‘aghast’ after Biden pauses new oil and gas leases** in *The Energy Mix* (Feb. 1); **‘Biden’s “all of government” plan for climate, explained** in *Vox* (updated Jan. 27) ; **‘Biden’s Pause of New Federal Oil and Gas Leases May Not Reduce Production, but It Signals a Reckoning With Fossil Fuels**” (Jan. 27) ; **‘Biden is canceling fossil fuel subsidies. But he can’t end them all’** (Grist, Jan. 28); **‘Activists See Biden’s Day One Focus on Environmental Justice as a Critical Campaign Promise Kept’** and **‘Climate Groups Begin Vying for Power in the Biden Era as Pressure for Unity Fades’** (Jan 21) in *The Intercept* , which outlines the key policy differences between the BlueGreen Alliance (which includes the Service Employees International Union, the American Federation of Teachers, and the United Steelworkers in the U.S.) and the Climate Justice Alliance, a national coalition of environmental justice groups.

The Narwhal provides an excellent overview of the important issues for Canada in **“Biden has hit the ground running on climate and environmental justice. How will Canada respond?”**

Focus: Cancelling the Keystone XL Pipeline

The January 20 **Executive Order** halting the Keystone XL pipeline construction was meant to be a highly symbolic break with the previous administration’s policies, as described by Bill McKibben in the *New Yorker* as **“Joe Biden’s cancellation of the Keystone Pipeline is a landmark in the climate fight”** . *Inside Climate News* wrote **“Biden Cancels Keystone XL, Halts Drilling in Arctic Refuge on Day One, Signaling a Larger Shift Away From Fossil Fuels”** (Jan. 21).

In Canada, the Keystone XL cancellation set off a torrent of reactions – with Alberta’s Premier immediately calling for trade retaliation – summarized in **“Gut punch’: Alberta premier blasts Biden on revoked Keystone XL permit”** (*National Observer*, Jan. 20) . The federal government held an **Emergency Debate on Keystone** on January 25, the first day the House of Commons re-convened after Christmas break. Environmental groups, along with social justice groups, First Nations, and the B.C. Government Employees Union, sent an **Open Letter** to Prime Minister Trudeau and all cabinet ministers on January 26, approving of the Keystone cancellation and stating: “Canada must follow Biden’s lead on Keystone XL and cancel TMX because it directly conflicts with the federal government recently announced climate plan and it does not have permission or consent from affected Indigenous Nations.” An opposite viewpoint was reported in **“Keystone XL denial will hurt communities, Indigenous business coalition leader says”** (*National Observer*, Jan. 22). Consistent with the past policies of the construction unions in the U.S. and Canada, Canada’s Building Trades Unions issued a **press release** expressing deep disappointment in lost jobs as a result of the decision – as did their U.S. counterpart the **North American Building Trades Union (NABTU)** . (The discord amongst unions over pipeline construction has been long-standing and well documented – for example, in **“Contested Futures: Labor after Keystone XL”** by Sean Sweeney (*New Labor Forum*, 2016.)

What next for Canada, now that Keystone XL has been cancelled?

CBC reports **“Trudeau government looks to continental energy strategy in wake of Keystone cancellation”** (Jan. 27), which summarizes the unimpressive history of international energy initiatives but strikes an optimistic note because of the new Biden administration. Eric Grenier summarizes the political and public opinion landscape and concludes that **“For Trudeau, there’s no political reason to fight for Keystone XL”** , and Aaron Wherry expands on that theme in **“How political symbolism brought down Keystone XL”** (Jan 23). In **“Cenovus unveils capital spending plan, confirms up to 2,150 layoffs still targeted”** (Jan. 29) the CEO of Cenovus states that while the Keystone XL pipeline cancellation was a “tragedy” for the industry, it wouldn’t affect his company’s ability to move oil and that Biden’s pause on oil and gas leasing, “is probably good for the Canadian oilpatch” . The Cenovus layoffs announced are not related to Biden’s policies but come as a result of its takeover of Husky Energy- Cenovus had already announced it would cut 20 to 25 per cent of its combined employee and contractor workforce (approx. 1,720 and 2,150 workers) in October 2020.

Warren Mabee wrote in *The Conversation Canada* (Jan.21) **“Biden’s Keystone XL death sentence requires Canada’s oil sector to innovate”** – (republished in The Narwhal [here](#)) arguing that Canada and Alberta “need to decide if more pipeline capacity is really needed” and “The future of Canada’s oil sector may not be in volume, but in value” – for example, high value-added products such as plastics, rubber and chemicals. But this is Canada, so pipeline battles will continue: **“With Keystone XL cancelled, all eyes turn to Trans Mountain expansion battle”** (*Ricochet* , Jan. 27) and **“The cancellation of Keystone XL raises the stakes for Trans Mountain”** (*Globe and Mail* Opinion piece, Jan. 26) . **David**

Hughes has written, most recently in October 2020, that the Trans Mountain pipeline capacity is not needed, and on December 8 2020, the **Parliamentary Budget Office released a report** with the same conclusion. An excellent overview on **the status of the Trans Mountain** issue appears from the West Coast Environmental Law, and the Dogwood Institute maintains an online petition against TMX [here](#).

Posted in **Government Policy, United States** | Tagged **Alberta, Climate change policy, Keystone XL, oil and gas pipelines, Trans Mountain Pipeline, United States** | [Leave a reply](#)

Decarbonization requires focus on sector-specific policies and investments: new report

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

Pathways to net zero: A decision support tool was released on January 25, directed at policy makers and investors. The report provides a broad-stroke analysis of all sectors of the Canadian economy, summarized in Assessment Tables which identify processes within each sector, classified as “credible” “capable” or “compelling” as pathways to net-zero. Priority areas are identified and highlighted in the final recommendation that “Canada needs a paradigm shift from trying to do a little bit of everything to reduce emissions to accelerating real change by strategically focusing on building out key regional and sector-specific pathways to net zero. ...This means prioritizing decarbonizing electricity, accelerating electric vehicle deployment and performing mass building retrofits, since these sectors are in the more mature ‘diffusion’ phase of their decarbonization transition.”

The report also acknowledges the cross-cutting issues of carbon taxes, energy efficiency, and technologies such as carbon capture and storage. Future reports are promised to provide deeper assessments of the additional sectors of hydrogen and biofuel energy; plastics; iron and steel; aluminum; mass transit.

Pathways to net zero: A decision support tool is written by lead author Professor James Meadowcroft of Carleton University, and published by the Transition Accelerator in Calgary. The Transition Accelerator launched in summer of 2019 with *Building Pathways to a Sustainable Future*, a report which summarizes the organization’s goals and its “**transition approach**”: partly defined as an examination of “opportunities to transform the large-scale societal systems or sectors which give rise to our emissions. This requires understanding how these systems operate, the stage of transition achieved in specific systems (‘emergence’, ‘diffusion’ or ‘system reconfiguration’), and the non-climate-related problems and disruptive currents influencing their evolution.”

Other reports to date are compiled [here](#) and have focused largely on hydrogen energy and transportation issues.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canadian Climate Policy, Clean Energy Investment, Clean Technology, Decarbonization** | [Leave a reply](#)

Survey of oil and gas workers shows little knowledge of energy transition

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

A report commissioned by international union coalition **Industrial** examines the geopolitics of fossil fuel producing countries (mainly, the United States, China, Europe and Russia) and the investments and performance of the Oil Majors (Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, Total, as well as nationally-owned PetroChina, Gazprom and Equinor). *Energy transition, national strategies, and oil companies: what are the impacts for workers?* was published in November 2020, with the research updated to reflect the impacts of Covid-19.

In addition to a thorough examination of state and corporate actions, the report asked union representatives from four oil companies about how workers understand the energy transformation and its impact on their own jobs, and whether the concept of Just Transition has become part of their union's agenda.

Some highlights of the responses:

- “the union members interviewed showed little knowledge about either the risks that the current transition process can generate for the industrial employee, or about the union discussion that seeks to equate the concern with the decarbonisation of the economy with the notions of equity and social justice. In some cases, even the term “Just Transition” was not known to respondents.”
- Their lack of knowledge regarding the Just Transition can be justified by the fact that they do not believe that there will be any significant change in the energy mix of these companies.
- Regarding information about energy transitions within the companies, “Managers are included, but the bottom of the work chain is not”
- Lacking corporate policies or support, some employees feel compelled to take responsibility for their own re-training

Echoing results of a similar survey of North Sea oil workers in the summer of 2020, published in *Offshore: Oil and gas workers' views on industry conditions and the energy transition*, one European respondent is quoted saying: “In the end, everyone is looking for job security, good wages and healthy conditions. It doesn't matter so much if the job is in another area, as long as it is in good working conditions”.

The researchers conclude that: “Far from being just a statement of how disconnected workers are from environmental issues, these researches reveal a window of opportunity for union movements to act in a better communication strategy with their union members, drawing their attention to the climate issue and transforming their hopes for job stability and better working conditions into an ecologically sustainable political agenda.”

The report was commissioned by Industriall and conducted by the Institute of Strategic Studies of Petroleum, Natural Gas and Biofuels (Ineep), a research organization created by Brazil's United Federation of Oil and Gas Workers (FUP).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [attitudes of union members](#), [attitudes of workers](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

A Manual of Arguments to be used to promote a fair and ecological society

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

A Manual of Arguments for a Fair and Ecological Society is a new communication tool aimed at a European and Eastern European audience, and at “social democrats working in the context of social-ecological transformation”. According to the manual, it “scrutinizes the seven most important topic areas in which social and environmental concerns are—mistakenly—often played out against each other” – including *Decarbonization of the Economy and the Future of Jobs*; *Socially Just Energy Transformation*; and *Socially Just Mobility Transformation*. It then provides summaries of these issues to be used in discussion.

Although the exact examples used in *A Manual of Arguments* are specific to Europe, the language and the framing follows well-established principles in the psychology of climate communication, making it a model which could be adapted in other countries. “We know that it will take more to combat climate crises than just stating the facts. We need to think strategically about our messaging if we want to reach our audience and avoid potential resistance or reactance, which may end up defeating our original purpose.” *A Manual of Arguments for a Fair and Ecological Society* was published by

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Berlin Germany, and offers brief [summaries of each topic here](#), with a version of the complete Manual [here](#).



Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change communication](#), [jobs vs environment](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How “clean” are clean energy and electric vehicles?

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

Several articles and reports published recently have re-visited the question: how “clean” is “clean energy”? Here is a selection, beginning in October 2020 with a multi-part series titled [Recycling Clean Energy Technologies](#), from the Union of Concerned Scientists. It includes: [“Wind Turbine blades don’t have to end up in landfill”](#); [“Cracking the code on recycling energy storage batteries”](#); and [“Solar Panel Recycling: Let’s Make It Happen”](#).

[“The glaring problem with Canada’s solar sector and how to fix it”](#) (National Observer, Nov. 2020) states that “While solar is heralded as a clean, green source of renewable energy, this is only true if the panels are manufactured sustainably and can be recycled and kept out of landfills.” Yet right now, Canada has no capacity to recycle the 350 tonnes of solar pv waste produced in 2016 alone, let alone the 650,000 tonnes Canada is expected to produce by 2050. The author points the finger of responsibility at Canadian provinces and territories, which are responsible for waste management and extended producer responsibility (EPR) regulations. A description of solar recycling and waste management systems in Europe and the U.S. points to better practices.

[“No ‘green halo’ for renewables: First Solar, Veolia, others tackle wind and solar environmental impacts”](#) appeared in *Utility Dive* (Dec. 14) as a “long read” discussion of progress to uphold environmental and health and safety standards in both the production and disposal of solar panels and wind turbine blades. The article points to examples of industry standards and third-party certification of consumer goods, such as The [Green Electronics Council \(GEC\)](#) and [NSF International](#). The article also quotes experts such as University of California professor Dustin Mulvaney, author of [Solar Power: Innovation, Sustainability, and Environmental Justice](#) (2019) and numerous other articles which have tracked the environmental impact, and labour standards, of the solar energy industry.

Regarding the recycling of wind turbine blades: A [press release](#) on December 8 2020 describes a new agreement between GE Renewable Energy and Veolia, whereby Veolia will recycle blades removed from its U.S.-based onshore wind turbines by shredding them at a processing facility in Missouri, so that they can be used as a replacement for coal, sand and clay in cement manufacturing. A broader article appeared in *Grist*, [“Today’s wind turbine blades could become tomorrow’s bridges”](#) (Jan. 8 2021) which notes the GE- Veoli initiative and describes other emerging and creative ways to deal with blade waste, such as the [Re-Wind project](#). Re-Wind is a partnership involving universities in the U.S., Ireland, and Northern Ireland who are engineering ways to repurpose the blades for electrical transmission towers, bridges, and more. The article also quotes a senior wind technology [engineer at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#) in the U.S. who is experimenting with production materials to find more recyclable materials from which to build wind turbine blades in the first place. He states: “Today, recyclability is something that is near the top of the list of concerns” for wind energy companies and blade manufacturers alike All of these companies are saying, ‘We need to change what we’re

doing, number one because it's the right thing to do, number two because regulations might be coming down the road. Number three, because we're a green industry and we want to remain a green industry.”

These are concerns also top of mind regarding the electric vehicle industry, where both production and recycling of batteries can be detrimental to the planet. [The Battery Paradox: How the electric vehicle boom is draining communities and the planet](#) is a December 2020 report by the Dutch Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO). It reviews the social and environmental impacts of the whole battery value chain, (mining, production, and recycling) and the mining of key minerals used in Lithium-ion batteries (lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite and manganese).

The report concludes that standardization of battery cells, modules and packs would increase recycling rates and efficiency, but ultimately, “To relieve the pressure on the planet, any energy transition strategy should prioritize reducing demand for batteries and cars... Strategies proposed include ride-sharing, car-sharing and smaller vehicles.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Recycling](#), [Solar Industry](#), [Solar PV Manufacturing](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

GM and Unifor agreement brings production of electric commercial vans to Ingersoll Ontario

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



The 1,900 workers at the CAMI auto plant in Ingersoll Ontario had been facing an uncertain future, as production of the Chevrolet Equinox was due to be phased out in 2023. Yet on January 18, 91% of [Unifor Local 88](#) members voted to ratify [a new agreement with General Motors](#), and as a result, GM will invest in the large scale production of EV600's, a zero-emissions, battery-powered commercial van said to be the cornerstone of a new GM business unit called [BrightDrop](#), itself only [just unveiled](#) in January at the Computer and Electronics (CES) Trade Show.

The official [Unifor CAMI Agreement Summary](#) provides details of the terms of the three-year CAMI agreement, and includes a GM Product and Investment Commitment Letter. It states: “the investments described below underscore GM’s commitment to our customers and employees; and are conditional on stable demand, business and market conditions; the ability to continue producing profitably; and the full execution of GMS. Subject to ratification of a tentative 2021 labour agreement reached with Unifor and confirmation of government support, General Motors plans to bring production of its recently announced BrightDrop electric light commercial vehicle (EV600) to CAMI Assembly. In addition, there are other variants of the electric light commercial vehicle program which are currently under study. This investment at CAMI Assembly will enable General Motors to start work immediately and begin production at the plant in 2021, making this the first large scale production of electric vehicles by a major automotive company in Canada. This will support jobs and transform work at the plant over the life of this agreement from the current two shifts of Chevrolet Equinox production to a new focus on the production of the all new EV600 to serve the growing North American market for electric delivery solutions.” GM pledges a total of C\$1.0 Billion capital investments for facilities, tools, M&E and supplier tooling. It also states: “.....This investment is contingent upon full acceptance of all elements contained within this Settlement Agreement and the Competitive Operating Agreement.” (which has not been made public).

The [GM Canada press release](#) summarizes the recent progress at other GM locations: “C\$1.3 billion Oshawa Assembly Pickup investments; a C\$109 million product and C\$28 million Renewable Energy Cogeneration project at St. Catharines; a C\$170 million investment in an after-market parts operation in Oshawa; expansion of GM’s Canadian Technology Centre including investments in the new 55-acre [CTC McLaughlin Advanced Technology Track](#)” in Oshawa. As [previously reported in the WCR](#), Unifor has also negotiated historic agreements to produce electric vehicles in the 2020 Big Three

Round of Bargaining. As Heather Scofield wrote in an Opinion piece in the *Toronto Star* on January 18, “[Never mind pipelines: Ontario automakers are showing us a greener way to create jobs now](#)”.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [CAMI](#), [courier industry](#), [electric light duty trucks](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [freight industry](#), [General Motors](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Principles and best practices for a Just Transition for Canada’s fossil fuel workers

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

Economist Jim Stanford has written a timely new report which should be required reading for politicians setting their hair on fire about [Joe Biden’s stated intention to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline project](#) on Day one of his presidency.

[Employment Transitions and the Phase-Out of Fossil Fuels](#), released on January 18, argues that “the actual number of fossil fuel jobs and the number of communities reliant on the industry is small enough that a just and equitable transition plan for workers is very feasible” – and the key is timing.

Stanford’s report begins by setting out the statistics regarding fossil fuel employment in Canada: “under 1% of total payroll employment in Canada (or about 160,000 jobs) is located in seven industrial sectors which together comprise most of the composite fossil fuel industry. “ Using 2016 Census data, the report discusses the distribution of fossil fuel jobs by province and community, showing that Alberta accounts for 75% of fossil-related jobs in 2016, but even there, only it accounts for 7% of all provincial employment. 18 fossil fuel-dependent communities are named, where fossil fuel jobs account for 9.5% of employment – including two well-known examples, Wood Buffalo/Fort McMurray in Alberta and Estevan in Saskatchewan. The report continues to compare employment in the fossil fuel industry and in the health care sector, Canada’s largest employer. The aim is not to diminish the importance of fossil fuel employment, but to illustrate that employment possibilities exist in other sectors, even within fossil fuel-reliant communities.

Stanford looks ahead and states: “given weakening global demand for fossil fuels, depressed prices, continued infrastructure constraints, and aggressive cost-cutting by fossil fuel employers (shedding labour to protect profits despite lower energy prices), fossil fuel industries will see continued downsizing of their employment footprint.” He summarizes the employment transitions of other sectors in Canada’s history, notably fisheries, auto manufacturing, manufacturing – as well as other sectors currently transitioning, including retail, transportation, and newspapers and media, and documents the overall dynamics which are always churning labour markets. All these arguments build to the report’s final section, which is to outline the principles and best practices for planning effective employment and community transitions for the inevitable decline of fossil fuels.

Principles and Best Practices for Transition

Repeating a point he made in a [similar report about Australia](#), Stanford speaks out for younger workers: “Fossil fuels will disappear as a major source of energy within the foreseeable future. Given that reality, it is unhelpful, and indeed cruel, to encourage more workers – including some just entering the workforce – to try to build their livelihoods in an industry that will soon disappear.”

And further

“...in an effective, orderly labour market transition..... Most fossil fuel workers will not end up producing solar panels or windmills; in fact, if we manage this transition effectively, most fossil fuel workers will not need to find new jobs at all. As with the climate itself, the sooner we start this transition, the lower its ultimate costs will be, and the greater its net benefits. Delaying these necessary actions only makes matters worse – including for fossil fuel workers. In this context, statements of supposed “solidarity” with fossil fuel workers expressed by some business leaders and political representatives are entirely dubious. Pretending that fossil fuel industries can carry on as “normal” for decades to come (or worse could actually be expanded) is a cruel hoax.”

Employment Transitions and the Phase-Out of Fossil Fuels was published by the Centre for Future Work, which is a project of the Australia Institute – which also operates in Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, housed in the CCPA's Vancouver office. The report **was commissioned by Environmental Defence Canada**, which released its own graphically-enhanced summary version, ***Steady Path: How a transition to a fossil-free Canada is in reach for workers and their communities***.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [phase-out of fossil fuels](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Newfoundland government primes the pump with funding for offshore oil ahead of February election

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

Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey has called a provincial election for February 13 –and **according to a CBC report**, one reason for the quick timing is to get ahead of the forthcoming Interim Report of the provincially-appointed Provincial Economic Recovery Team (PERT), scheduled for late February. The PERT is also called the Greene team for its chair, Dame Moya Greene, who brings a business background, having previously been head of Britain's Royal Mail and Canada Post, as well as positions at TD Securities, CIBC and Bombardier. **Another CBC article** highlights that the economic report is going to be a controversial election issue, and discusses the January withdrawal from the team by Mary Shorthall, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour. Shorthall called the exercise “window dressing”, and **stated**: “I can say that the lack of transparency, top-down approach, rushed timeline, lack of real collaboration and an overall feeling that not all perspectives were being considered, or appreciated, are the overarching themes for my decision”. Shorthall's departure is also discussed in **an article** in *The Independent*.

Another key election issue is likely to be the role of the oil and gas industry in the Newfoundland economy. The election announcement was preceded by a series of provincial funding announcements: on January 14, a government pledge of \$175 million funding as well as royalty incentives **to Suncor to prop up the Terra Nova Offshore oil field**; \$38 million for the **Hibernia offshore project** in December 2020; and **\$41.5 million for Husky Energy's White Rose project** – all of which are funded by \$320 million of federal funds, announced in September 2020. (Note that **Husky Energy laid off workers** at one of the worksites just days after the funding was announced).

On January 12, the Environment and Climate Change Minister **issued his decisions** under the Impact Assessment Act, allowing Chevron Canada, Equinor Canada, and BHP Petroleum to drill exploratory wells offshore from St. John's – although further permits will be required, as explained in this **new “Toolkit”** regarding the process from the East Coast Environmental Law. Provincial approval is likely to be forthcoming, given the pro-industry views expressed by the provincial **Oil and Gas Recovery Task Force** appointed in October 2020 to distribute the federal funding. Reflecting this favourable environment, Equinor announced that it is consolidating its Canadian offices and moving staff from Calgary to St. John's, according to a **Financial Post report** (Jan. 12).

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

What's ahead for Canadian climate and energy policy in 2021?

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

The Canadian government has a full climate change agenda ahead when it reconvenes Parliament on January 25, not the least of which will be the debate and passage of **Bill C-12, the Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act**, analyzed by the Climate Action Network [here](#). After its introduction in November, C-12 was criticized for lacking urgency and specific plans – for example, in **an article by Warren Mabee** in *The Conversation* which calls for three per cent to four per cent GHG reductions “every year, starting now.”

On December 11, the government released its latest climate plan, **A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy**, previously **discussed in the WCR** and noted primarily for its proposed carbon tax hike to \$170 per tonne by 2050. According to **“The good, the bad and the ugly in Canada’s 2030 climate plan”** (*The National Observer*, Jan. 18): “The good news is that ...The government’s recently announced **A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy** plan contains enough new climate policy proposals that, if implemented, will allow Canada to reach its 2030 target. The bad news is....Climate laws enacted by Canadian politicians to date don’t come anywhere close to meeting our 2030 target. With time running out and a gigantic emissions gap to close, Canada needs to enact climate laws now.”

Clean Fuel Standard, Hydrogen, and Small Nuclear Energy Policies released

On December 19, the government released the long-awaited **draft regulations for a Clean Fuel Standard**, triggering a 75-day consultation period, with final regulations expected in 2021, to take effect in 2022. According to the **government Q&A website**, the new regulations differ from previous drafts in that they apply only to liquid fossil fuels : gasoline, diesel and oil. Producers and importers of fossil fuels will be required to reduce their carbon content by 2.6% by 2022 and by 13% by 2030 over 2016 levels. Clean Energy Canada compiled the reactions of several environmental groups [here](#). The Pembina Institute called the regulations “both fair and cost-effective” in **a press release reaction**. Their report, **The Clean Fuel Standard: Setting the Record Straight** (Nov. 2020) stated: “ The Clean Fuel Standard is expected to create as many as 30,000 jobs as new clean fuel facilities are built, supplied and operated. While some job losses could result from choices made under the CFS, robust modelling shows a net gain for Canadian workers: Energy-economic modelling suggests the **CFS will yield a net employment gain resulting in between 17,000 and 24,000 additional jobs**.” These projections are taken from on a technical analysis, conducted by Navius and EnviroEconomics consultants before the switch in scope to liquid fossil fuels only.

Next, on December 16, the Minister of Natural Resources Canada released **A Hydrogen Strategy for Canada: Seizing the Opportunities A Call to Action**, another long-awaited strategy document which is the result of three years of study, analysis, and consultations, along with collaboration with industry associations: the Transition Accelerator, the Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association (CHFCA), the Canadian Gas Association, and others. The report states that the government will now establish a Strategic Steering Committee, with several targeted task teams, to implement recommendations. Key highlights of the Hydrogen Strategy are [here](#); the government’s Hydrogen website [is here](#).

From page 86, a glimpse into the thinking behind the report:

“The energy transition will fundamentally shift the Canadian economy and alter value chains in many related sectors. One shift of particular importance is the transition away from the direct burning of fossil fuels without carbon abatement. Canada’s energy sector accounted for 900,000 direct and indirect jobs as of 2017, with assets valued at \$596 billion. This industry’s significant energy expertise and infrastructure can be leveraged to support the development of the future hydrogen economy in Canada. Hydrogen will be critical to achieving a net-zero transformation for oil and natural gas industries. It provides an opportunity to leverage our valuable energy and infrastructure assets, including fossil fuel reserves and natural gas pipelines, providing a pathway to avoid underutilizing or stranding these assets in a 2050 carbon neutral future. Leveraging these valuable assets will not only be instrumental in achieving the projected economic growth for the domestic market, but also presents the opportunity for Canada to position to become a leading global clean fuels exporter.”

Regarding regulatory changes, the report states: “Policies and regulations that encourage the use of hydrogen technologies include low carbon fuel regulations, carbon pollution pricing, vehicle emissions regulations, zero emission vehicle mandates, creation of emission-free zones, and renewable gas mandates in natural gas networks. Mechanisms to help de-risk investments for endusers to adapt to regulations are also needed.” There is no mention of training or transition

policies, although the report forecasts a job creation potential for hydrogen which might reach more than 350,000 jobs in 2050 at the upper end – “a combination of new job growth and retrained and reskilled labour”. (pages 85 and 86).

An [article in *The National Observer*](#) discusses the strategy, the state of [hydrogen initiatives in Alberta](#), and reaction of environmental groups, including a quote from Environmental Defence, saying: “... “a focus on fossil hydrogen only serves the interests of the oil and gas sector as they seek to create new markets for their products.” Similarly, Clean Energy Canada [released a statement](#) saying, “Canada’s long-awaited federal hydrogen strategy ... falls short of what some other nations have put forward in terms of investment and ambition.” [A New Hope](#), published in October 2020, fleshes out Clean Energy Canada’s recommendations about hydrogen in Canada.

Finally, on December 18, Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources released a [national Small Nuclear Reactor Action Plan \(SMR\)](#), which responds to the 53 recommendations identified in [Canada’s SMR Roadmap](#) from November 2018. The list of organizations endorsing the SMR Agenda reflects the entrenched “who’s who” of Canada’s “75-year nuclear energy heritage.” Each of these organizations – governments, public utilities, Indigenous groups, and unions, contributed a chapter to the Plan – [available here](#). Individual endorsements include: the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#); [The International Union of Operating Engineers](#); [Power Workers Union](#) – which highlights the pending closure of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station in 2025 and the need to transition that workforce; and the [National Electrical Trade Council \(NETCO\)](#) a workforce development organization for Red Seal electrical trades in Canada, jointly led by the Canadian Electrical Contractors Association (CECA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Clean Fuel Standard](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Energy policy](#), [green hydrogen](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Over 400,000 Clean Energy jobs lost in the U.S. since the start of the pandemic

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

U.S. government employment figures for December 2020 show that the U.S. clean energy sector added 16,900 jobs in December. However, analysis [released on January 13](#) reveals that the recovery is slow, and the industry now has its lowest number of workers since 2015, having suffered a loss of over 400,000 jobs (12%) during the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Clean Energy Employment Initial Impacts from the COVID-19 Economic Crisis, December 2020](#) was prepared by BW Research Partnership, commissioned by industry groups [E2 \(Environmental Entrepreneurs\)](#), [E4TheFuture](#), and the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE). The 17-page report provides data by state and by technology, with energy efficiency leading the losses with 302,164 total jobs lost nationally between February and December 2020. California was the hardest hit state.

This is the latest in a monthly series of reports tracking the impact of Covid-19 on clean energy jobs – the series is available at the E2 website [here](#). These reports document the dramatic shift in clean energy employment in the U.S; the E2 [Clean Jobs America 2020](#) annual report outlines the industry’s policy recommendations for recovery as of April 2020.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Covid-19](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

81% of carbon captured to date used in Enhanced Oil Recovery according to new report

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

Canada's newly-released climate plan, ***A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy*** (Dec. 2020) states that one of the government's objectives is to: "Develop a comprehensive carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) strategy and explore other opportunities to help keep Canada globally competitive in this growing industry." As a clue to where that is going, the government also states: "The broad range of compliance strategies allowed under the proposed Clean Fuel Standard will give fossil fuel suppliers the flexibility to choose the lowest cost compliance actions available. The same compliance strategies that will support the Clean Fuel Standard will also ensure Canada becomes a leader in carbon capture, utilization and storage, hydrogen production, and other technologies that will allow Canada to extract energy from its resources while significantly reducing and eventually eliminating carbon pollution." The government is no doubt influenced by such views as those in the energy-industry Public Policy Forum, which calls for a favourable regulatory environment in ***Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage – The Time is Now*** (July 2020). (this report is mainly focused on energy industry applications but also discusses decarbonization of industrial processes briefly).

A December report commissioned and released by Friends of the Earth Scotland and Global Witness focuses only on energy industry applications, and comes to a different conclusion. ***A Review of the Role of Fossil Fuel Based Carbon Capture and Storage in the Energy System*** concludes that carbon capture and storage systems will not be as effective in reducing GHG emissions as would ramped up renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures. Further, the authors state that "2030 emissions reduction targets are being set up to fail due to the huge emphasis placed on CCS." The authors, from the UK's Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, highlight three main barriers to success: prohibitive costs; time to reach commercial scale; and the residual emissions from CCS, especially methane. Canada's ***Boundary Dam coal-fired power plant*** in Saskatchewan is discussed, and cited as an example of prohibitive costs, with capital costs of approximately US\$455 million and a capture cost of US\$100 per tonne of CO₂. The report notes that there are just 26 operational CCS plants in the world, and significant scale is not forecast until at least 2030. And the authors state that 81% of carbon captured to date has been used for Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) – a process which pumps captured carbon underground to push previously unreachable fossil fuels up for extraction, extending the life of oil fields. This contributes to the problem of CCS-linked emissions of carbon dioxide and methane .

A Review of the Role of Fossil Fuel Based Carbon Capture and Storage in the Energy System is summarized in an ***Executive Summary*** and by ***the Climate News Network*** . The International Energy Agency has released a number of ***reports related to CCUS*** , most recently ***Special Report on Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage; CCUS in clean energy transitions*** . Another source of information is the ***Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute*** which maintains a database of information and advocates for CCUS adoption in its publications.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Boundary Dam](#), [Carbon capture and storage \(CCS\)](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Global Just Transition case studies from a trade union viewpoint

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

"***Just Transition: Putting planet, people and jobs first***" is the theme of a special issue of ***Equal Times***, published in December 2020. The compilation of articles provides a trade union point of view to describe the just transition experiences in [Bangladesh](#), Tunisia, Argentina, and [Senegal](#), as well as the more frequently cited experiences in [Spain](#) and [Scotland](#). The complete Special Issue is [here](#) , and was supported financially by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Although Spain's 2018 agreement regarding coal transition is well known, [this article](#) is a welcome English-language text, translated from the original Spanish version written by Spanish journalist María José Carmona. Another useful English text on the topic is [The Just Transition Strategy within the Strategic Energy and Climate Framework](#), translated and published by the Spanish government in 2019. And an earlier report from the Central Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) provides brief summaries of Spanish and other Just Transition frameworks, in [A Fair Climate Policy for Workers: Implementing a just transition in various European countries and Canada](#) (2019). It covers Germany, Spain, France, The Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, and Canada in a brief 32 pages.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Argentina](#), [Bangladesh](#), [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#), [Scotland](#), [Senegal](#), [Spain](#), [Tunisia](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New centre for Vancouver to spur urban climate action, especially building retrofits

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

Retrofitting is a priority for the [newly-announced](#) Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre, to be administered through the Renewable Cities program at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver. According to the [SFU press release](#) of January 12, the Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre “will be seeded by a generous \$21.7 million endowment from the federal government to identify, finance and scale up local climate solutions, such as building retrofits and electrification of transportation.” The top priorities stated include “Identifying and initiating programmatic priorities, and integrating the [Zero Emission Building Exchange](#) to support building sector capacity building”. For now, though, “the new centre’s work will start modestly. It is expected to grow steadily through partnership, programming investment, leveraging and innovative financing”. The launch of the Centre is scheduled for September 2021, after input is gathered “from a range of stakeholders, including local and provincial government, industry, non-profit organizations and the finance sector.”

The Vancouver Centre will be modelled on [The Atmospheric Fund](#) – originally known as the Toronto Atmospheric Fund when it was established in 1991 through the advocacy of then-Toronto City Councillors Jack Layton and Dan Leckie. [The Atmospheric Fund](#) now serves Canada’s largest urban area, the Greater Toronto/Hamilton region of approximately 7 million people, and is part of the [Low Carbon Cities Canada \(LC3\)](#), a partnership which also includes Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax, as well as the [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#).

In [“What does Canada’s new \\$15 billion plan mean for urban climate action?”](#) (Dec. 15), The Atmospheric Fund reviews the [federal government’s latest climate plan](#) and discusses the two sectors most relevant to municipalities: buildings and transportation. [The Atmospheric Fund](#) states that its own priorities for 2021, include: “Partnering with housing providers to initiate deep retrofits in 3,000 housing units this year; Mobilizing \$150 million in investment to leverage public funding and attract more capital into low-carbon activity; Supporting municipalities to adopt green development standards for new buildings and performance standards for existing ones; Providing grants and investment capital to enable even more low-carbon activity like workforce development (clean jobs!) and EV charger installations; and Publishing new research on growing challenges like fugitive methane emissions and embodied carbon in new construction.”

The governance of climate action in Toronto and Vancouver is summarized in a new article by three academics from the Universities of Waterloo and Toronto, [“Strategies and Governance for Implementing Deep Decarbonization Plans at the Local Level”](#), published in the latest issue of the journal *Sustainability*. It offers case studies of the best practices in climate action governance in Toronto and Vancouver, along with Bridgewater, Nova Scotia; Guelph, Ontario; Park City and New York City in the U.S., Lahti in Finland and Oslo in Norway. These cities range in size from 8,400 people to 9.6 million, but were chosen as “leading and ambitious” cities. The authors identify the importance of transnational networks in city decarbonization planning, and highlight their efforts “to expand their green economies and the capacity of their workforces to meet the future demand for skilled workers, especially in the buildings and construction sectors.”

And briefly: A recent article in the New York Times also noted the importance of retrofitting: “[New York’s real climate challenge: Fixing its aging buildings](#)” (Dec. 29, *New York Times*). Stating that “Nearly 70 percent of the city’s total carbon emissions come from buildings. A project to retrofit nine buildings with green technology is pioneering a new solution”. The article describes the [Casa Pasiva retrofitting project](#), one of a number of [RetrofitNY](#) projects funded by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Building](#), [Municipal Government](#), [New York City](#), [retrofitting](#), [Toronto](#), [Toronto Atmospheric Fund](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Just and fair transition from fossil fuels in Australia

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

In a new report published in December by the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute, author Jim Stanford argues that Australia’s labour market could transition away from fossil fuel jobs without involuntary layoffs or severe disruption to communities—if governments plan a fair transition which includes: a clear, long-term timeline, measures to facilitate inter-industry mobility and voluntary severance as fossil fuels are phased-out, and generous retraining and diversification policies. Fossil fuel jobs, though only 1% of jobs in Australia, have higher than average compensation, so in order to be attractive, alternative jobs must have decent compensation, stable hours and tenure, and collective representation. [Employment aspects of the transition from fossil fuels in Australia](#) echoes a [recent New York Times article](#) about the career disappointment of young oil and gas workers, with this:

“Far from being ‘supportive’ of fossil fuel workers by attempting to disrupt and delay appropriate climate transitions, in fact it does them a great disservice to pretend that these industries have a long-term viable future. It seems a cruel hoax to encourage young workers to begin their careers in industries with an inevitably short time horizon. It would be more compassionate and honest to give fossil fuel workers (both current and prospective) fair notice of the changes coming, and support them in building careers in occupations and industries that are ultimately more promising.”

Author Jim Stanford, formerly with Canada’s Unifor union, now splits his time between Canada and Sydney, where he is director of the Australia Institute’s [Centre for Future Work](#). He and the Centre are profiled in “[The People’s Economist](#)” in the Australian magazine *In the Black*. This research was commissioned by Australian health care industry super fund HESTA.

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

How the U.S. Capitol mob threatens climate change activism everywhere

Posted on [January 12, 2021](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 has relevance for all climate change activists, including Canadians. The overlapping universe of climate change denial and the political extreme of white nationalism is outlined by Eric Holthaus in *The Phoenix* on January 8 in his essay “[White nationalism gave us the climate emergency. Now, it’s our biggest obstacle.](#)” Holthaus argues: If we don’t acknowledge the racist roots of opposition to climate action, the world is going to keep spiraling towards chaos. It’s bad now. But it will get much, much worse.....Trumpism and the rise of “Big Lie” politics – climate denial, anti-masking, embracing conspiracy theory – is rooted in white supremacy. It’s rooted in the lie that “this world belongs to me, and not you”. white nationalism is not a case of rural, backwards hillbillies. It’s in boardrooms. It’s

in the white exodus of public schools. It's in the privatization of health care. It's in the fossil fuel industry. It's in the White House."

One might also argue it's in some police forces too, to explain the obvious differences in police tactics meted out to the Capitol mob vs. climate protesters. "**Capitol Rioters Walked Away. Climate Protesters Saw a Double Standard**" in the *New York Times* (Jan. 7) sketches out the issue and states, for example, that more than 600 arrests were made over the course of the non-violent Fire Drill Fridays protests led by Jane Fonda in 2020 – which in itself was treated very differently than **the 2016 Native American protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline**, (never mind the extremes of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests!). In Canada, we have our own recent examples: the RCMP violence against and arrest of 14 members of the **Wet'suwet'en First Nations for their protest** against the Coastal Gas Link pipeline in 2019 . Media accounts of that struggle include "**No Surrender**" (Feb. 20) in *The Intercept* .

Brian Kahn wrote "**The Climate Crisis Will Be Steroids for Fascism**" (in *Earther*, Jan. 7) explaining: "It's never been clearer that a large chunk of the nation's top Republican leaders will embrace and even fuel this extremism and hate. The Venn diagram of people who push election denial and climate denial has near-perfect overlap, but even if these figures deny the climate crisis, they'll still look to exploit it. At the end of the day, their goal is to use easy-to-disprove lies to build and consolidate power." This agrees with Melissa Ryan, who writes about the alt-right and white nationalism as editor of the *Ctrl Alt-Right Delete* weekly newsletter and is quoted by **Desmog Blog** saying: "The goal isn't necessarily to convince anyone of anything.... The goal is to sow so much confusion that it's actually hard for people to tell the truth from fiction.....I feel like it's a very clear end of the Trump administration, ...but what's terrifying is what it is the birth of." "**Climate Deniers Moved Rapidly to Spread Misinformation During and After Attack on US Capitol**" (Jan. 8) provides examples by reproducing some shocking post-riot tweets and messages from prominent climate deniers such as the Heartland Institute and Marc Marano. (check out such individuals and organizations in DeSmog Blog's **Climate Disinformation Database**).

Meanwhile in Canada

And for Canadians in general who might feel we are in less danger from right-wing extremism, we are reminded that Gavin McInnes, founder of the Proud Boys, was born in Canada, in "**Canadian government weighs listing Proud Boys as a terror group**". McGinnis led the **first Canadian Proud Boys demonstration** in Nova Scotia in 2017 . In 2018, the CBC warned us that "**Three Percenterers are Canada's 'most dangerous' extremist group, say some experts**". A very complete description and analysis of this Canadian scene appears in "**Meanwhile in Canada': The Groups Inciting a Fascist Insurrection in Washington Are Here in Canada Too**" in *Press Progress* on January 7.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change activism, Climate change denial, Donald Trump, Protests & Rallies, white nationalists** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change Accountability Report shows rising emissions – B.C. government announces new GHG reduction targets

Posted on **January 11, 2021** by **elizabethperry493**



The government of British Columbia issued [a press release](#) on December 15 2020, announcing new carbon reduction targets and the release of the first-ever [Climate Change Accountability Report](#), highlighting progress on the CleanBC action plan. From the press release: “The new emission target requires greenhouse gases in B.C. to be 16% below 2007 levels by 2025. It provides a benchmark on the road to B.C.’s legislated emission targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050 of 40%, 60% and 80% below 2007 levels, respectively. The Province will also set sectoral targets, which will be established before March 31, 2021, and will develop legislation to ensure B.C. reaches net-zero emissions by 2050.”

“[Climate Change Accountability Report discloses that B.C. carbon emissions rose three percent in 2018](#)” in *The Straight* (Dec. 16) highlights some findings which the government downplayed – for example, in 2018, “Gross emissions reached 67.9 million tonnes. That’s up a whopping 7.3 million tonnes from 2010, which went unremarked in the report.” The article also quotes from an interview with Environment and Climate Change Strategy Minister George Heyman, pointing out that “Heyman also admitted that the government has never done any modelling of carbon emissions that goes beyond LNG Canada’s phase one portion of its plant in Kitimat.”

The response by the [Sierra Club B.C.](#) summarized the reactions of environmental advocacy groups, which commended the government for the transparency of the [Climate Accountability Report](#), while criticizing the fossil-friendly policies which have led to missed GHG reduction targets. Reiterating the long-standing criticisms over LNG, notably, by [David Hughes of the CCPA-B.C in a July 2020 report](#), the Sierra Club B.C. states: “It is clear that if we continue to allow the growth of oil and gas extraction in this province we won’t ever be able to get climate pollution under control” “The sooner we begin a serious conversation about the transition away from fracking and all other forms of fossil fuels, the less disruptive and painful the transition will be for workers, our communities, and the most vulnerable among us.”

The [Pembina Institute](#) calls the report “sobering” and “a much-needed wake-up call”, while calling for improvements. “The report is inconsistent in its provision of details, which makes it difficult to assess whether or not climate programs should be continued, enhanced, redesigned, or replaced to effectively and efficiently make progress to targets. For a fulsome picture of climate progress, we expect future accountability reports to provide more clarity. We need to see the emissions reductions achieved to date by specific programs; annual budget allocations for programs and the corresponding (anticipated) emissions reductions; how the government has acted on the advice of the Climate Solutions Council; and what course corrections will be made to meet our climate targets. Once interim and sector-specific targets are established, the report should evaluate progress against these goals as well.”

British Columbia as part of the myth of eco-friendly Cascadia

[Getting to Zero: Decarbonizing Cascadia](#) is a new investigative series launched on January 11 with an article published in *The Tyee* under the title “[Cascadia Was Poised to Lead on Climate. Can It Still?](#)”. (At the InvestigateWest website, the same article appeared as “[A Lost Decade: How climate action fizzled in Cascadia](#)”). It documents the rise of GHG emissions in the jurisdictions which compose Cascadia: British Columbia and the states of Washington and Oregon. The article summarizes political developments, summarizes the development of carbon taxes, and argues that weak decarbonization policies – especially in the transportation sector- are behind the failure to reduce emissions. “Between full economic recovery in 2012 and 2018, the most recent reporting year, California and Cascadia both booked a robust 26 percent increase in GDP. Over that period California drove its annual emissions down by more than 5 percent. Washington’s emissions —and Cascadia’s as a whole — ballooned by over 7 percent.” According to the article, for the period 2012 to 2018, “vehicle emissions had ballooned by over 10% in Washington and Oregon and more than 29% in BC (in contrast California’s grew only 5% during that period.)”

From the article:

“So why is environmentally-conscious Cascadia stuck in first gear? The consensus answer from experts and activists interviewed by InvestigateWest: a shortage of political will. The region has been beset by partisan wrangling, fear of job losses, disagreements over how to ensure equity for already polluted and marginalized communities, and misinformation obscuring the full potential of well-documented solutions. “The constraining factor has always been political feasibility, not economic feasibility,” says political economist and energy modeling expert Mark Jaccard, a professor at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC, and a former chair of the British Columbia Utilities Commission.”

The series [Getting to Zero: Decarbonizing Cascadia](#) is the result of a year-long reporting initiative led by InvestigateWest, in partnership with Grist, Crosscut, The Tyee, the South Seattle Emerald, The Evergrey, and Jefferson

Public Radio. It will run throughout 2021, aiming to document and analyse the political and economic forces and barriers to climate action in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, generally perceived as one of the most eco-friendly regions in the world.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [California](#), [Clean BC](#), [climate accountability](#), [Oregon](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [State of Washington](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

What we all need: Reasons for climate optimism in 2021

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

As always at the New Year, we head into 2021 with many reviews of the year gone by – notably The New York Times interactive “[Climate Change Year in Review](#)”, “[The Climate Emergency: 2020 in Review](#)” in *Scientific American*, “[The Best Environmental Journalism of 2020](#)” from *Unearthed* by Greenpeace International. From a Canadian perspective, “[20 Ideas from 2020](#)” from British Columbia-focused *The Tyee* includes Climate Change and Green Recovery; Indigenous Rights, decolonization and racism; and social and income inequality in its review.

Offering some much-needed hope for the future: “[6 reasons why 2020 wasn’t as bad for climate change as you think](#)” from *Grist* in the U.S.; “[Climate Action Is Embedding Into How the World Works](#)” from Bloomberg Green, and a December 2020 [report by Climate Action Tracker](#) – not normally a hopeful source – which states that global warming by 2100 could be as low as 2.1°C, which they judge as “within striking distance” of the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C goal. This assessment is based on the net zero pledges announced as of November 2020 (most importantly China, but including South Africa, Japan, South Korea, Canada, with the assumption of the USA under Biden).

From *The Conversation Canada*, “[2020 was a terrible year for climate disasters but there’s reason for hope in 2021](#)”, written by Matthew Hoffmann of the University of Toronto. Hoffman cites an [October article in The Atlantic](#) when he states that “climate despair is the new climate denial, dulling the sense of urgency and blunting the momentum for action”. He, like others, seems to be urging us forward with hope.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Denial](#), [climate despair](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New forum for human rights views on Just Recovery

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

Launched in December 2020, [Just Recovery from Covid-19](#) is a new blog forum for the international human rights community. One of the first posts is “[A New Social Contract](#)” by Sharan Barrow, Secretary-General of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Barrow reviews the impacts of Covid-19 and calls for a new global social contract, based on principles outlined in the 2019 [ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](#) – labour protections for all workers, universal social protections for all, a transformative agenda for women, and just transitions for climate and technology shifts. Barrow reviews the current Just Recovery policy debate in Europe, and states: “At the heart of these measures sits the requirement for social dialogue to ensure trust in design and implementation.”

The Just Recovery blog series is hosted by The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, and the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR). It aims to open the door on the community of organizations and people seeking to promote human rights issues in business. For example, the CEO of the [Institute for Human Rights and Business](#) posted to the blog with “[Building forward better: Thoughts on intergenerational justice](#)”. (Other reports at the IHRB website include: [Connecting the Climate Change](#)

and Business & Human Rights Agendas (Dec 2020) and *Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights, and Climate Action* (Nov. 2020).)

Another contributor to the Just Recovery blog is the CEO of **Principles for Responsible Investment.**, with the post “**Collaborating for a Just Recovery**” . PRI initiated the pioneering *Blueprint for Responsible Investment* in 2017 and continues to work globally for transparency and environmental responsibility in the investment community.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Covid-19, Human Rights, Just recovery, Labour Rights, Management attitudes** | [Leave a reply](#)

Green and greenable jobs in the global energy sector – trends and recommendations

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

Employment in the Energy Sector: Status Report 2020 is a Science for Policy report released by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in late 2020. It compiles statistics regarding global employment trends related to the greening and decarbonisation of the economy, with a focus on the energy sector, both from a supply side (including fossil fuels, nuclear, solar, wind, biofuels, geothermal, and tidal) and a demand side (construction, energy efficiency, energy storage). The report provides a compilation of the best available statistics from established sources (e.g. IRENA, ILO, Eurostat and academic studies) – though the authors warn that data are not necessarily comparable. Nevertheless, this report offers a wide-ranging review and discussion of the labour market aspects of a greening economy, including a discussion of occupational characteristics based on a framework for “greenable jobs”. It discusses education, skills requirements and skills gaps, gender and generational aspects of new economy jobs, and concludes with policy recommendations.

Some highlights:

According to [an IRENA report in 2020](#), Global employment in the energy sector reached nearly 58 million in 2017; about half of these jobs were in the fossil fuel industries.

Also [based on IRENA data](#), global renewable energy employment has been increasing continuously since 2012, reaching 11 million jobs in 2018. If ambitious policies are implemented, IRENA forecasts global renewable energy jobs to reach 42 million by 2050.

Based on the task content of occupations, 87.6 million jobs were green(able) in the EU-28 by 2016, amounting to 40 % of employment that year, according to the 2019 annual edition of *Employment and Social Developments in Europe* .

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Clean energy industry, employment statistics, energy industry, Green Jobs, international statistics** | [Leave a reply](#)

Colorado Office of Just Transition defers actions for worker protection in new Final Action Plan

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

In 2019, the State of Colorado established the first state-level **Office of Just Transition (OJT)** through **House Bill 19-1314** . As required by that legislation, the OJT submitted its final *Just Transition Action Plan* on December 31, 2020, based largely on the *Draft Plan* submitted by its Just Transition Advisory Committee (JTAC) in August 2020. (The structure, mandate, and documentation from the consultation process are accessible [here](#); an excellent summary is provided by the State press release [here](#) .

The December [Just Transition Action Plan](#) offers discussion and strategy recommendations organized in three sections: communities; workers; and financing. The estimated cost is \$100 million, and the time frame calls for actual closures to finish in 2030. (Perhaps the leisurely schedule will be reviewed in light of events: the [Denver Post reported](#) on January 4 that Xcel- Energy announced it will close its Hayden coal plant significantly earlier than planned – beginning in 2027). The December Action Plan strategies are dominated by concerns for communities, with six detailed strategies outlined. Recognizing that some communities are more dependent on coal than others, and that average wages are also different across communities, the plan designates four communities as priority Tier One communities, and others as Tier Two communities, as defined in an Appendix. The Hayden plant is located in a Tier One community.

Actions for workers' benefits, environmental justice are deferred

Regarding workers, there are 3 action strategies. The Just Transition Advisory Committee made recommendations to provide displaced workers with temporary benefits related to “wage and health differential” and “wage and health replacement” in the [Draft Plan](#) in August, but the [final Plan](#) states: “too much uncertainty remains around cost and scalability for us to feel comfortable advancing this recommendation — especially in the midst of the COVID pandemic and resulting economic downturn.” Instead, the Office for Just Transition: “will drive a serious process to gain more certainty about costs, scalability, potential sources of funding, and possible alternatives at the state level. And we will engage a broad range of stakeholders in a dialogue about whether the State should implement such a strategy — and how it might do so.” This includes discussions with coal-related employers regarding their willingness to provide severance and retirement benefits.

This Plan also discusses and ultimately deflects and defers responsibility for the environmental justice concerns expressed in the [2019 enabling legislation](#), which recognized “a moral commitment” to “the disproportionately impacted communities who have borne the costs of coal power pollution for decades”. This December Plan states: “we agree with the JTAC that these issues are best addressed in that broader context, which is why we are following its suggestion that OJT participate actively in emerging interagency efforts — led largely by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment — rather than creating our own independent (and potentially isolated) approach..... OJT will continue to rely on the advice of the Disproportionately Impacted Communities subcommittee of the JTAC, and it will play as active a role as possible in broader interagency efforts. As with our work on behalf of transition communities and workers, this is a long-term challenge to which we make a long-term commitment.”

The final report is summarized in an [article in *The Colorado Sun*](#), which emphasizes the explicit goal for the Office of Just Transition to “Encourage the federal government to lead with a national strategy for energy transition workers”. This is perhaps thanks to the leadership of Dennis Dougherty, Chair of the Colorado Just Transition Advisory Committee, Executive Director of the Colorado AFL-CIO, and through them, a representative to the [National Economic Transition project](#) – a grassroots organization of representatives from U.S. coal communities. That ongoing project released a [National Economic Transition Platform](#) in the summer of 2020.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [coal transition](#), [Colorado](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Just Transition](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

[Montreal Gazette article](#) also summarizes reaction and criticism of the plan by politicians and environmentalists – mostly centred around a lack of financial detail.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [government employees](#), [New York State](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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



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

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

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

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [ev infrastructure](#), [freight industry](#), [Green skills training](#), [Trucking Industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

Posted on December 14, 2020 by elizabethperry493

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

A Backgrounder is **here**, and specific initiatives are explained in Annex documents **here**. One missing piece, as pointed out in **Unifor’s reaction to the new Plan**: the previously-promised Just Transition Act. Also missing: the slightest notice by the international press, even the normally climate-vigilant ***Guardian in the U.K.*** Reaction within Canada was strong, and ranged widely (compiled by the CBC **here**). In the mainstream media, the conservative-leaning ***Globe and Mail*** approved in its Editorial: **“Justin Trudeau goes all in on the carbon tax. It’s the right thing – for the environment, and the economy”**. Political writer Paul Wells uses similar language and confesses to “startled admiration” in **“On climate, at last, Justin Trudeau is all in”** in ***Maclean’s magazine***. The ***National Observer*** published **“Trudeau goes it alone with new climate plan, proposes carbon price hike”**, drawing the contrast with the 2016 Framework, which was drafted in consultation with all the provinces. ***The Energy Mix*** is less approving in **“With \$170/Tonne Carbon Price, \$15b In New Spending, Canada’s 2030 Carbon Target Still Falls Far Short”** (Dec. 14), which summarizes reaction from environmental groups.

Reaction from Labour and Environmentalists:

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

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

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

Similarly, from **Environmental Defence**: “The climate action plan released today has a more comprehensive suite of climate policies than in the past and we welcome the meaningful escalation of the retail portion of the carbon price. We’re

also pleased about the portion of the \$15 billion investment that is not in effect yet another fossil fuel subsidy. But that amount, which is a small fraction of what other countries are doing on a per capita basis, clearly cannot get the job done. In fact, Canada should be investing \$270 billion if it was following the level of ambition of the US or EU.” **West Coast Environmental Law** agrees with these points, and also states: “While we applaud much of this climate plan, the government continues to ignore the reality that climate leaders don’t build oil pipelines. The recent analysis released by **Canada’s Parliamentary Budget Officer** confirms that the Trans Mountain pipeline will lose money if any climate action is taken, let alone the action promised in this plan. If Canada is serious about acting on climate change, the government must cancel this ill-conceived project once and for all.”

Economists applaud carbon tax initiative

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

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

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Canada, Carbon Pricing, Carbon Tax, Climate change policy** | **Leave a reply**

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

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

The online **Climate Ambition Summit** on December 12 marks the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, to be co-hosted by the U.N. and the United Kingdom and France, in partnership with Chile and Italy. It calls itself “a monumental step on the road to the UK-hosted COP26 next November in Glasgow..... countries will set out new and ambitious commitments under the three pillars of the Paris Agreement: mitigation, adaptation and finance commitments. There will be no space for general statements.”

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

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

The **Production Gap Report** measures the gap between the aspirations of the Paris Agreement and countries’ planned production of coal, oil, and gas. This year’s report concluded that countries plan to increase their fossil fuel production over the next decade – and singled out Canada, Australia and the U.S. in this regard. The takeaway message: **“the world**

needs to decrease production by 6% per year to limit global warming to 1.5°C". The report also outlines six areas of policy action needed in COVID-19 recovery plans, including reduced government support for fossil fuels, restrictions on fossil fuel production, and commitment to direct stimulus funds to green investments. The *Production Gap Report* is produced jointly by the Stockholm Environment Institute, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Overseas Development Institute, and E3G, as well as the United Nations Environment Programme.

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

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

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

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Arctic](#), [climate change research](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [International Climate Summit](#), [Oceans](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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

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

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

Green Jobs Taskforce

Receiving less attention was another announcement on November 12: the launch of a Green Jobs Taskforce. The **press release** announces that the Taskforce sets " a clear ambition to support 2 million green jobs by 2030 to set the direction for the job market as we transition to a high-skill, low carbon economy." The Green Jobs Taskforce met for the first time on November 12 under the leadership of the Minister of Business, Clean Energy and Growth, and the Minister of

Skills; it includes representation from workers (the TUC Deputy General Secretary), as well as representatives from business and the skills sector. Specifically, the Taskforce is meant to “focus on the immediate and longer-term challenges of delivering skilled workers for the UK’s transition to net zero”:

1. Ensuring we have the immediate skills needed for building back greener, such as in offshore wind and home retrofitting.
2. Developing a long-term plan that charts out the skills needed to help deliver a net zero economy.
3. Ensuring good quality green jobs and a diverse workforce.
4. Supporting workers in high carbon transitioning sectors, like oil and gas, to retrain in new green technologies.”

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

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

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

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

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

After the Hazelwood coal fired power station closure: Latrobe Valley regional transition policies and outcomes 2017-2020 is a Working Paper published in November by the Centre for Climate and Energy Policy, Crawford School of Public Policy, in Australia . Although the paper is a detailed case study, the findings are summarized by the authors thus: “Prior to its sudden closure in March 2017, Hazelwood was the most carbon-intensive electricity generator in Australia. The debate over the future of Hazelwood became an icon in the nation’s ongoing political struggle over climate and energy policy. Employment and economic outcomes in the three years since closure indicate promising initial progress in creating the foundations required to facilitate an equitable transition to a more prosperous and sustainable regional economy. The Hazelwood case study provides support for a number of propositions about successful regional energy transition including that well managed, just transitions to a prosperous zero-carbon economy are likely to be strengthened by proactive, well integrated industry policy and regional renewal strategies; respectful and inclusive engagement with workers and communities; and adequately funded, well-coordinated public investment in economic and community strategies, tailored to regional strengths and informed by local experience.”

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

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

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

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



A Report from the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released on December 8 examines the financial viability of the Trans Mountain Pipeline, and includes updated employment and economic impact forecasts. **The press release** summarizes the findings, including that the Trans Mountain pipeline has increased in value from \$4.4 billion when the federal government purchased it in 2018, to \$5 billion, using net present value calculations. However, that value is conditional on global demand for oil, on construction delays and costs, and – the crux of the matter – “the profitability of the Trans Mountain assets is highly contingent on the climate policy stance of the federal government. Consistent with **modelling from the Canada Energy Regulator (CER)**, if policy action on climate change continues to become more stringent, it is possible for the Trans Mountain assets to have a negative net present value.” In other words, as 350.org says: “two government agencies have said the exact same thing. The Canada Energy Regulator and the Parliamentary Budget Officer have made it clear that Trudeau has to choose between building Trans Mountain and confronting the climate emergency. It’s past time that Trudeau was honest: does he want to build a pipeline or tackle the climate crisis? He simply can’t do both.” (The 350.org sign-on online campaign is [here](#) ; B.C.’s Dogwood Institute also has an online petition to Chrystia Freedland to [Rethink TransMountain](#))

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

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

New coalition urges legislative changes to counter environmental racism

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

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

The three recommended initiatives :

1. Recognition of the right to a healthy environment: as recognized in more than 150 countries, and under consideration as part of the modernization of the **Canadian Environmental Protection Act**.
2. Implementation of the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**: includes the recognition of Indigenous legal systems and free, prior and informed consent for resource projects on Indigenous land. On

December 3, the federal government introduced **Bill C-15** *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. A **dedicated website** provides a summary of the provisions, including the fact that the new legislation, if passed, would not impose any retroactive Duty to Consult.

3. Private member's **Bill C-230**, *An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to redress environmental racism*, first introduced by Member of Parliament Lenore Zann in the House of Commons on February 26 2020. Second Reading occurred on December 8, with a substantive **debate, transcribed here**, but without a vote. A summary of Bill C-230, as well as bilingual resources for a social media and letter-writing campaign, are offered at the **ENRICH project website**.

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

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Environmental Justice, environmental racism, First Nations** | **Leave a reply**

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

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

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

The **government press release** summarizes the spending for health and economic measures, including, **for employers**, extension of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Canada, the Emergency Rent Subsidy and Lockdown Support, and new funding for the tourism and hospitality sectors through the new **Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program**. In Chapter 3, **Building Back Better**, the Economic Statement addresses the impacts of Covid-19 on the labour market and employment. It includes promises to create one million jobs, invest in skills training, reduce inequality, attack systemic racism, support families through early learning and child care, support youth, and build a competitive green economy. Most budget allocations will be channeled through existing programs, but new initiatives include "the creation of a task force of diverse experts to help develop "an Action Plan for Women in the Economy"; launch of "Canada's first-ever Black Entrepreneurship Program"; and a task force on modernizing the Employment Equity Act to promote equity in federally-regulated workplaces. Under the heading, "**Better working conditions for the care Economy**" comes a pledge: "To support personal support workers, homecare workers and essential workers involved in senior care, the government will work with labour and healthcare unions, among others, to seek solutions to improve retention, recruitment and retirement savings options for low- and modest-income workers, particularly those without existing workplace pension coverage."

Climate change provisions and a Green Recovery:

Another section in **Chapter 3** is entitled *A Competitive, Green Economy*, which reiterates the government's commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and reiterates the importance of the **Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act**, currently before Parliament. Funding of \$2.6 billion over 7 years was announced to go towards grants of up to \$5000

for homeowners to make energy-efficient improvements to their homes, and to recruit and train EnerGuide energy auditors. A further \$150 million over 3 years was announced for charging and refuelling stations for zero-emissions vehicles, and \$25 million for “predevelopment work for large-scale transmission projects. Building strategic interties will support Canada’s coal phase-out.

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

Reactions from unions, think tanks:

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

Bruce Campbell reacted in *The Conversation* (Dec. 7) that “The pace of government action to date does not align with the urgency of the twin climate and inequality crises. Nothing it has done so far is threatening to the corporate plutocracy and its hold on power.” Several experts from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives contributed to a blog, “**A fiscal update for hard times: Is it enough?**”, with the answer from Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood re the climate change provisions: “Planting trees, retrofitting buildings and increasing ZEV uptake doesn’t go far enough without a clear timeline for winding down oil and gas production.” **Climate Action Network-Canada** agrees with Mertins-Kirkwood when it states: “today’s update includes a summary of new and existing spending that we hope will provide an important foundation for Canada’s new national climate plan that we expect in the coming weeks. ...As part of a larger package, along with Bill C-12, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, and the pending new national climate plan, today’s fiscal update provides the backbone to guide Canada through some of the most important global transitions in generations.”

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

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

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

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

The ***Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change*** has been a landmark report since its first edition in 2015 (earlier reports are [here](#)). Compiled by an international team from more than 35 institutions including the World Health Organization and the World Bank, it documents the health impacts of climate change, and discusses the health and

economic implications of climate policies. The global [2020 Countdown Report](#) was released on December 2. Along with troubling statistics comes one core message:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

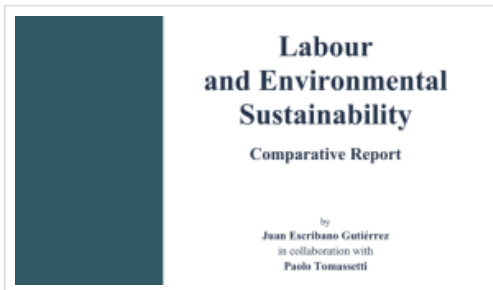
.....It’s essential to transition from a state of ad hoc responses to a changing climate and weather-related disasters to one of building resilience. This includes continual learning about what works, what doesn’t, and how to plan for uncertainty. Instead of waiting for more information, the uncertainty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

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

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

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

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



Written mostly by lawyers, the **Comparative Report** reviews the theoretical concepts influencing labour unions' positions on environmental issues – with a key section titled “Treadmill of Production and Just Transition: Two Contrasting Patterns?”. The **Comparative Report** also reviews the legal structure of collective bargaining and the forms of social dialogue in each country, and for each country, discusses topics which might be included in collective bargaining – for example, linking pay to environmental performance; health and safety considerations; inclusion of environmental issues

within labour-management bodies. The conclusion:

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

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

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

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

Updated Net-zero strategy for Greening Canadian government operations includes work from home provision

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

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

The full Green Government Strategy is [here](#) , and includes goals for buildings and retrofits, clean energy, waste management, water, as well as employee engagement and transparent reporting of GHG emissions reductions. Highlighted changes below come under the heading “Mobility”, and will impact employee commuting, work-from-home, and business travel:

- The Centre will encourage employees to use low-carbon forms of transportation to reduce emissions from employee commuting and will track these emissions by the 2021 to 2022 fiscal year.
- The government will facilitate opportunities for flexible work arrangements, such as remote work, by enabling remote computing telecommunications and by supporting information technology (IT) solutions.
- The government will promote and incentivize lower-carbon alternatives to work-related air travel. Departments will contribute to the Greening Government Fund (GGF) based on their air travel emissions. The GGF aims to incentivize lower-carbon alternatives to government operations by providing project funding to federal government departments and agencies to reduce GHG emissions in their operations.
- Emissions from other travel related to operations, such as major events hosted and ministerial travel, may be offset by departments.
- Purchase of carbon offsets for events, conferences and travel may also be used as an eligible expense for grants and contribution program recipients.
- Regarding vehicle fleets, 75% per cent of new light-duty unmodified fleet vehicle purchases will be zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) or hybrids, with the objective that the government’s light-duty fleet comprises at least 80% ZEVs by 2030. Priority is to be given to purchasing ZEVs.
- All new executive vehicle purchases will be ZEVs or hybrids.

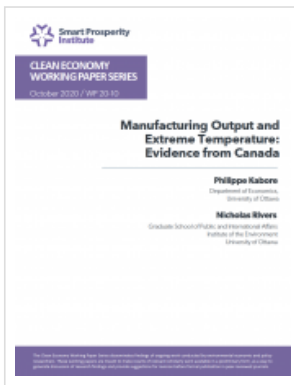
An update of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory of emissions from federal operations was also released, showing a decrease of 34% from 2005 levels from real property and conventional fleet operations. The [details from the Inventory are here](#) .

More detailed information about each of the priorities is available from the [Greening Government Centre website](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [commuting](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [federal government](#), [government workers](#), [Green Employers](#), [Green procurement](#), [telecommuting](#), [work from home](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A study of Canadian manufacturing plants demonstrates the economic damage of extreme hot or cold weather

Posted on **November 26, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Researchers at the [Sustainable Prosperity Institute](#) at the University of Ottawa released a Working Paper on November 24, forecasting how manufacturing productivity will be affected by weather extremes. Based on longitudinal data from 53,000 manufacturing plants across Canada, the authors find that the productivity of the plants is reduced in extreme weather – both hot or cold. They highlight the importance of labour input as a main contributor to the productivity loss.

The authors' summary appears in a blog, [Estimating the impact of climate change on the Canadian economy](#), which explains that the typical manufacturing plant in Canada currently experiences 4 extreme cold days and 14 extreme hot days per year, but under a scenario of high GHG emissions by the end of the century, that typical plant would experience one extreme cold day, but over 80 extreme hot days each year. They state: “Using medium and high greenhouse gas scenarios for 2050s and 2080s, we find that the annual losses of manufacturing output due to extreme temperature would go from 2.2% today to 2.8-3.5% in mid-century and to 3.5-7.2% in end of century.” The authors claim to be the first to estimate the effect of extreme temperatures on establishment performance in Canada, and the first to estimate the potential economic impact of climate change in a cold environment. The full results and discussion appear in a 50-page Working Paper, “[Manufacturing Output and Extreme Temperature: Evidence from Canada](#)” by economists Philippe Kabore and Nicholas Rivers.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [extreme cold weather](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Labour Productivity](#), [manufacturing industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

No new pipeline construction needed in Canada, and domestic fossil fuel consumption peaked in 2019

Posted on **November 25, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The key takeaway from a new flagship government report is that no new pipeline construction is needed in Canada, and the current pipelines under construction – the TransMountain Expansion, Keystone XL, and Enbridge Line 3 Replacement- are sufficient to accommodate all future crude oil production. The new report, [Canada's Energy Future 2020: Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2050](#), is the latest annual report by the Canada Energy Regulator CER- (formerly the National Energy Board) and discusses the future of all energy commodities under two scenarios – a Reference case and an Evolving Scenario, which includes a carbon price of \$75 per tonne in 2040 and \$125 per tonne in 2050.

Under the Evolving Scenario of increased policy intervention, Canada's domestic fossil fuel consumption peaked in 2019 and by 2050, it will be 35% lower than the 2019 level. However, the report states that even under the Evolving Scenario, fossil fuel consumption is forecast to make up over 60% of Canada's fuel mix in 2050. It is worth noting that these CER reports have been criticized in the past for overestimating fossil fuel demand – for example, by the Pembina Institute in 2019, in [“Why Canada's Energy Future report leads us astray”](#) . In 2020, [Pembina calls for changes](#) to the modelling assumptions for future reports, saying “the scenarios modelled in the report are still not aligned with commitments set out in the [Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act](#). This model of Canada's energy future is not consistent with the future that Canada has committed to in the Paris Agreement.” Further, it points out “Canada's Energy Future 2020 report does not reflect the range of recent scenarios for global oil demand, such as those recently released by the International Energy Agency and BP, where demand is predicted to fall by 50 to 75 per cent over the next 20 to 30 years in order to achieve net-zero emissions.”

Other reactions to the CER report focus on the forecast of declining need for pipelines , summarized in [“No Future Need for Trans Mountain, Keystone XL Pipelines, Canadian Energy Regulator Report Shows”](#) (The Energy Mix, Nov. 25), and even echoed in the conservative [Financial Post](#) . Followers of David Hughes will recognize this argument that he has made many times, most recently in [Reassessment of Need for the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project](#) , published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives at the end of October .

The press release and summary from the Canada Energy Regulator report is [here](#), with data sets and interactive tables [here](#) and an archive of past annual reports [here](#). Beyond fossil fuel projections, this year's Report includes a discussion of the transition to a Net-Zero Emissions energy system, focusing on personal passenger transportation, oil sands production, and remote and northern communities. It also briefly notes the impact of the Covid pandemic, stating “Canadian end-use energy demand will fall by 6% in 2020 compared to 2019, the biggest annual drop since at least 1990. Energy to move people and goods will fall the most due to less travel and increased remote work and learning.” (A [report published by the World Meteorological Office](#) on Nov. 23 provides preliminary estimates of a reduction in the annual global emission between 4.2% and 7.5% because of Covid).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Energy policy](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Keystone XL](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Transmountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IndustriALL sets out union goals for decent work in the battery supply chain, organizing in Green Tech

Posted on **November 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

IndustriALL Global Union represents workers along the entire battery supply chain, (except in China) through its international affiliates in mining, chemicals, energy, electronics, and the automotive sector. Canada's Unifor is an affiliate. [“Due diligence across the battery supply chain”](#) (November 2020) describes that expanding and complex supply chain, from mining to processing to end-use products for batteries, and outlines the union's aim to research and map it. IndustriALL's aim is to “create a social dialogue scheme or platform with key stakeholders to achieve decent work for all throughout the supply chain. IndustriALL is the only global union who can coordinate unions around the world and contribute to the policy to achieve decent work around the battery supply chain. The international trade union movement becomes more important than ever. ” A separate post, [“Developing a global trade union battery supply chain strategy”](#) (November 20) outlines further specifics about the union's strategy and announces: “IndustriALL has applied for funding for a project starting in January 2021 on the battery supply chain across the industrial sectors. In a pilot project

IndustriALL intends to collaborate with companies, NGOs and other associations to find out how such an approach can help to genuinely improve the situation workers along the entire battery supply chain.”

GreenTEch Manifesto for Mechanical Engineering

IndustriALL Global Union convened an online seminar on green technology in the mechanical engineering sector in early November 2020 – [summarized here](#). The seminar was the occasion to launch a **GreenTech Manifesto**, which defines “Green technology” (GreenTech) as “ any technology that promotes one or more of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN summit in 2015, specifically clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, green industry, innovation and infrastructure, responsible consumption and production and climate action.”

At a previous IndustriALL workshop on Mechanical Engineering and GreenTech in December 2018, the President of Austrian trade union PRO-GE and co-chair of the sector, said: “As mechanical engineers and trade unionists, technology is the most important contribution we can make to mitigating climate change. We need hydro, we need wind, we need solar, we need biomass. And we need strong unions to ensure that energy transition is just.”

The new Greentech Manifesto states: “IndustriALL Global Union and its affiliates need to be alert and present so that green jobs become good jobs with appropriate working and living conditions. To this end the participants at this IndustriALL Global Union GreenTech virtual workshop resolve to: § facilitate exchange between affected affiliates in the sector over new trends, especially focusing on GreenTech, digitization and related developments § organize training for trade union organizers and works councils to develop new methods, strategies and services to approach and recruit new employees at green workplaces § involve especially young workers and women in our work § intensify our efforts to increase trade union power in the affected sectors through organizing and recruiting.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [Engineering](#), [green technology](#), [IndustriALL](#), [international labour action](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s legislation for net-zero emissions lacks urgency and enforcement mechanisms

Posted on **November 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 19, Canada’s Environment Minister introduced Bill C-12, ***the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*** in the House of Commons. If passed, it would establish in law the already-promised national net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2050, and require the Minister to establish a national greenhouse gas emissions target and plan for 2030 within six months of the Act coming into force. Requirements for public consultation and progress reports are included, along with a provision for an advisory body which would also be required to conduct “engagement activities”. A summary of provisions appears in [the government’s press release](#) and in press reports from [the CBC](#) and [the Toronto Star](#). Initial reactions to the legislation abound on Twitter, mostly noting that 2030 is a disappointingly slow first target date. In [an article in Behind the Numbers](#), Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood calls the legislation “much ado about nothing” , and says “the bill’s failure to require a new emissions reduction target before 2030 means the federal government can continue delaying the kinds of transformational climate policies we require to meet the scale of the climate change threat. A new 2025 target would have put real pressure onto the present government rather than shirking responsibility to a future one.” Legal group Ecojustice calls the legislation **“a significant first step”** , and West Coast Environmental Law calls the legislation **a “critical juncture for Canada”**. WCEL pledges to work towards improving the Bill in the course of the parliamentary debate.... “to be effective, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act will

need to prioritize immediate climate action by setting a 2025 target, and ensure that all the targets we set are as ambitious as possible. It also needs stronger requirements to ensure those targets are actually met.”

The House of Commons [website here](#) will link to the Debates on Bill C-12, and chronicle its passage through the legislature. Already, the new Leader of the Green Party, Annamie Paul, has issued a reaction titled, [A failure of leadership: Government’s climate bill squanders “the opportunity of a lifetime” for a green economic recovery](#). Former leader Elizabeth May is quoted in the same press release saying “Having worked on the climate issue for over thirty years, watching one government after another kick the problem down the road, today is the tragic low-point. The window on holding to a livable climate will close, forever, before this legislation holds anyone to account.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#), [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Unions not impressed with the new U.K. 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution – updated

Posted on **November 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [10-point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#) was released by U.K. Premier Boris Johnson on November 18, promising to “mobilise £12 billion of government investment, and potentially 3 times as much from the private sector, to create and support up to 250,000 green jobs.” Some of the marquee goals: to ban the sale of new gas and diesel vehicles by 2030; £1bn to insulate homes and public buildings, (using the existing green homes grant and public sector decarbonisation scheme); and a previously announced pledge to quadruple offshore wind capacity by 2030.

The Guardian provides a [factual summary of new plan](#); the full list of 10 areas for “increased ambition” include: advancing offshore wind; driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen; delivering new and advanced nuclear power; accelerating the shift to zero emission vehicles; green public transport, cycling and walking; ‘jet zero’ and green ships; greener buildings; investing in carbon capture, usage and storage; protecting our natural environment; and, green finance and innovation. *The Guardian* also published a highly [negative summary here](#), along with a kinder editorial: [“The Guardian view on Johnson’s green jobs plan: the right way to start”](#). The editorial states “it is reassuring that Mr Johnson has chosen the path of believing in climate science and recognising that action affords economic opportunities.....That latter point is crucial. The prime minister is right to frame the response in terms of job creation. The cause of environmentalism in British politics has suffered from the misperception that it is a middle-class lifestyle affectation or a device to raise taxes. The reality is that the transition to a green economy is not a matter of choice, since the alternative is ruinous ecological calamity. “

That Guardian editorial warns of Mr. Johnson’s past pattern of lofty rhetoric lacking follow-through, and compares the pledged investment of £12bn, (much of which has been announced previously) to the €40bn green recovery package announced by Germany, the €30bn for green stimulus in France, and the \$2Trillion plan promised by US president-elect Joe Biden. UNITE The Union echoed many of the same doubts in its reaction, [“10-point plan for a green revolution is “half-baked offer”](#) “, and also in a [another response regarding the nuclear energy proposals](#), which calls for “more flesh on the bones”.

The U.K. [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\) reaction](#) calls the 10-point Plan a “slow start” for a green recovery, and says “The prime minister should step up his ambition on jobs. TUC research shows that fast-tracked spending on green infrastructure could create 1.24 million good jobs by 2022.” (That research, published in June 2020, is [here](#). The TUC also recently published [Voice and Place: How to plan fair and successful paths to net zero emissions](#), which presents union voices and case studies from five regions: the North; the North West; the Midlands; Yorkshire and Humberside; and Wales, and sets out recommendations for national, regional and local policies.

Update: The November/December 2020 issue of the [Greener Jobs Alliance Newsletter](#) provides its own summary of the 10-point Plan, and links to reactions from other unions, including the education unions, GMB and RMT.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Recovery](#), [industrial strategy](#), [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), [UNITE the Union](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ørsted and U.S. Building Trades reach a national agreement for workforce planning in Offshore Wind

Posted on **November 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A November 18 [press release](#) from the North America Building Trades Unions (NABTU) and [Ørsted Offshore North America](#) announces a “Landmark MOU for U.S. Offshore Wind Workforce Transition” , which “represents a transformative moment for organized labor and the clean energy industry. This framework sets a model for labor-management cooperation and workforce development in the budding offshore wind industry.”

According to the NABTU [press release](#), “The partnership will create a national agreement designed to transition U.S. union construction workers into the offshore wind industry in collaboration with the leadership of the 14 U.S. NABTU affiliates and the AFL-CIO.” The newly-announced MOU is based on the model of an agreement developed by the Rhode Island Building Trades for the Block Island Wind Farm project – the first offshore wind installation in the U.S. which came online in December 2016, and is now operated by Ørsted .

No text of the new agreement is available yet, but the press release specifies:

“As part of this national framework, Ørsted, along with their partners, will work together with the building trades’ unions to identify the skills necessary to accelerate an offshore wind construction workforce. The groups will match those needs against the available workforce, timelines, scopes of work, and certification requirements to fulfill Ørsted’s pipeline of projects down the East Coast, creating expansive job opportunities in a brand-new American industry for years to come and raising economics for a just transition in the renewable sector.....Ørsted and NABTU, along with their affiliates and state and local councils, have agreed to work together on long-term strategic plans for the balanced and sustainable development of Ørsted’s offshore wind projects.”

North America’s Building Trades Unions is an alliance of 14 national and international unions in the building and construction industry that collectively represent over 3 million skilled craft professionals in the United States and Canada. Previous NABTU model national agreements are available [here](#) . Labour-affiliated BlueGreen Alliance [issued a press release](#) immediately, “lauding” the agreement between NABTU and Ørsted . BlueGreen is also a partner in [New England for Offshore Wind](#) , a civil society coalition which advocates for regional collaboration in New England, and urges state Governors to make commitments to power one-third of New England with offshore wind by 2022.

The Block Island Wind Farm has been described as “a case study in high-quality job creation” by the Center for American Progress in [Offshore Wind Means Blue-Collar Jobs for Coastal States](#) (April 2018). [Massachusetts Offshore Wind Workforce Assessment,\(2018\)](#) is a detailed study by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Centre, focusing on job-related issues, and highlighting the experience of Block Island.

Vancouver approves Climate Emergency Action Plan and promises a Climate Justice Charter

Posted on **November 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 17, Vancouver City Council approved a **Climate Emergency Action Plan**, a roadmap for the city to cut carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, with a focus on the biggest local sources – fossil fuels use in vehicles (39% of city emissions) and in buildings (54%). According to the official **Summary**, goals for 2030 include 50% of the km driven on Vancouver's roads to be by zero emissions vehicles, and 40% less embodied emissions from new buildings and construction projects compared to 2018. The plan will cost \$500 million over the next five years, according to **reporting from Business in Vancouver**.

Detailed documentation is available [here](#), and the 318-page staff proposal presented to City Council on November 3rd is [here](#). As reported by *Business in Vancouver* and *The Georgia Straight*, all 19 action items proposed by staff did not survive debate. The most contentious issues related to plans for a “walkable city” and a proposal for congestion pricing for the city centre. Staff were directed to prepare a report for Council by 2022 on that issue. *The Georgia Straight* reproduces all the motions from the debate, indicating next steps, and how the final approved plan differs from the staff proposals.

Consultation process included a Climate and Equity Working Group

The Climate Emergency Action Plan drew on a citizen consultation process, described in detail in the **staff proposal document**. One of the key features of the consultation process: a Climate and Equity Working Group (as described in Appendix N at page 251) which included “a rich mix of perspectives including new immigrants, people with disabilities, people with low income, urban Indigenous. The majority of participants were racialized people.” However, the report also notes that the process lacked voices from some Indigenous nations, as well as seniors, youth LGBTQ2+ community, and “While the majority of participants were women, there was no voice specific to gender equity. These gaps need to be addressed in future engagement as part of implementation work and in the reformation of the Climate and Equity Working Group.” The Emergency Action Plan approved by Council on November 17 promises: “Our equity work on climate policies and programs will be shaped by the forthcoming Climate Justice Charter, the Equity Framework, the Reconciliation Framework, the Healthy City Strategy, Vancouver's Housing Strategy, and the Women's Equity Strategy.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Action Plan](#), [Climate Justice](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Gender](#), [green buildings](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Transit Policy](#), [transportation policy](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Wind and solar PV will surpass coal and natural gas by 2024, according to latest IEA forecast

Posted on **November 18, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Energy Agency released another of its flagship reports in November: **Renewables 2020: Analysis and Forecast to 2025**. This comprehensive report focuses in turn on each of: renewable electricity, renewable heat, solar pv, wind, Hydropower, bioenergy, CSP and geothermal, and transport bioenergy. Overall, the report forecasts global energy demand is set to decline by 5% in 2020, and although all other fuels will decline, overall renewable energy demand will increase by 1%, and renewables used for generating electricity will grow by almost 7% in 2020. The report provides statistics and comments on the **impacts of Covid recovery policies**.

Some highlights: “The renewables industry has adapted quickly to the challenges of the Covid crisis.... Supply chain disruptions and construction delays slowed the progress of renewable energy projects in the first six months of 2020. However, construction of plants and manufacturing activity ramped up again quickly, and logistical challenges have been mostly resolved with the easing of cross-border restrictions since mid-May.” As a result, the IEA has revised its [May 2020 forecast](#) of global renewable capacity additions upwards, and forecasts a record expansion of nearly 10% in 2021 for new renewable capacity, led by India and the EU. Other eye-catching statements: “Solar PV and onshore wind are already the cheapest ways of adding new electricity-generating plants in most countries today... Overall, renewables are set to account for 95% of the net increase in global power capacity through 2025.....Total installed wind and solar PV capacity is on course to surpass natural gas in 2023 and coal in 2024. Solar PV alone accounts for 60% of all renewable capacity additions through 2025, and wind provides another 30%. Driven by further cost declines, annual offshore wind additions are set to surge, accounting for one-fifth of the total wind annual market in 2025.”

The [Renewables 2020 website is here](#) ; a 9-page Executive Summary [is here](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [Offshore Wind](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Lobbying Joe Biden for climate action, and what it means for Canada

Posted on **November 18, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Despite the chaos in post-election politics of the United States, Joe Biden is the legitimate President-elect of the United States, and [his climate change platform](#) was an important factor in his victory. As his Transition team prepares for inauguration in January 2021, environmental and climate change groups are among those advocating for appointments and policies. Prominent among these: [The Climate Mandate](#), a joint initiative of the [Sunrise Movement](#) and [Justice Democrats](#) . On November 11, Climate Mandate issued a statement saying: “We can unite our nation by solving the crises we have in common: COVID-19, climate change, systemic racism and an economic recession. Joe Biden must command the federal government with fierce urgency and bold creativity.... This is Biden’s FDR moment”. A top demand of the Climate Mandate movement: the creation of a Climate Mobilization Office – “with wide-reaching power to combat the climate crisis — just as we mobilized to defeat the existential threat of Nazi Germany in WWII.” The CMO “will convene and coordinate across the President’s Cabinet agencies and, ultimately, hold every federal department accountable to the national project of stopping climate change. The Office of Climate Mobilization will deeply embed this mission into all of our spending, regulations, policies, and actions.” Top picks suggested to lead the Climate Mobilization Office: [Washington Governor Jay Inslee](#), [Gina McCarthy](#) , now Head of the Natural Resources Defence Council and former head of the Environmental Protection Agency, or [John Podesta](#), founder of the American Center for Progress and a counsellor to President Obama and Chief of Staff to President Clinton.

Other names which appear in the [Climate Mandate wish list](#) include Bernie Sanders , their top pick for Secretary of Labor; environmental justice champion Mustafa Santiago Ali to lead the Environmental Protection Agency; and two union officials: Mary Kay Henry, International President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), as an alternate choice for Secretary of Labor, and Sara Nelson, International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA as a second choice for Secretary of Transportation.

The [Climate 21 Project](#) is a second group with proposals for Joe Biden. A group of more than 150 people, Climate 21 Project is co-chaired by Christy Goldfuss, a former Obama official and now with the Center for American Progress, and Tim Profeta, director of the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University. The Summary of their Recommendations regarding the transition is [here](#) , accompanied by eleven memos for each of the relevant departments and agencies .

Finally, Greenpeace USA [released](#) its Just Recovery Agenda on November 17, directed at Joe Biden. Broader than climate and environmental issues, “the Just Recovery Agenda includes more than 100 concrete policy recommendations spanning both legislation and executive action aimed at creating a world in which everyone has a good life and where our

fundamental needs — including dignified work, healthcare, education, housing, clean air and water, healthy food, and more — are met.” [Detailed policy proposals are here](#) .

Here are a few general reactions and assessments of the climate future since Biden’s election: “[Initial Thoughts on the Impact of the 2020 Federal Elections on National Climate Policy](#)” by Joel Stronberg (Nov. 5); “[Election likely hardens political limits of Biden climate agenda](#)” by Amy Harder in *Axios* (Nov. 5); “[State Climate Leadership Is Coming to the Nation’s Capital in 2021](#)” in a Center for American Progress blog (Nov. 9) and “[How Joe Biden plans to use executive powers to fight climate change](#)” in *Vox* (Nov. 9); and “[Trump Rolled Back 100+ Environmental Rules. Biden May Focus on Undoing Five of the Biggest Ones](#)” in *Inside Climate News* (Nov. 17) .

Canada greets Joe Biden and his climate plans

The *National Observer* maintained a [Special Report section](#) about the U.S. election, including an overview of reactions in “[Ottawa welcomes president-elect Joe Biden as climate fight ally](#)” (Nov. 9) -including comments from politicians (Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson and former Minister Catherine McKenna, as well as Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, and New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs) along with policy experts Blair Feltmate and Sara Hastings-Simon. A good summary of the most important climate issues appears in “[The Biden presidency could change the terms of the climate debate in Canada](#)” by Aaron Wherry at CBC (Nov. 10).

In “[Five ways the Biden presidency could change Canadian climate policy for the better](#)” in CCPA’s *Behind the Numbers* (Nov. 12), Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood gives an overview, stating:

“For the past four years, a recalcitrant U.S. administration provided cover for Canadian politicians to water down and delay climate policies. With Biden in the White House, the situation may be reversed. Even if the new president only achieves a portion of his ambitious climate agenda, Canada risks falling behind in the transition to a net-zero carbon economy. Biden’s plan could energize Canada’s international climate agenda, could accelerate the growth of Canada’s clean economy, curb fossil fuel infrastructure, strengthen Canada’s carbon pricing system, and strengthen Canadian environmental regulations.”

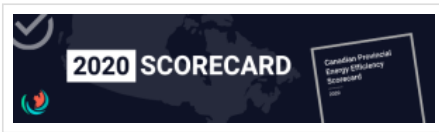
Whether Canada can compete with U.S. clean technology industry if the U.S. starts to ramp up its spending is a topic raised in “[Biden’s victory raises the clean growth stakes for Canada](#)” (Nov. 7) by Sara Hastings-Simon and Rachel Samson of the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices. In “[What Joe Biden’s Climate plan means for Canada](#)” in *The Conversation* (Nov. 12), Robert O’Brien of McMaster University focuses on the prospects for the oil and gas industry and the Keystone XL pipeline, flowing from Biden’s remark that “I would transition from the oil industry, yes.” O’Brien considers the implications for Indigenous communities, workers and communities in that transition. Will Greaves of University of Victoria focuses on the oil and gas industry and protection of the Arctic in “[What a Biden Presidency means for Climate Change and Canada](#)” in *Policy Options* (Nov. 10) .

Another analysis, from a trade perspective, appears in *Behind the Numbers* : “[Biden’s Buy American Plan should inspire – not scare – Canada](#)” (Oct 25) . Author Scott Sinclair argues that Buy American policies are not likely to go away, and if you can’t beat ‘em, you should learn from them. “ Canadians can no longer afford to disregard or neglect considerable potential of government purchasing for job creation, improved working conditions and environmentally sustainable development. Given our current trade treaty constraints, ambitious “Buy Sustainable” purchasing policies offer the best way forward for Canadian workers and the environment.”

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Green Recovery](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

British Columbia tops in Canada’s Energy Efficiency Scorecard

Posted on **November 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Efficiency Canada has released its **2020 Energy Efficiency Scorecard**, self-described as “a comprehensive benchmarking of provincial energy efficiency policies.” The 2020 edition is the 2nd produced, and has expanded to include new information on Indigenous energy efficiency, heating fuel savings, building code adoption activities, active transportation, and geo-targeted efficiency. A complex website offers **a database** with policy summaries sorted by province and by policy areas: energy efficiency, enabling policies, buildings, transportation, and industry. Provincial fact sheets describe and rank each province, with **British Columbia** retaining its rank as #1 in Canada, followed by **Quebec**; **Nova Scotia**; **Ontario**, which dropped from third place in 2019 to fourth rank; **Prince Edward Island** (highlighted as most improved province); **Manitoba**; **New Brunswick** in 7th place; **Alberta** (slipped from 6th to 8th place); **Newfoundland and Labrador** at 9th, and in last place, **Saskatchewan**. The **press release** notes that “All provinces have significant room to improve. On a scale with 100 available points, the highest score this year is 58 and the lowest 17.”

Efficiency Canada is housed at Carleton University’s Sustainable Energy Research Centre. The website also offers two highly useful reports: **Less is More: A win for the economy, jobs, consumers, and our climate: energy efficiency is Canada’s unsung hero** (co-published by Clean Energy Canada and Efficiency Canada in 2018) and **The Economic Impact of Improved Energy Efficiency in Canada Employment and other Economic Outcomes from the Pan-Canadian Framework’s Energy Efficiency Measures**, prepared for Clean Energy Canada by Dunsky Consulting in April 2018.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **employment impacts, energy efficiency, energy policies, provincial climate change policies** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ambitious focus on electric vehicles in Quebec’s 2030 Plan for a Green Economy

Posted on **November 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On November 16, the government of Quebec released its **2030 Plan for a Green Economy** (in French), with an **official English-language Summary**. The plan is costed at \$6.7 billion over the next five years, with targets to reduce GHG emissions by 37.5% below 1990 levels by 2030, and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. The bulk of funding and attention focuses on electrification of transportation. Already a leader in electric vehicle incentives, Quebec will have the most ambitious goal for electric vehicles in Canada – by 2030, 1.5 million electric vehicles on the road, along with 55% of city buses and 65% of school buses, 100% of governmental cars, SUVs, vans and minivans, and 25% of pickup trucks. Sales of new gasoline-powered vehicles will not be permitted as of 2035.

Although emissions from transportation account for 40% of the province’s total emissions, two articles posted by CBC note that the measures announced will be insufficient to meet the GHG emissions reduction targets: “**Quebec’s push to go**

electric won't get province to emission reduction targets, experts say", and "How Quebec's climate change plan protects suburbanites from tough choices".

The new 2030 Plan for a Green Economy is part of a suite of complementary policy statements, including [Joining Forces for a Sustainable Energy Future: 2018 – 2023 energy transition, innovation and efficiency master plan](#) ; [Strategy for developing the Battery Sector](#) (French only); and [Development of critical and strategic minerals in Quebec](#). The complete [2030 Plan for a Green Economy](#) is available in French only .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [electric buses](#), [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

An oath for climate scientists: speak truth to power, and take personal action for climate change

Posted on **November 10, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Scientists for Global Responsibility, a U.K.-based organization, has launched a new initiative with an [Open Letter in The Guardian](#) on November 7, stating: "Science has no higher purpose than to understand and help maintain the conditions for life to thrive on Earth. We may look beyond our planet with wonder and learn, but this is our only viable home." The [online campaign](#) asks the world's climate scientists to sign an Oath, modelled on the Hippocratic Oath for physicians, by which they "pledge to act in whatever ways we are able, in our lives and work, to prevent catastrophic climate disruption."

The website continues:

"To translate this pledge into a force for real change, we will:

explain honestly, clearly and without compromise, what scientific evidence tells us about the seriousness of the climate emergency.

not second-guess what might seem politically or economically pragmatic when describing the scale and timeframe of action needed to deliver the 1.5°C and 2°C commitments, specified in the Paris Climate Agreement. And, speak out about what is not compatible with the commitments, or is likely to undermine them.

to the best of our abilities, and mindful of the urgent need for systemic change, seek to align our own behaviour with the climate targets, and reduce our own personal carbon emissions to demonstrate the possibilities for change.

With courtesy and firmness, we will hold our professional associations, institutions and employers to these same standards, and invite our colleagues across the scientific community to sign, act on and share this pledge."

Scientists for Global Responsibility have been active in previous climate-related activism – for example, a campaign seeking fossil fuel divestment by the U.K. Universities' Superannuation Scheme (USS), as summarized in "[Is your pension fund wrecking the planet?](#)" (March 2020) of [Responsible Science](#). That journal was launched in 2019; they also communicate through social media ([@ResponsibleSci](#) on Twitter) , webinars and conferences, and have a long history of [published reports](#) addressing all aspects of ethical issues in science and technology. Founded in 1992, the history of SGR is [here](#).

Methane emissions in Canada- Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan finalize equivalency agreements despite new evidence of under-reporting

Posted on **November 9, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 5, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change issued [a press release](#) announcing that the federal government has finalized equivalency agreements for methane regulations from the oil and gas industry with Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, for the next five years. "These equivalency agreements represent a flexible approach that enables provinces and territories to design methane regulations that best suit their respective jurisdictions while meeting equivalent emissions-reduction outcomes to the federal regulations." These equivalency agreements have been in the works for months, during which time Environmental Defense Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation, and other groups [have lobbied](#) for regulations to be tightened and for the reporting procedures to be improved.

These same groups were critical of the federal [Emissions Reduction Fund, announced](#) on October 29, to reduce methane and GHG emissions. This \$750-million fund will provide "primarily repayable funding" to eligible onshore and offshore oil and gas firms to encourage them to invest in greener technologies. Details are at the [government portal for the Emissions Reduction Fund](#). The Pembina Institute [endorsed the Fund](#) on the grounds that it could reduce emissions while improving health and creating jobs. More critical comments from Environmental Defense Canada are included in the *Toronto Star* report, "[Justin Trudeau offers \\$750 million to oil and gas companies to slash methane emissions, but critics warn it isn't enough](#)" (Oct. 29).

Updated: Scientific evidence shows under-reporting of methane emissions worse than thought

An [interview with Dale Marshall](#), National Climate Program Manager at Environmental Defence Canada, appeared in *The Energy Mix* on November 16. Marshall criticizes the Equivalency Agreements, especially in light of a new article just published in *Environmental Science and Technology*, the scientific journal of the American Chemical Society. "[Eight-Year Estimates of Methane Emissions from Oil and Gas Operations in Western Canada Are Nearly Twice Those Reported in Inventories](#)" was written by Canadian government scientists, and provides damning evidence of the problem of under-reporting. The scientific article was summarized [in lay terms in the National Observer](#) on November 12.

Canada set its [regulations for methane emissions from the oil and gas industry](#) in 2018, targeting a reduction by 40% to 45% below 2012 levels by 2025. It [appears that Canada will miss its target](#), with modelling showing the reduction likely to be closer to 30%. The Pembina Institute has published [fact sheets](#) on methane regulations, and the International Energy Agency posted an overview of Canada's methane emissions regulations and levels in February 2020 [here](#). The dangers of methane and the problem of underreporting fugitive emissions have been summarized in a January 2020 report from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), [Fractures in the Bridge: Unconventional \(Fracked\) Natural Gas, Climate Change and Human Health](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Fracking Regulations](#), [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#), [Methane Emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and Gas Regulations](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Climate Youth in the Courts: Victory in Ontario, dismissal in Canadian court, and an appeal to the Supreme Court of Norway

The Environmental Law Centre of Alberta has been monitoring climate litigation cases worldwide, but events have overtaken their latest summary blog [Climate Litigation in Canada and Beyond –Where Are We in 2020?](#) (Nov. 9) , which discusses the dismissal of the [LaRose case](#) in the Federal Court of Canada (more on that below). On November 12, Justice Carole Brown of the Superior Court of Ontario issued a [landmark decision](#) , allowing the case of Mathur et al. to proceed to trial under [Canada’s Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms](#). The case is thoroughly described in a [Backgrounder from the Ecojustice](#), who represent the seven youth. Their claim is that their rights were violated when the Ontario government under Doug Ford passed the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act in 2018, weakening GHG emissions reduction targets for the province. According to Ecojustice, “The lawsuit aims to strike down Ontario’s current 2030 target as unconstitutional and enshrine the right to a safe, healthy climate as part of the right to life, liberty and security of the person in Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This would require the Government of Ontario to set a new target in line with the scientific consensus, and revise its policies accordingly.” The decision to allow the case to proceed is a first for Canada.

Federal Court of Canada dismisses an earlier youth-led case, LaRose vs. Her Majesty the Queen

On October 27, Justice Michael D. Manson of the Federal Court of Canada dismissed the case of [LaRose vs. Her Majesty the Queen](#), and [in the words of law professor Jason MacLean](#), slammed the door on big, “holy grail” climate cases in Canada. The LaRose case [was filed](#) in 2019 by 15 youth who used the Public Trust doctrine under [section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) to argue that the federal government is violating their rights to life, liberty and security of the person, and failing to protect essential public trust resources. Further, they call on [section 15 of the Charter](#) regarding equality, alleging that youth are disproportionately affected by the effects of the climate emergency. Although Justice Manson agreed that “the negative impact of climate change to the Plaintiffs and all Canadians is significant, both now and looking forward into the future,” he declined to allow the case to proceed because the questions raised “are so political that the Courts are incapable or unsuited to deal with them.” Lawyers for the case will appeal. The legal organizations supporting the LaRose case reacted to the decision: the Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation (CELL) [here](#) , and U.S.-based Our Children’s Trust [here](#) . Our Children’s Trust also maintains a timeline and compilation of documents [here](#).

The *LaRose* case was summarized in “[Kids facing effects of climate change are taking their governments to court](#)” in *The Conversation* (Nov. 2019), with an explanation of the public trust doctrine. After the decision, a brief summary appeared in “[Federal judge tosses youth climate case against Ottawa](#)” (National Observer, Oct. 27). In “[Why the youth climate court case failed and what’s next for Canadian climate policy](#)” (*The Conversation*, Nov. 3) Jason MacLean, Assistant Professor of Law at the University of New Brunswick, summarizes the case and concludes that the federal court’s decision “slams the door”, but also looks for broader hope in the prospects for more specific, smaller climate cases – referring to “[The Unsexy Future of Climate Litigation](#)” (Journal of Environmental Law, 2018) for his framework, and citing the current example of the [Grassy Mountain coal mine project](#) in Alberta as an example of such a specific case.

Previous attempts by Canadian youth to fight for climate rights in courts include [ENvironnement JEunesse](#), which is currently under appeal after being denied the right to proceed by the Quebec Superior Court in 2019 .

[Rebellion](#) is a new documentary episode by The Nature of Things, a flagship production of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It profiles some of the youth involved in the Canadian court fights.

Youth in Norway take their climate case to the Supreme Court

In a case known as *People vs. Arctic Oil* , [Young Friends of the Earth Norway](#) (also known as Nature and Youth) have challenged their government’s 2016 decision to license oil drilling in the Barents Sea of the Arctic. Their challenge, now before the Supreme Court of Norway in November, [is being described](#) by Greenpeace Norway (a co-plaintiff), as internationally precedent-setting, potentially as important as the Urgenda decision in the Netherlands. The New York Times [reported on November 5](#) that it is being called “the case of the century” in the Norwegian press. The court case [finished in mid-November](#), with a decision expected in early 2021.

The Sabin Center Climate Case Litigation Database offers [an archive of all official documents](#) in the Norwegian case, and Greenpeace Norway provides a chronology and a layman's [summary of the case decisions in English](#). The Greenpeace website also provides the new information that the government's decision to issue oil licenses was based on incorrect economic analysis and that "Ministry of Petroleum and Energy has been sitting on updated calculations they did not present to the Parliament, which shows that the profitability of the oil fields is questionable."

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [climate change litigation](#), [Environnement Jeunesse](#), [LaRose case](#), [Mathur case](#), [Urgenda Decision](#), [Youth and climate](#), [youth litigation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Links between Pandemics, biodiversity, and climate change

Posted on **November 3, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The experts of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services ([IPBES](#)) released [their Report](#) of an earlier workshop on October 29, warning that "the risk of pandemics is increasing rapidly, with more than five new diseases emerging in people every year, any one of which could potentially spark a pandemic." The problem, as stated in the report: "The majority (70%) of emerging diseases (e.g. Ebola, Zika, Nipah encephalitis), and almost all known pandemics (e.g. influenza, HIV/AIDS, COVID-19), are zoonoses – i.e. are caused by microbes of animal origin. These microbes 'spill over' due to contact among wildlife, livestock, and people.....Pandemics have their origins in diverse microbes carried by animal reservoirs, but their emergence is entirely driven by human activities. The underlying causes of pandemics are the same global environmental changes that drive biodiversity loss and climate change. These include land-use change, agricultural expansion and intensification, and wildlife trade and consumption. These drivers of change bring wildlife, livestock, and people into closer contact, allowing animal microbes to move into people and lead to infections, sometimes outbreaks, and more rarely into true pandemics that spread through road networks, urban centres and global travel and trade routes."

Prevention 100 times cheaper than reactive policies

The [IPBES Report](#) asserts that pandemics are not inevitable. The authors advocate a dramatic shift in policy to prevention, rather than the current reactive scramble to treat diseases through vaccines etc. – an approach which brings enormous human suffering, and economic costs. The report estimate the economic costs of the reactive approach at "likely more than a trillion dollars in economic damages annually." – likely 100 times the costs of prevention.

Given that the IPBES is an intergovernmental body linked to the United Nations, it is perhaps not surprising that one of their key recommendations is to establish a high-level intergovernmental council on pandemic prevention, which would provide decision-makers with scientific research, economic impact estimates, and a global monitoring mechanism. They also suggest an international accord or agreement with mutually agreed upon targets. Finally, they suggest specific measures, such as taxes or levies on meat consumption, which would impact consumption patterns, and reduce the globalized agricultural expansion and trade that have led to pandemics.

The [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services \(IPBES\)](#) was established in 2012, with 137 member states as of 2020 (including Canada and the U.S.) . In 2019, the IPBES published a landmark report, [Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) . A key IPBES scientist, Cambridge Professor Partha Dasgupta, was named by the government of the United Kingdom to lead an [Independent Review on the Economics of Biodiversity](#), in preparation for the [15th UN Biodiversity Conference](#) , now postponed till May 2021. The [Dasgupta Review Interim Report](#) was published in April 2020. (discussed in "[Halt destruction of nature or suffer even worse pandemics, say world's top scientists](#)" in *The Guardian* (April 2020) .

Also in 2020, the 13th annual edition of the [Living Planet Report](#) was published by the WWF, linking pandemics to ecosystems, and reiterating the message that "unsustainable human activity is pushing the planet's natural systems that support life on Earth to the edge." In addition to compiling data about the loss of natural species, the report offers nature-

based solutions to prevent ecological collapse and to mitigate climate change – especially in the companion report, [Too Hot To Handle: A Deep Dive into Biodiversity in a Warming World](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Economic impacts](#), [ecosystems](#), [nature-based solutions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International studies offer hope to reach Paris targets through Green Recovery plans

Posted on **November 2, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An October report, [Assessment of Green Recovery Plans after Covid-19](#) , modelled Green Recovery plans globally and for the EU, Germany, Poland, Spain, the UK, USA, Japan and India. In all cases, the Green Recovery Plan produced the best results measured for GDP growth, employment impacts and emission reductions . The report assessed two paths to recovery, both of which have equal cost to government: 1. a ‘return to normal’ approach by reducing VAT rates and encouraging households to resume spending; and 2. a ‘Green’ Recovery Plan that included a smaller reduction in VAT, but included public investment in energy efficiency and in upgrading electricity grids; subsidies for wind and solar power; a car scrappage program with subsidies for electric vehicles; and a tree planting program. The report was commissioned by the [We Mean Business](#) coalition and conducted by Cambridge Econometrics in the U.K.

Another report was announced in an October 28 [press release: Technical Report: The Case for a Green and Just Recovery](#), commissioned by the C40 Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force. This report (with details of [methodology here](#)), estimates that investing COVID stimulus funds in green solutions would create 50 million jobs, prevent 270,000 premature deaths, and deliver \$280bn in economic benefits globally. Expressing concern that, “to date, only 3 – 5% of an estimated US\$12 – \$15 trillion in international COVID stimulus funding is committed to green initiatives”, the C40 Task Force issued a [Call to Action](#) for national governments, international institutions, businesses and world leaders. Noting that timing is consequential, the Task Force calls for “decisive climate action before COP26”, to embrace the principles of the Global Green New Deal coalition – turning away from “business as usual”, ending all public investments in fossil fuels, and pledging to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

The [C40 Mayors’ Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery](#) was launched in July, with support from civic society, labour unions and youth activists. A detailed [Implementation Guide](#) was released in June with specific strategies.

An optimistic view: Green Stimulus Funds can take us to 1.5C

Finally, “[How the coronavirus stimulus could put the Paris Agreement on track](#)” appeared in *Carbon Brief* , summarizing “[Covid-19 recovery funds dwarf clean energy investment needs](#)” , an academic article published in the journal *Science* – (restricted access). The authors of the article argue that if just a fraction of Covid-19 fiscal stimulus – around 10% – was invested every year, it would be sufficient to fund the clean energy transition. “Together with the \$300bn annual increase into low-carbon energy, investments into fossil fuels need to be reduced by \$280bn per year for a Paris compliant pathway”. The optimistic conclusion: “In very concrete terms, our analysis shows that the more ambitious goal under the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to 1.5C is still within reach. Decisive leadership, swift action and sound use of scientific advice seems to be a good recipe for coping with both the Covid-19 crisis and our warming climate.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Covid-19](#), [Green Recovery](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Costs and job impacts of Green Recovery and Just Transition programs for Ohio, Pennsylvania

Posted on **November 2, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Impacts of the Reimagine Appalachia & Clean Energy Transition Programs for Ohio: Job Creation, Economic Recovery, and Long-Term Sustainability was published by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) in October, written by Robert Pollin and co-authors Jeannette Wicks-Lim, Shouvik Chakraborty, and Gregor Semieniuk. To achieve a 50 percent reduction relative to 2008 emissions by 2030, the authors propose public and private investment programs, and then estimate the job creation benefits to 2030. “Our annual average job estimates for 2021 – 2030 include: 165,000 jobs per year through \$21 billion in spending on energy efficiency and clean renewable energy; 30,000 jobs per year through investing \$3.5 billion in manufacturing and public infrastructure. 43,000 jobs per year through investing \$3.5 billion in land restoration and agriculture. The total employment creation through clean energy, manufacturing/infrastructure and land restoration/agriculture will total to about 235,000 jobs. “

There are almost 50,000 workers currently working in the Ohio fossil fuel and bioenergy industries, with an estimated 1,000 per year who will be displaced through declining fossil fuel demand. As he has before, Pollin advocates for a Just Transition program which includes: Pension guarantees; Retraining; Re-employment for displaced workers through an employment guarantee, with 100 percent wage insurance; Relocation support; and full just transition support for older workers who choose to work past age 65. The report estimates the average costs of supporting approximately 1,000 workers per year in such transition programs will amount to approximately \$145 million per year (or \$145,000 per worker).

Pennsylvania report

Using an identical structure, the same authors modelled a Green Recovery program for Pennsylvania, released as a preliminary document, ***Impacts of the Reimagine Appalachia & Clean Energy Transition Programs for Pennsylvania***. They estimate that, “as an average over 2021 – 2030, a clean energy investment program scaled at about \$26 billion per year will generate roughly 174,000 jobs per year in Pennsylvania.”

The authors estimate that oil and natural gas consumption in Pennsylvania will fall by 40 percent by 2030, and coal will fall by 70 percent, resulting in the loss of 2,870 fossil fuel-based jobs per year between 2021 – 2030. Given the demographic composition of the workforce, they estimate that 1,056 workers in the industry will voluntarily retire – leaving 1,814 workers per year who will experience displacement (0.03 percent of the total workforce). Just Transition measures similar to those called for in Ohio are presented, with the statement that “the overall costs of providing these displaced workers with generous just transition support will be trivial relative to the size of Pennsylvania’s economy. The just transition program should be financed jointly by federal and state government funding sources.” More detailed costing is promised when the final study for Pennsylvania is released.

The Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at University of Massachusetts has published related studies in a “Green Growth” series, available [from this link](#). States studied are Colorado (2019) , Maine (August 2020), New York (2017), and Washington State (Dec. 2017). In September 2020, PERI released ***Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures***, in which Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty modelled the impact of a \$6 trillion, 10-year economic stimulus program for clean energy and infrastructure across the U.S.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy Investment](#), [employment impacts](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Job Creation](#), [Just Transition](#), [Ohio](#), [Pennsylvania](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Two reports forecast millions of new jobs based on Sierra Club proposals for green investment

Posted on **October 21, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A study **released by the Economic Policy Institute** in Washington D.C. on October 20 examines the employment impacts of trade and investment policies proposed by the Alliance for American Manufacturing, in combination with a modified version of policies proposed **by the Sierra Club** – \$2 trillion over 4 years invested in infrastructure, clean energy, and energy efficiency improvements. The EPI report, ***Rebuilding American manufacturing—potential job gains by state and industry, Analysis of trade, infrastructure, and clean energy/ energy efficiency proposals***, concludes that the combined trade policy reforms and clean economy investments would result in 6.9 million direct and indirect jobs by 2024. Noting that 91.6% of clean energy and energy efficiency investments are for manufactured products, the authors further forecast what industries and sub-sectors would benefit, with state-by-state statistics. They conclude that, of the 6.9 million forecast jobs, 2.5 million would be widely distributed across the U.S. in the manufacturing industry, with 36.4% concentrated in high-wage jobs.

The **Sierra Club proposals** underlying the EPI scenario were made to the U.S. Congress during their deliberations on the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*, in April 2020. These proposals were also analyzed by Pollin and Chakraborty in a report published in September by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at University of Massachusetts Amherst. The Pollin Chakraborty report, ***Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures***, used a 10 year time frame, investing \$683 billion per year in infrastructure, clean energy and energy efficiency, as well as agriculture and land restoration programs and, notably, the “Care economy, public health, and postal service”. Their resulting projection of 16 million new jobs appears in **the platform of the THRIVE Agenda**, an economic renewal plan for the U.S. created in September 2020 by the **Green New Deal Network** and endorsed by more than 100 climate justice, civil rights and labour organizations.

Final note: Robert Pollin, Noam Chomsky, and C.J. Polychroniou released a new book in September, ***Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet***, published by Verso Press.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **employment impacts, Job Creation, Manufacturing, United States** | [Leave a reply](#)

Green Hydrogen in Canada – Alberta sets a goal of 2040 for exports

Posted on **October 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Clean Energy Canada released a new report on hydrogen as a clean energy source, providing a history of policy and development in Canada and around the world, and a call to action. ***A New Hope*** states that “.. Canada is among a small group of countries with the highest potential for exporting clean hydrogen, thanks to a clean power system (82% of Canada’s electricity grid is already non-emitting) and plenty of access to water (required for electrolysis). But the time to act is now. Already, 18 economies comprising more than 75% of global GDP are developing and rolling out hydrogen strategies. Some, like the EU and South Korea, have dedicated post-pandemic recovery funds to make it happen. Germany’s priming of the hydrogen market with a €9-billion (\$13.7-billion) strategy could lead to a snowballing competitive market—and increasingly cheaper clean hydrogen.” The EU ***Hydrogen Strategy for a climate neutral Europe*** was released in July 2020.

“***Green, Blue or Grey? Colour-coded hydrogen holds keys to Canada’s energy transition***” appeared in *The National Observer* in August, and gives an excellent overview of the policy landscape for hydrogen in Canada – the perspective of the **Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association** and the Canadian government, which has promised a Hydrogen Strategy – but no date is set. The article cites a very thorough consultant’s report circulating amongst government officials: ***2019 Hydrogen Pathways : Enabling a Clean Growth Future for Canadians***.

The Pembina Institute had also published ***Hydrogen on the path to net-zero emissions Costs and climate benefits*** (July), a 6-page overview of the terminology (blue, green or grey hydrogen?), the production process, transportation and storage, and its many possible applications across industry, transportation, power and buildings sectors.

Alberta seems to be heeding the call: in September, the Alberta Industrial Heartland Hydrogen Task force released [Towards Net-Zero Energy Systems In Canada: A Key Role For Hydrogen](#), and on October 6, the Alberta government released its [Natural Gas Vision and Strategy](#), part of its Recovery Plan for petrochemicals, LNG production, plastics recycling, and hydrogen. Along with the [October 6 press release](#), the Plan states “... Alberta is already a leader in hydrogen production and has strong carbon capture and storage infrastructure in place. Combined with a number of projects being built across the province, Alberta has the potential to be a strong global competitor through the creation of a hydrogen economy.” The goals stated in the Plan: 1. “Large-scale hydrogen production with carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) and deployment in various commercial applications across the provincial economy by 2030; and 2. Exports of clean hydrogen and hydrogen-derived products to jurisdictions across Canada, North America, and globally are in place by 2040.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Clean Technology](#), [green hydrogen](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

LNG, fossil subsidies as issues in B.C. election on October 24

Posted on [October 20, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

British Columbia will vote on October 24, and climate and environmental issues are prominent in the Party Platforms of the ruling [New Democratic Party \(NDP\)](#), the [Green Party](#), and to a much lesser extent, the [Liberal Party](#), which lacks any specific emissions reductions targets, and endorses LNG development.

The NDP is running on its record and its 2018 CleanB.C. Plan; Sarah Cox wrote a detailed review in *The Narwhal* in September, “[So there’s going to be a fall election in B.C.: has the NDP kept its environmental promises?](#)”. A key NDP commitment is to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, but according to David Hughes at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (and many others), that won’t be possible with the current NDP policy to support the LNG industry – explained, for example, in [BC’s Carbon Conundrum Why LNG exports doom emissions-reduction targets and compromise Canada’s long-term energy security](#) (July). A related report, [Subsidizing Climate Change: how BC gives billions to corporate polluters](#) was published by Stand.earth in September, reporting that B.C. is second only to Alberta in subsidies to the oil and gas industry, at \$557 million in 2018 (the last year for which data is available). The Dogwood Institute also reports on this in “[Tax-payer funded climate change](#)” (Oct. 2) and “[BC NDP candidates quiet as oil and gas subsidies soar](#)” (Oct. 7). The NDP platform promises only “a comprehensive review of oil and natural gas royalty credits”. And on another hot-button issue, the Site C Dam – *The Narwhal* summarizes two critical reports that call for it to be scrapped in [an October 15 article](#), and even the right-wing C.D. Howe Institute published [Site C – the case is getting weaker](#).

For quick summaries and comparisons of all party platforms, see *The Tyee* “[Where they Stand: Climate Change](#)”, or an [Explainer](#) on climate and environmental issues in *The Narwhal* (October 19).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [LNG Jobs](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

European Journal of Industrial Relations Special Issue on Climate Change and Just Transition

Posted on [October 20, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

“Trade Unions, Climate Change and Just Transition” is the theme of the December 2020 special issue of the [European Journal of Industrial Relations \(Volume 26 #4\)](#). In the introduction, EJIR editor Guglielmo Meardi acknowledges the paucity of academic industrial relations research on the issues of climate change, and states: “This Special Issue, edited

with passion and experience by Linda Clarke and Carla Lipsig-Mummé, helps to fill the void. Its articles map the dilemmas of trade unions with regard to climate change and disentangle the issues raised by the idea of a Just Transition to a carbon-neutral economy. They show evidence of variation and influence in trade union actions on climate change and will certainly inspire more research on the complex problems they present.”

All article abstracts are available [here](#) ; access to the full articles is restricted to subscribers. The following list links to the authors' abstracts: “[Future conditional: From just transition to radical transformation?](#)” by Linda Clarke and Carla Lipsig-Mummé; “[Just Transition on the ground: Challenges and opportunities for social dialogue](#)”, by Béla Galgóczi; “[Trade union strategies on climate change mitigation: Between opposition, hedging and support](#)”, by Adrien Thomas and Nadja Doerflinger; “[Unions and the green transition in construction in Europe: Contrasting visions](#)”, by Linda Clarke and Melahat Sahin-Dikmen; “[Innovating for energy efficiency: Digital gamification in the European steel industry](#)”, by Dean Stroud, Claire Evans and Martin Weinl; and “[From Treadmill of Production to Just Transition and Beyond](#)” by Paolo Tomassetti.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change research](#), [Green Building](#), [industrial relations](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental justice in Canada: A labour union call to action, and evidence from the UN Special Rapporteur

Posted on [October 19, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

“[We will not rest, we will not stop: Building for better in a post-pandemic recovery](#)” appeared in the Labour Day issue of *Our Times* magazine, written by Yolanda McClean and Christopher Wilson, executive officers of the [Coalition of Black Trade Unionists \(CBTU\)](#). Set in the context of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, the article states: “The calls to intensify the struggle against Canada’s police violence, economic apartheid and environmental racism are resounding. ...Anti-Indigenous, anti-Black and systemic racism extend beyond our political structures to our education and healthcare systems, to our corporations, workplaces, communities and, yes, to our labour movement. (On this point, the authors refer to “[Dear White Sisters & Brothers](#),” an Open Letter by unionist Carol Wall which appeared in the Summer 2020 issue of *Our Times*).

Wilson and McClean call upon the labour movement, stating: “A labour vision for a post-pandemic recovery must confront structural racial inequalities and advocate for the inclusion of BIPOC communities — economically, politically and socially.” As positive examples, the article cites the Ontario Federation of Labour, which joined with the CBTU in a [joint statement](#) in July, stating: “As allies, we must act now and support the call to defund the police”. Wilson and McClean also highlight the CBTU’s “[Green Is Not White](#)” Environmental Racism research project, and its associated webinar “[What Can Unions Do to Stop Environmental Racism?](#)”, produced by the CBTU, the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance, and York University’s Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW).

[UN Special Rapporteur reviews toxic chemicals in Canada and concludes: Environmental injustice persists in Canada](#)

The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics, Mr. Baskut Tuncak, officially visited Canada in May/June 2019, and presented his resulting [Report](#) to the United Nations Human Rights Council in early September 2020. The report states clearly that “Environmental injustice persists in Canada. A significant proportion of the population in Canada experience racial discrimination, with Indigenous, and racialized people, the most widely considered to experience discriminatory treatment.” The report focused on the extractive industries (defined as “mining of metals and oil sands”) in Canada and abroad – noting that over 50% of the world’s multinational mining companies are based in Canada. The report also discusses oil and gas pipelines, and chemical industries (including pesticides in agriculture). After documenting many specific examples, the Rapporteur concludes with recommendations for legislative and regulatory changes.

Excerpted highlights from the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics :

“...Contamination from extractive industries, including the massive tailing ponds in Alberta, and the possibility of seeping into local water supplies, is of concern.

... despite compliance with the Fisheries Act, 76% of metal mines have confirmed effects on fish, fish habitat or both. Among these mines, 92% confirmed at least one effect of a magnitude that may be indicative of a higher risk to the environment.

....The health risks posed to Indigenous peoples by the multibillion-dollar oil sands industry are another example of concerns. Fort McMurray, Fort MacKay and Fort Chipewyan (Fort Chip) paint a disturbing picture of health impacts of the oil sands (i.e. tar sands) that were not properly investigated for years, despite increasing evidence of health impacts on local communities.

... the situation of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation in Sarnia is profoundly unsettling. Deeply connected with their land, residents on the reservation invaded by industry as far back as the 1940s are now surrounded on three sides by over 60 industrial facilities that create the physiological and mental stress among community members ...It is one of the most polluted places in Canada, dubbed “chemical valley.”

...Workers are unquestionably vulnerable regarding their unique and elevated risks to chemical exposures. In Canada, occupational diseases and disabilities due to such exposures pose a major challenge to fulfilment of workers’ rights. Recent estimates show over 2.9 million workers are exposed to carcinogens and other hazardous substances at work, which is a gross underestimation.. ”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Coalition of Black Trade Unionists](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [environmental racism](#), [First Nations](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [labour union policies](#), [mining industry](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Ontario Federation of Labour](#), [toxic chemicals](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Employment and Job loss experience of Canada’s oil and gas, coal workers

Posted on **October 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In September 2020, Canada’s oil and gas industry employed approximately 160,100 workers – a 0.9% increase from August 2020, but a 14% drop from September 2019. In that same one-year period, employment in the services sub-sector decreased by 29%; the pipelines sub-sector decreased by 30% and the exploration and production sub-sector increased by 3%. These statistics are based on Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey (LFS) data, made available on the [Employment and Labour Force Data Dashboard](#) provided by [PetroLMI](#), a labour market agency specializing in the oil and gas industry, jointly funded by government-industry. Their September 2020 blog is [here](#), summarizing the current trends ; an archive of PetroLMI reports re the trends and forecasts [is here](#) – most recently, [The LNG Opportunity in Canada: Employment Prospects and Requirements](#) (June 2020).

In addition to providing regular labour force data by industry, on September 22 Statistics Canada released two studies in its Economic Insights series: [How Do Workers Displaced from Energy producing Sectors Fare after Job Loss? Evidence from the Oil and Gas” Industry](#) and [How Do Workers Displaced from Energy producing Sectors Fare after Job Loss? Evidence from coal mining](#). Both studies use data, (including age), from Statistics Canada’s Longitudinal Worker File, covering the period 1995 to 2016, for workers permanently laid off from those industries..

Job loss experience for oil and gas workers

[How Do Workers Displaced from Energy producing Sectors Fare after Job Loss? Evidence from the Oil and Gas” Industry](#) reports that “job loss leads to substantial and persistent earnings declines”, although “three years or five years after being displaced, a significant fraction of workers displaced from this sector earn more than they did in the year prior to job loss.” Data show that re-employment has become progressively more difficult, and for workers laid-off in 2015 or 2016, less than two-thirds found paid employment in the following year, with most moving outside the oil and gas

industry – construction being the most common sector for re-employment. CBC produced a summary of the Statistics Canada report in [an article here](#), augmenting it with personal stories and commentary from economists.

Coal workers' job loss experience

Similar analysis (the reports are authored by the same Statistics Canada economists) appears in [How Do Workers Displaced from Energy producing Sectors Fare after Job Loss? Evidence from coal mining](#). Contrary to the trend for oil and gas workers, finding employment within a year of lay-off became easier for coal workers more recently: 67% for workers laid-off in 1995 compared to 89% for those laid-off in 2005. However, regarding earnings loss, the report compares coal data with all industries, and states: “These numbers imply that about half of workers laid-off from coal mining and from other industries during the 2004-to-2011 period saw their annual wages and salaries drop by at least 30% in the short term. Since coal miners are paid higher-than-average wages the median declines in annual wages and salaries of coal miners displaced from 2004 to 2011 amounted to roughly \$14,800 (in 2016 dollars) in the short term, more than twice the median declines (of about \$6,100) experienced by other laid-off workers.” Conclusions are similar to those in the report on oil and gas workers: a transition to “green jobs” has not materialized, and “for many coal miners and other workers, job loss leads to substantial and persistent earnings declines”, but, “the financial consequences of job loss are not uniform for all displaced workers. Three years after job loss or five years after job loss, a significant fraction of displaced workers earn more than they did in the year prior to job loss.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Coal Industry](#), [coal phase-out](#), [Job displacement](#), [layoffs](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [unemployment](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Saskatchewan respondents rank comparable salary and preserving home equity as most important factors in a Just Transition

Posted on [October 16, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A [provincial election campaign](#) is underway in Saskatchewan – a province with a strong oil and gas production industry, and where 72% of electricity comes from coal and gas. Although the conservative-leaning [Saskatchewan Party](#) led by Scott Moe is favoured to win the election on October 26th, a new report published by the Saskatchewan Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis on October 14 reveals that there is strong concern about climate change, and surprising support for a shift to renewable energy in the province. [Transition Time? Energy Attitudes in Southern Saskatchewan](#) was written by professors from University of Toronto, in collaboration with Emily Eaton, Associate Professor at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan. It reviews the energy politics of the province briefly, and reports the responses of over 500 residents to a survey of five broad issues: climate change, transition, regional differences, energy production, and SaskPower.

While over 40% of respondents were worried about climate change, 50% disagreed that “it is necessary for Canada to phase out oil and gas production as our contribution to mitigating climate change”. 65% of respondents agreed that “Canada can continue to develop fossil fuels such as oil sands in Alberta and still meet its climate commitments” (only 18% disagreed). Regarding carbon pricing, 47% strongly disagreed that Saskatchewan needs a price on carbon emissions. (Saskatchewan is one of the provinces currently [fighting the federal carbon tax](#) in the Supreme Court).

Yet in a contradictory way, 60% of respondents supported a phase out of oil, gas and coal production in Saskatchewan – with 23% favouring a 10-year timetable for such a phase out. Even in oil-producing areas, half of the population agreed with phasing out fossil fuels, and 30% within 10 years or less. Respondents rated comparable salary and benefits, and maintaining equity in house/property values as the most important considerations in a Just Transition- more important than support and training to transition to new roles, and employment opportunities in your current community. Saskatchewan was one of the provinces visited by the federal Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities, and the views of Saskatchewan citizens were reported in the Task Force's 2019 report, [What we Heard](#).

The discussion which concludes the paper states that “it is clear that there is an urgent need for honest climate change leadership in the province. The fossil fuel industries have attempted to obstruct a transition to zero-carbon economies by suggesting that climate change can be tackled while continuing to produce fossil fuels, a belief widely held in Saskatchewan and propagated by both the government and the official opposition.”

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Updating carbon pricing in Canada: PBO Report , Supreme Court case, and provincial opt-outs

Posted on **October 16, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 8, the Office of Canada’s Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released its latest report on carbon pricing, ***Carbon pricing for the Paris target: Closing the gap with output-based pricing*** . The report concludes that the government’s existing and announced policies and measures – including a carbon tax which rises to \$50 per tonne in 2022 and an **Output-Based Pricing System (OBPS)** will not be sufficient to allow Canada to meet its emissions target under the Paris Agreement – 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. The PBO models three complex scenarios to estimate that the level of the carbon price necessary to achieve the Paris target ranges from \$67 per tonne to between \$81 and \$239 per tonne.

A **critique by Clean Prosperity** , a Toronto NGO focused on carbon tax research and education, finds two of the PBO scenarios “unrealistic” and calls for a fourth approach, which transitions the industrial output-based pricing system to economy-wide pricing plus a border carbon adjustment. Clean Prosperity concludes: “The bottom line is that carbon pricing works and should continue to increase after 2022 at roughly the same level as today in order to help us meet our Paris targets.” Clean Prosperity promises to release its own modelling of such an approach “in the near future”.

The report was released while a constitutional challenge to the federal carbon pricing system is **still before the Supreme Court**, and does not reflect the September 20 **announcement** that “The Government of Canada will stand down the federal carbon pricing system for industry in Ontario and New Brunswick as of a date in the future.” (that date and formal change to the systems to be determined in consultation with each province.)

Smart Prosperity (a University of Ottawa research centre) posted a **blog** and a report ***Ontario’s Options: Evaluating How Provincial Carbon Pricing Revenues Can Improve Affordability*** on October 8 . Smart Prosperity has published a number of relevant working papers, including : ***Environmental Taxes and Productivity: Lessons from Canadian Manufacturing*** (April 2020); ***Border Carbon Adjustments in Support of Domestic Climate Policies: Explaining the Gap Between Theory and Practice*** (Oct. 2019) and ***Do Carbon Taxes Kill Jobs? Firm-Level Evidence from British Columbia*** in March 2019. Canada’s Ecofiscal Commission also researched and published numerous reports (**archived here**) before it closed its doors in November 2019.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [output based pricing](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Covid recovery clouds World Energy Outlook, but IEA calls for unprecedented changes to avoid lock-in to 1.65 degree temperatures

Posted on **October 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The IEA [World Energy Outlook 2020](#), the flagship publication of the International Energy Agency, was released on October 12, stating, “The Covid-19 pandemic has caused more disruption to the energy sector than any other event in recent history, leaving impacts that will be felt for years to come.” The report is a comprehensive discussion and analysis of those impacts, and attempts to model the crucial next 10 years of recovery. Modelling is provided for all energy sources – fossil fuels, renewables, nuclear – under four different scenarios, including a longer-than-expected Covid recovery and a **Sustainable Development Scenario**. Key highlights:

Solar is “king”: In 2020, global energy demand is forecast to fall by 5% overall: 8% in oil, 7% in coal and 3% in natural gas demand. Under the heading “Solar becomes the new King of electricity”, the report states: “Renewables grow rapidly in all our scenarios, with solar at the centre of this new constellation of electricity generation technologies. Supportive policies and maturing technologies are enabling very cheap access to capital in leading markets. With sharp cost reductions over the past decade, solar PV is consistently cheaper than new coal- or gasfired power plants in most countries, and solar projects now offer some of the lowest cost electricity ever seen.”

Questionable future for new Liquefied Natural Gas projects: For natural gas, “different policy contexts produce strong variations”. For the first time, the business as usual scenario for advanced economies shows a slight decline in gas demand by 2040. And “An uncertain economic recovery also raises questions about the future prospects of the record amount of new liquefied natural gas export facilities approved in 2019.” In certain scenarios, “the challenge for the gas industry is to retool itself for a different energy future. This can come via demonstrable progress with methane abatement, via alternative gases such as biomethane and low-carbon hydrogen, and technologies like carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS).”

Peak oil within sight despite growing importance of plastics manufacturing: The era of growth in global oil demand comes to an end within ten years, but the shape of the economic recovery is a key uncertainty. The report notes “The longer the (Covid) disruption, the more some changes that eat into oil consumption become engrained, such as working from home or avoiding air travel. However, not all the shifts in consumer behaviour disadvantage oil. It benefits from a near-term aversion to public transport, the continued popularity of SUVs and the delayed replacement of older, inefficient vehicles.” The analysis also considers the impact of plastics manufacturing on oil demand.

Inequities will persist or be made worse. “Reversing several years of progress, our analysis shows that the number of people without access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa is set to rise in 2020. Around 580 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lacked access to electricity in 2019....and in addition, “a rise in poverty levels worldwide in 2020 may have made basic electricity services unaffordable for more than 100 million people who already had electricity connections”.

Structural change, not Covid, will bring lasting CO2 emissions decline: The economic downturn related to Covid has brought a temporary decline of 2.4 gigatonnes in annual CO2 emissions, although an accompanying decline in methane emissions is not clear. And emissions are expected to rebound. “The pandemic and its aftermath can suppress emissions, but low economic growth is not a low-emissions strategy. Only an acceleration in structural changes to the way the world produces and consumes energy can break the emissions trend for good.”.... “if today’s energy infrastructure continues to operate as it has in the past, it would lock in by itself a temperature rise of 1.65 °C.”

Finally, the report concludes by advocating a future path built on its **Sustainable Development Scenario**, calling for “unprecedented” actions, not just from government and business, but from individuals.

“Reaching net zero globally by 2050.... would demand a set of dramatic additional actions over the next ten years. Bringing about a 40% reduction in emissions by 2030 requires, for example, that low-emissions sources provide nearly 75% of global electricity generation in 2030 (up from less than 40% in 2019), and that more than 50% of passenger cars sold worldwide in 2030 are electric (from 2.5% in 2019). Electrification, massive efficiency gains and behavioural changes all play roles, as does accelerated innovation across a wide range of technologies from hydrogen electrolyzers to small modular nuclear reactors. No part of the energy economy can lag behind, as it is unlikely that any other part would be able to move at an even faster rate to make up the difference.

To reach net-zero emissions, governments, energy companies, investors and citizens all need to be on board – and will all have unprecedented contributions to make. The changes that deliver the emissions reduction in the SDS are far greater

than many realise and need to happen at a time when the world is trying to recover from Covid-19.”

The full *World Energy Outlook 2020* is only available for purchase. An overview, FAQ's, and related reports including modelling details and a methane tracker are all available [here](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [energy future](#), [energy industry](#), [Energy Infrastructure](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

\$320 million federal aid to Newfoundland oil and gas industry, yet layoffs continue

Posted on **October 8, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 8, both Suncor and Husky Energy **announced new layoffs** in their Newfoundland oil and gas operations. A week earlier, there was an **announcement by Irving Oil** that it would not proceed with the purchase of the Come By Chance oil refinery -yet another blow to the floundering Newfoundland industry. **“Here’s what could happen if the Come By Chance refinery shuts its doors”** (CBC, Oct 8) estimates potential job losses of 1,400 jobs when spin-off impacts are considered, if the plant is closed. TradesNL, an umbrella organization of 16 building and construction trades unions in the province, which **released this reaction** to the news.

Unifor has been **lobbying for government aid** for months – and on September 16, the union organized a **public rally** calling for government support. On September 25, the federal minister of Natural Resources answered the calls for help by announcing a \$320 million aid package, to be targeted at safety, maintenance and upgrades, and at stimulating employment. In a **press release**, Unifor states: “Unifor expects to see some of the funding be directed at long-overdue maintenance onboard the Terra Nova and Hibernia offshore facilities where 750 members of Unifor Local 2121 work.” The decisions on how the \$320 million will be spent will be guided by a **new Oil and Gas Industry Recovery Task Force**, appointed by the provincial government on September 25 to “focus on immediate actions required to sustain the offshore industry in Newfoundland and Labrador and provide suggestions for how best to utilize the \$320 million in funding from the Federal Government to maximize value for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.” To date, only the two co-Chairs have been appointed.

On September 24, the provincial government **also announced** “the establishment of a new offshore exploration initiative to provide companies with the incentive to drill more wells in the best prospects. This is a policy measure that will allow all future bid deposit forfeitures to be reinvested as received, resulting in an injection of hundreds of millions of dollars in support of growth in our offshore petroleum industry. “ The press release was accompanied by this statement from Siobhan Coady, Minister of Finance:

“The value of the oil and gas industry to our province cannot be overstated, nor can it be replaced by any other sector in our economy. Upwards to 30 per cent of our GDP, 13 per cent of our labour compensation and 10 per cent of all employment is attributed to this industry. We will support this industry in any way that we can, because it supports our province.”

The ends to which the government and industry are prepared to go are hinted at in a recent blog by WWF on October 1: ***Canada Provides Funding for Oil And Gas Development In Newfoundland and Labrador amidst Federal Scientists’ Critique of Flawed Environmental Assessment.***

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Newfoundland and Labrador](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Investment Bank announces \$10 Billion plan for green infrastructure

Posted on **October 8, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The federal government's **Throne Speech** on September 23 set out priorities for economic recovery, with environmentalists and **labour commentators generally supportive**, on the condition that actual programs are launched and funded. The first step in that journey occurred on October 1, with a **press release from the Prime Minister's Office** and another **from the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB)**, announcing its Growth Plan, which will invest \$10 billion to build new green infrastructure over the next 3 years. Project investments will begin this year, focus on these five priority areas:

Clean power to support renewable generation and storage, and to transmit clean electricity between provinces, territories, and regions, including to northern and Indigenous communities. (\$2.5 billion)

Internet connectivity improvement for approximately 750,000 homes and small businesses in underserved communities(\$2 billion)

Large-scale building retrofits to increase energy efficiency (\$2 billion)

Agriculture irrigation projects to strengthen productivity (\$1.5 billion)

Accelerating the adoption of zero-emission buses and charging infrastructure (\$1.5 billion)

Slightly fuller descriptions are provided for each initiative in a **Backgrounder** from the Bank.

An **article** in *The Energy Mix* summarizes generally favourable reaction from environmental leaders, and a Climate Action Network CAN-Rac **statement** states: "There is still a long road ahead of us, with much more work to be done – we trust that this is only the first of many such announcements." Labour leaders are less enthusiastic because of the CIB public-private investment structure. The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) responded on October 2 with "**Privatization won't build sustainable infrastructure**", which opposes privatization, and calls for a recovery which invests in publicly-owned infrastructure, and which prioritizes social infrastructure in areas such as child care, long-term care and social housing.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Green Infrastructure, Green Investment** | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy efficiency policies could create 1.3 million job years in the U.S.; jobs require skills standards

Posted on **October 7, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) released three reports in September. **Growing a Greener Economy: Job and Climate Impacts from Energy Efficiency Investments** considers policy proposals for investments in homes and commercial buildings, electric vehicles (EVs), transportation infrastructure, manufacturing plants, small businesses, states, and cities. Those investments are projected to achieve 660,000 added job-years in the U.S. until 2023, and 1.3 million added job-years over the lifetime of the investments and savings. In addition, the proposed programs would result in 910 million tons of lifetime reduced carbon dioxide emissions and \$120 billion in lifetime energy bill savings for consumers. A 3-page **Fact Sheet** summarizes findings.

A second ACEEE report released in September identifies the skills required to ensure a workforce prepared to build and maintain highly energy efficient buildings. ***Training the Workforce for High-Performance Buildings: Enhancing Skills for Operations and Maintenance*** is summarized [in this blog](#) . The report includes a literature review and responses to a survey of 111 building owners/managers, operators, tradespeople, technicians, and service providers. 92% of survey respondents ranked operations and maintenance (O&M) skills as most critical. The report provides an insight into the job duties and tasks, as well as an overview of the state of education and training in the U.S., and case studies of exemplary training programs . The main recommendation: utilities, program administrators, and policymakers should establish skill and credentialing standards . ***Training the Workforce for High-Performance Buildings: Enhancing Skills for Operations and Maintenance*** is available [from this link](#) (registration required).

Finally, ***Programs to Promote Zero-Energy New Homes and Buildings*** identifies and analyzes twenty programs in British Columbia, Washington, D.C., and 12 other U.S. states. British Columbia's Zero Energy Challenge is briefly highlighted- an incentive program and juried design competition for buildings built to the highest standard of the B.C. Building **Energy Step Code** . (Much more detail is available at the **Net-Zero Ready Energy Challenge website** and the **BC Energy Step Code website**, which includes case studies). The ACEEE report highlights as "particularly notable" the Energy Trust of Oregon commercial program, NYSEDA multifamily and commercial programs, and Efficiency Vermont programs addressing single-family housing, multifamily housing, modular housing, and commercial buildings.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BC Step Code](#), [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Green skills training](#), [Skilled Workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Working from home: health and safety concerns but no clear environmental benefit

Posted on **October 7, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Working from home has become a necessity for many during the pandemic, and the popular press has documented many examples of the trend – recently, for example ***“Twitter’s plans to work from home indefinitely have prompted a wave of copycats.”*** (Washington Post , October 1) . It is a complex issue which raises questions about the climate change potential of a permanent shift in working arrangements for knowledge workers, as well as the equity impacts and the health and safety impacts .

Researchers study the complexities and trade-offs, find little improvement in GHG’s

An October article by engineering professors O’Brien and Yazdani Aliabadi of Carleton University in Ottawa updates the state of research about: ***“Does telecommuting save energy? A critical review of quantitative studies and their research methods”*** (published in *Energy and Buildings* in October) .The authors consider the complexity of simultaneous analysis of “home office energy use, the Internet, long-term consumer choices, and other so-called rebound effects” on GHG emissions. They conclude that: “current datasets and methods are generally inadequate for fully answering the research question. While most studies indicate some benefit, several suggest teleworking increases energy use – even for the domain that is thought to benefit most: transportation.” The authors point to the need for future research which considers the impact of energy-saving trends already under way, including urban design, building energy efficiency, and electric vehicles for community.

Unions see workplace impacts, including lack of health and safety protections

In July, Canada’s National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) published ***Working from Home: Considerations for Unions***, a 23-page overview to make unions aware of the important issues, including climate change

impacts: using these headings: Use of technology ; Impacts on productivity ; Work-life balance ; Accessibility and equity ; Cost savings ; Environmental impact ; Health and safety ; Worker and community solidarity. The report, which uses the acronym “WFH” throughout, includes a useful bibliography of Canadian-focused articles. In October, NUPGE followed up with a detailed report, [Workers’ Health and Safety Protections and Working from Home](#), which “considers how OHS and Workers’ Compensation (WC) laws apply to WFH and identifies potential legal gaps. By surveying Canadian legislation, case law, government guidelines, and analogous examples, this paper seeks to help workers and unions identify potential areas of concern for workers’ health and safety protection in WFH arrangements.” It highlights the situation in Ontario, where section 3(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) specifically excludes telework, and contrasts Ontario with British Columbia, which offers more protection in its Workers’ Compensation Act by defining “workplace” broadly, as “any place where a worker is or is likely to be engaged in any work and include[s] any vessel, vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in work.” NUPGE’s report also includes a thorough bibliography, and concludes by referring to the recommendations of the [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety online Fact Sheet](#), which recommends “the employer and the teleworker should have a written agreement to avoid complications, to ensure that both parties know who is responsible for what, and to ensure that the worker’s health and safety protections are not reduced.”

Another union-led discussion of this issue appeared on October 1, when the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) published a [Legal Guide to Telework](#) which briefly outlines the threats, and states: “To guarantee that such arrangements reconcile the need for flexibility (for both workers and employers) and safeguarding of labour rights and protections, the introduction and implementation of teleworking arrangements should be accompanied by key principles outlined in this discussion guide.” Regulation and collective bargaining protections are seen as key. Specifically, the Guide calls for voluntary arrangements for employees, with an option of a physical space for workers who prefer it; regulation of working hours and the “right to disconnect” (already legislated in France and Italy) ; work equipment and costs should be the responsibility of the employer; safeguards for worker privacy; and respect for the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining for teleworkers.

Related articles: *Work and Climate Change Report* previously reported on articles related to the workers’ perspective in [“Canadians report mixed feelings about working from home – but is it good for the environment? for workers?”](#) . Tanguay and Lachapelle from Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) provide the Canadian context using data from the 2017 Statistics Canada General Social Survey in [“Remote work worsens inequality by mostly helping high-income earners”](#) (*The Conversation*, May 10), and a U.S. update appears in [“Telework mostly benefits white, affluent Americans – and offers few climate benefits”](#) (*The Conversation*, July 2020) . In [“Working from Home: Post-Coronavirus Will Give Bosses Greater Control of Workers’ Lives”](#) (*Jacobin*, June 4) author Luke Savage cites examples of Canadian workplace policies from the Bank of Montreal and Shopify, and sums up the dangers of a permanent shift to working from home: “With every home an office and every office a home, the residual boundaries between work and private life will be gone for good. Still worse, the whole or even partial demise of the physical office space could become a catalyst for a deeper precarization of work wherein many workers are effectively remote contractors, their homes operating like quasi-franchises over which employers can exercise discretionary control with minimal restriction.... Socialists have long argued that bosses and markets exert far too much power and control over our time, our private lives, and our individual autonomy. Unless we resist the burgeoning shift to remote work, both are about to devour an even bigger share of all three.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [commuting](#), [Covid 19](#), [knowledge workers](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [office workers](#), [telecommuting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Annual review of Jobs in Renewable Energy, with gender analysis

Posted on [October 2, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 2020 Annual Review of [Renewable Energy and Jobs](#) was released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) on September 20 , showing a total of 11.5 million jobs globally in renewable energy in 2019 – led by 3.8 million jobs in the Solar photovoltaics (PV) sector, (a third of all renewable jobs) and 1.2 million in wind power. Asia accounted for

63% of total jobs in renewables, and China alone accounted for 38%. The report provides statistics regarding the subsectors, country case studies and geographic analysis, gender analysis, and growth trends. In addition, this year's review includes a special feature highlighting the importance of education and training policies to avoid skills shortages as renewable energy continues to expand. IRENA's [press release](#) summarizes the highlights.

The 2020 Annual Review continues the gender analysis begun with their 2019 publication, [Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective](#). The 2020 Review repeats the gender balance comparison between renewables and the fossil fuel industry, as first reported in the 2019 report: 32% of renewables jobs held by women, as compared to 22% in fossil fuels.

Related reports include [Wind Energy: A Gender Perspective](#) (2020) by IRENA, and the [Status Report on Gender Equality in the Energy Sector](#), published in September by the International Energy Agency (IEA) and C3E. The report summarizes statistics on women in management, women on Boards of Directors, and women in STEM, covering a full range of energy companies, such as Exxon, Shell, and Encana as well as Canadian Solar, Eskom, and Vattenfall. C3E is an abbreviation for "Clean Energy, Education and Empowerment" and is part of the [Equal by 30](#) campaign, launched in 2018 at the 9th Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) in Copenhagen. Members include Canada, Italy, Sweden, Finland, UK, USA, Japan, Germany, France, and more than 80 energy companies.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Gender Equality](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Just Transition Task Force as a model for energy and climate policy discussion

Posted on **October 1, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Positive Energy](#) research program at the University of Ottawa released two new reports in September. First, [Addressing Polarization: What Works? A Case Study of Canada's Just Transition Task Force](#), written by Brendan Frank with Sébastien Girard Lindsay. According to the



authors (p.26): "The primary aim of this case study was to identify specific attributes and processes of the Just Transition Task Force potentially conducive to depolarization over energy and climate issues in Canada To do so, we assessed whether the Task Force's consultation process aligned with principles of procedural justice—consistency, neutrality, accuracy of information, correctability, representativeness and ethical commitment." Unlike many other studies, this analysis took labour union views into consideration, insofar as it included a review of ENGO and labour organizations' responses to Task Force activities.

The authors conclude:

"Several elements of the Task Force's approach are worth building on and studying further to reduce the risk of polarized opinion over energy and climate issues in Canada. Specifically, this research suggests that anyone designing or leading similar task force processes should pursue opportunities to go beyond the technocratic dimensions of the policy problem, engage with stakeholders in both formal and informal settings, ensure that the composition of the task force is geographically and vocationally reflective of the groups it is consulting, and, crucially, avoid any perceptions of

partisanship or politicization. Lastly, given the complexity of Canada's climate and energy files, it is important to consider the timing of the consultations and situate any policy problem a task force is commissioned to address within the broader policy, political and economic context.”

A **two-page Brief** summarizes the findings and implications for decisionmakers. The authors also wrote “**Canada's Just Transition Task Force can offer lessons for a green recovery**” (*The National Observer*, Sept.18), which emphasizes “Most important were the neutral, non-partisan approach and the demonstration of ethical commitment of Task Force members, aided by a dynamic, iterative approach to consultations that took regional realities into consideration.”

Public Opinion on Oil and Gas and the Retraining of oil and gas workers

A survey was conducted as part of the Positive Energy research in Fall 2019, measuring public opinion on the present and future of the oil and gas industry in Canada, the role of federal and provincial governments, and issues related to transition. The authors summarized the findings in “**What Canadians think about the future of oil and gas**” in *Policy Options* (September 17), and in a 4-page Brief titled ***Polarization over Energy and Climate in Canada: Oil and Gas – Understanding Public Opinion***. Some highlights: there is overwhelming agreement amongst Canadians that oil and gas is important to the current economy, regardless of party affiliation, ideology, region, gender or age. Agreement regarding the future importance of the industry diminishes according to the age of the respondent. When asked if phasing out oil and gas is necessary and whether a phase-out is unfair to people in producing provinces, opinion is fragmented overall and polarized along partisan and ideological lines (but not along regional, age or gender lines). **Overall, there is strong agreement (70%) with the statement: “Canada needs to invest tax dollars into retraining workers as the country addresses climate change.** Positive Energy has conducted surveys of public opinion since 2015, **compiled here** . “**On Energy and climate we're actually not so polarized**” appeared in *Policy Options* in January 2020, reporting on attitudes to carbon tax and pipeline construction, among other topics.

The Positive Energy project at the University of Ottawa is now in its second phase, and has published a number of studies previously, including these, which flew under the radar when released in the early days of the pandemic. ***Addressing Polarization: What Works? The Alberta Climate Leadership Plan*** (March 2020) finds that while the Climate Leadership Plan was polarizing within Alberta, “it opened a policy window across the country. Many of Canada's subsequent energy and climate policies would not have been possible without it.” The authors conclude that the Climate Leadership Plan was a success in terms of agenda setting and policy development, but a failure of implementation and communication.

What is Transition: The Two Realities of Energy and Environmental Leaders in Canada (March 2020), summarized in “**Can Language drive polarization in the fight against climate change?**” in *The Hill Times* (April 2020) . Of this study, it is worth pointing out that the 40 energy and environmental leaders interviewed about their use and interpretation of the term “transition” did not include any labour leaders. (“interviewees were drawn from the energy and environmental communities, including from industry, policy, regulatory, non-government, research and Indigenous organizations”).



The **Positive Energy website** provides access to their publications since 2015.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta Climate Leadership Plan, Canadian Climate Policy, Just Transition, Just Transition Task Force, provincial climate policies, public opinion** | [Leave a reply](#)

North Sea offshore oil workers rank job security as most important factor in a Just Transition

Posted on **October 1, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Three environmental groups in the U.K. have released a new report on September 29: ***Offshore: Oil and gas workers' views on industry conditions and the energy transition***. The report summarizes the views of 1,383 workers in the North Sea oil and gas industry (representing 4.5% of the workforce), as provided in a survey conducted in the summer of 2020 by [Friends of the Earth Scotland](#), [Greenpeace UK](#), and the less well-known, London-based [Platform](#). In addition to the worker's responses, the report summarizes the economic and working conditions of North Sea offshore oil and gas workers, includes case studies of the personal experiences of eight workers, and makes recommendations for government action. In the final call to action, the three environmental groups invite energy workers, unions, and others to participate in a planned consultation process across the UK, with workshops where energy workers can draft policy demands for a transition that works for them.

Almost 35% of respondents identified themselves as union members, – the two largest unions being [RMT-OILC](#) (52.5%) and [Unite](#) (36%). In response to the report, RMT issued [this press release](#), which states: "The skills and expertise of offshore oil and gas workers are key to a Just Transition.... To hear this strong, pro-worker, pro-trade union message from influential environmental groups is a significant moment in the debate which operators, contractors and Governments must listen to and act on. We applaud Platform, FoE Scotland and Greenpeace for taking this initiative and RMT will continue to work with them and like-minded NGOs in the fight for action to protect offshore jobs and skills from an unjust transition."

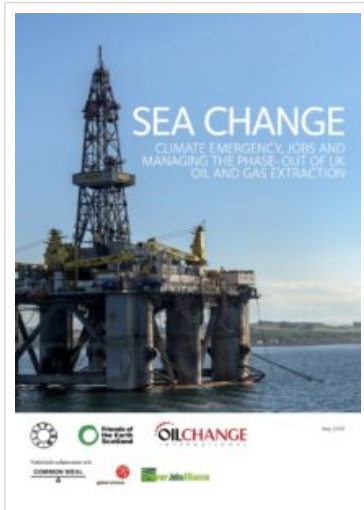
Workers reveal an appetite for change, fueled by a desire for more job security

Selected survey results show:

- 42.8% of oil and gas workers have been made redundant or furloughed since March 2020;
- Satisfaction with health and safety standards was most commonly rated 3/5;
- 81.7% said they would consider moving to a job outside of the oil and gas industry- only 7% said they would not.
- The most important consideration for those willing to transition outside the oil and gas industry was job security (58%). Second most important, at 21%, was pay level.
- When asked what part of the energy sector they would be willing to retrain for and move to, 53% chose Offshore wind 53%; 51% Renewables ; 38% Rig decommissioning ; 26% Carbon capture and storage . 20% would also consider moving outside the energy sector.

Based on these responses, the report makes recommendations for three key areas of action: 1. Consultation with workers: "a representative section of the workforce should be involved in participatory policy-making, where workers are able to help determine policy, in addition to engagement with trade unions"; 2. Immediate government intervention and regulation to

“improve job security and working conditions for workers in the oil and gas sector, to boost morale, improve quality of life, and mitigate the risk of workers leaving the energy sector altogether”; and 3. “Address barriers to entry and conditions within the renewables industry, including creating sufficient job opportunities.”



Platform is a U.K.-based environmental and social justice collective with campaigns focused on the global oil industry, fossil fuel finance and climate justice and energy democracy. Readers may remember that Platform partnered with Friends of the Earth Scotland and Oil Change International, to publish ***Sea Change: Climate Emergency, Jobs and Managing the Phase-Out of UK Oil and Gas Extraction***, released on May 2019 and highlighted by WCR [here](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [attitudes of workers](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [North Sea](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Scotland](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Pension Plan continues to risk Canadians’ retirement savings – this time, fracking investments in Colorado

Posted on [September 30, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board continues to display a hypocritical disregard for its own **sustainability principles**, as reported in **“CPPIB’s fracking operation in U.S. raises questions”** in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* on September 27. The *Globe and Mail* describes the fracking activities and political donations of Crestone Peak Resources, a company 95% owned by the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, and formed out of the ashes of Encana. The article reports that Crestone spent more than US\$600,000 to support pro-business candidates who opposed tougher regulation of fracking in the 2018 Colorado state elections. Friends of the Earth Canada were involved in the *Globe and Mail* investigation and has posted **unique information here**.

The Energy Mix also published **“Canadians Don’t Want This: Fracking Company Owned By Canada Pension Plan Spent \$600,000 To Influence Colorado State Elections”** (September 30). The article quotes Professor Cynthia Williams, Osler Chair in Business Law at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, who states: “It’s a “perfectly correct statement of corporate law” to say that CPP and Crestone are separate companies”, But it’s “an imperfectly correct answer to the ethical questions about CPPIB using its heft, based on the involuntary monetary contributions of millions of citizens and other people working in Canada, to try to shape politics to support its oil and gas investments, in Colorado, even as the Government of Canada has committed to working to transition to a low-carbon economy.”



Professor Williams is the author of *Troubling Incrementalism: Canadian Pension Plan Fund and the Transition to a Low-carbon Economy*, published in September by the [Canada Climate Law Initiative](#). The report discusses CPPIB investments in fossil fuels in the last six years in detail, including fracking companies in Ohio and the Crestone company in Colorado, as well as oil sands expansion in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The report concludes by calling on CPP Investments to fundamentally re-evaluate its role, stating:

“Our view is that CPP Investments should be, and could be, making a substantial contribution to Canada’s future economy by supporting new technologies, new companies, and the just transition to a low-carbon economy. We argue that doing so would be more consistent with its statutory mandate to manage the assets of the CPP Fund in the best interests of the twenty million Canadian contributors and beneficiaries than is its current approach. It would also be more consistent with its common-law fiduciary duties, which require intergenerational equity.”

What can Canadians do to move their pension funds away from fossil fuels?

[Friends of the Earth Canada](#) offers an [online letter](#) to Heather Munroe-Blum (Chair, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board) and Mark Machin (CEO), with five recommendations arising from the Crestone investigation. FOE is also conducting open [informational meetings about the CPP investments](#) throughout Canada in October.

[Shift Action](#) is a project of Tides Canada which advocates for environmentally-responsible pension management. Their [press release](#) (Sept. 29) cites the Crestone investment, highlights the [nearly \\$12 billion](#) invested in Chinese coal mines and other fossil fuel companies (double its clean energy investments), and warns: “The CPP is betting Canadian retirement savings against the unstoppable transition to a clean energy economy, and fueling the global climate crisis in the process.” In [an interview](#) published in *The Energy Mix*, Shift Action’s Executive Director, Adam Scott urges Canadians: “One of the best ways to have an impact in this crisis is to make sure the funds that are invested on your behalf are invested in solutions to climate change, not in the problem. There’s a [tool on our website](#) that makes it easy for all Canadians to send a note to their pension funds asking what they’re doing on climate risk and how they’re investing.” Shift Action published a detailed guide to engagement in June 2019, [Canada’s Pension Funds and Climate Risk: A Baseline For Engagement](#). It concludes with tips which include: “Each of Canada’s major pension plans has a different structure for governance and accountability. Beneficiaries should understand this structure and have a clear sense of their pension plan’s sponsors and governance model. Beneficiaries should engage with all relevant points of contact, for example a union pension representative or a government appointed pension trustee.”

And finally, for pension fund trustees, the [Canada Climate Law Initiative](#) flagship initiative is the [Canadian Climate Governance Experts](#) program, which offers “pro bono sessions on effective corporate governance to address climate-related financial risks and opportunities to corporate boards of directors and Canadian pension fund boards.”

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“Historic” investments in electric vehicles for Canada: Unifor and Ford, Fiat Chrysler

agreements (updated)

Posted on **September 28, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a September 28 [press release](#), the Canadian union for auto workers, Unifor, reports that members at the Ford Motor Company voted 81% overall in favour of new three year collective agreements “that include \$1.95 billion in investments to bring battery electric vehicle (BEV) production to Oakville and a new engine derivative to Windsor, along with other significant gains.... . This agreement is perfect timing and positions our members at the forefront of the electric vehicle transformation, as the Oakville plant will be a key BEV supplier to the North American and European Union markets”. Under the heading, “Making History in Challenging Times”, the [Ford Bargaining Report Summary](#) reports that the retooling is scheduled to begin in 2024, with the first BEV vehicles forecasted to roll off the assembly line in 2026, “and hopefully sooner.” Also, “Through this conversion, Oakville will become the first mass production BEV plant in Canada – and one of only a few currently in North America. Ford’s investment is also the biggest single facility investment in the auto sector since 2015 in Canada.”

The [Bargaining Summary](#) highlights changes in wages, pensions, and all topics, including that the company and union agreed on the advantages of having a union Workplace Environmental Representative, and that additional training will be offered to the workplace environmental representatives “related to Global Plant Action”. Unifor and Ford also agreed to develop an Anti-Racism Action Plan, and to establish a new Racial Justice Advocate position which will offer support to those who face anti-Black and anti-Indigenous discrimination.

Media coverage of the agreement appeared in the *Toronto Star* on **September 20**, pointing out that the federal and provincial governments will also contribute to the re-tooling of the Oakville plant. On September 22, the Star also published “[Justin Trudeau’s Liberals are betting that electric vehicles can recharge the economy. But a vision is not a plan](#)”, summarizing some of the policy context of the decisions. And beyond the benefit to the auto manufacturing sector, on September 17, Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources was making the case that “[Mining gives Canada a competitive advantage in electric vehicle market](#)” arguing that “we are the only nation in the western hemisphere with an abundance of cobalt, graphite, lithium and nickel, the minerals needed to make next-generation electric batteries.”

\$1.5 billion investment for EV production in Fiat Chrysler agreement

Following the agreement with Ford Canada, Unifor announced the ratification of 3-year contract with Fiat Chrysler (October 19 [press release](#)), including a \$1.5 billion commitment to electric vehicle production at the Windsor Ontario plant. Jerry Dias states: “This year’s Auto Talks will go down in history as a transformational moment for the Canadian auto sector. Years of government neglect, job loss and worker despair is quickly turning to optimism, hope and a very bright future.” He repeated this message in an October 20 OpEd in the *Toronto Star* “[A new green auto strategy for Canada](#)”

The [Unifor summary document](#) includes all the agreement provisions, and includes the full text of the Product and Investment Commitment Letter, describing the plans for Windsor:

“In addition to the continued production of the current Pacifica and Voyager/Grand Caravan products, including the PHEV, AWD and ICE models, FCA confirms the intention to install a new multi-energy vehicle architecture (including Plug-In Hybrid Electric (PHEV) and/or Battery Electric (BEV) capability) and at least one new model on that architecture, contingent on the necessary agreements in partnership with the Company, the Union, and both Federal and Provincial governments which includes the implementation of this collective agreement and government financial support for the associated investments. With that joint commitment, the Company’s intention is to add the necessary assembly tooling and equipment to manufacture electrified vehicles for future models, currently planned from the 2025 model year. The total impact of this investment and product plan is estimated at 5,700 secured or new jobs by 2024 returning to a 3 shift operation. Potential workforce increase of 2,000 employees over today’s active on-roll employment. Investment related to Windsor Assembly: CDN \$1.35B to \$1.50B.”

In addition to the headline-grabbing investment commitment for new Electric Vehicle production, the agreement also enhances training for Workplace Environmental Representatives, and increases the frequency of the existing union-management business review meetings. “The parties agree to review company product plans and business forecasts, including on electric, autonomous, connected vehicle and component parts development.”

Labour's perspective on electric vehicles

Unifor's Road Map for a Fair, Inclusive and Resilient Economic Recovery, published in the summer, states: "The government must also take the lead in supporting zero-emission vehicle manufacturing and preparing the economy for electrified transportation through targeted subsidies and investment in battery technology innovation. A long-overdue National Auto Strategy, for instance, would help merge Canada's innovation agenda, trade policy, skills training and infrastructure development to foster a modern supply chain for EV components and parts, leading to final assembly. This need not only apply to light duty, passenger vehicles but other modes of surface transportation, including mass transit, commercial trucking and logistics, student transportation, taxis and light rail. Once in place, such a strategy could serve as a rubric for all transportation sectors and industries."

These points are also made by Angelo DiCaro, Research Director for Unifor, in an essay titled "**Canada's auto sector revival will take more than wishful thinking. We need a plan**", featured in the August/September issue of *The Monitor*, and at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives website. DiCaro reiterates the call for a national auto strategy, and sketches out key steps for a national Electric Vehicle strategy, starting with Step 1, a "comprehensive mapping of existing capacities and materials needed to forge a complete supply chain for EVs and component parts in Canada", followed by setting domestic production targets for vehicle assembly and component manufacturing.

"**Union workers are strong allies for electric vehicles, as Canada's Unifor demonstrates**" appeared in the industry newsletter *Electrek* in June 2020, quoting favourable statements re EV manufacturing from both Unifor and the United Auto Workers (UAW) in the U.S. The UAW published their report, *Taking the High Road: Strategies for a fair EV Future* in January, making specific policy recommendations, and stating: "The UAW rejects the idea promoted by climate change deniers that fuel efficiency and environmental regulations lead to closed plants and lost jobs. Fuel-efficient vehicles, clean energy, clean manufacturing, renewable energy and other advanced technologies are an opportunity to create new middle-class jobs with good pay, good benefits, and economic security."

More recently, the American Center for Progress released "**Electric Vehicles Should Be a Win for American Workers**" on Sept. 23. It concludes: "Federal funding to incentivize consumer demand, drive manufacturer investments, and build out electric vehicle infrastructure should be made contingent on key job quality and domestic content standards. In structuring funding, policymakers must be realistic about present EV capacity while also ensuring that taxpayer dollars do not subsidize low-road employers or erode job quality standards in the broader industry. By designing federal policies that encourage both rapid vehicle electrification and the creation of high-quality, good-paying domestic jobs throughout the EV ecosystem, policymakers can satisfy the priorities of climate and labor advocates and ensure economic prosperity for future generations. In a period of significant economic and environmental challenges, the transition to EVs presents a powerful and positive opportunity to improve conditions for both American workers and the climate."

Electric vehicle policy in Canada

In response to the news of the Unifor/Ford agreement, Clean Energy Canada published a Media Brief: "**What is a zero emission vehicle standard and why does Canada need one?**". It notes **research from the International Council on Clean Transportation** that found that Canada is the 12th largest vehicle producer in the world but is responsible for only 0.4% of global EV production. Assessing that Canada has a EV supply problem, Clean Energy Canada recommends a ZEV standard as the solution, rather than a voluntary standard or consumer incentives. "A ZEV standard is a supply-focused policy that requires a gradually rising percentage of vehicles sold by auto manufacturers to be zero-emission (i.e. battery-electric, plug-in hybrid or hydrogen fuel cell vehicles). While purchase incentives help drive demand, ZEV standards secure supply." Currently, only British Columbia and Quebec have ZEV standards in place – with B.C. having passed the **Zero Emissions Vehicle Act** in May 2019, requiring automakers to meet increasing annual levels of EV sales reaching 10% of new light-duty vehicle sales by 2025, 30% by 2030 and 100% by 2040. On July 30, B.C. followed up with **new ZEV regulations under the Act** which set phased-in annual targets and other compliance requirements, as well as a ZEV advisory council to be comprised of industry, ENGOs, local governments, First Nations, infrastructure providers and academics, to provide input into the ministry's EV programming and policies.

The [Clean Energy Media Brief](#) links to many supporting documents, including a recent academic discussion, “[Which plug-in electric vehicle policies are best? A multi-criteria evaluation framework applied to Canada](#)” which appeared in the June 2020 issue of *Energy Research and Social Science*.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Fiat Chrysler](#), [Ford Motor Co.](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Lithium Ion Batteries](#), [Unifor](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Canada’s Speech from the Throne sketches out its plans for Covid recovery in pale green

Posted on **September 24, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Liberal government opened the new session of Parliament on September 23 with a Speech from the Throne titled [A Stronger and More Resilient Canada](#). Acknowledging the perilous moment of history in which it was delivered, Catherine Abreu of [Climate Action Network Canada](#) states: “Today the Government of Canada delivered the most progressive speech from the throne heard in a generation. The promises made acknowledged the inequalities and vulnerabilities that have been laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic and spoke to the scale of action needed to confront them. Of course, we’ve heard similar promises before from this government. It is the policy and investment decisions made in the coming months that will determine whether the spirit articulated in this historic speech is turned into meaningful action.”

Stating that “this is not the time for austerity”, the Speech emphasizes measures to deal with the impact of Covid-19. General summaries by the [CBC here](#) and the *Toronto Star* are [here](#); Trish Hennessy of [the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#) summarizes and critiques the speech with a focus on inequality, the workplace, and health care. The Canadian Union of Public Employees response appears in [“Promises are good Proof is better”](#). The [Canadian Labour Congress reaction](#) is supportive of the Speech and highlights provisions of greatest impact to workers, including the government’s promise to create one million jobs through “direct investments in the social sector and infrastructure, immediate training to quickly skill up workers, and incentives for employers to hire and retain workers.” Other key promises: the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy will be extended through to summer 2021; modernization of the Employment Insurance system will address the growth of the self-employed and gig workers; and yet again, “significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system “.

From the [Speech from the Throne](#): The section titled, Taking action on extreme risks from climate change” :

“...Climate action will be a cornerstone of our plan to support and create a million jobs across the country..... The Government will immediately bring forward a plan to exceed Canada’s 2030 climate goal. The Government will also legislate Canada’s goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

As part of its plan, the Government will:

Create thousands of jobs retrofitting homes and buildings, cutting energy costs for Canadian families and businesses;

Invest in reducing the impact of climate-related disasters, like floods and wildfires, to make communities safer and more resilient;

Help deliver more transit and active transit options;

And make zero-emissions vehicles more affordable while investing in more charging stations across the country.

The Government will launch a new fund to attract investments in making zero-emissions products and cut the corporate tax rate in half for these companies to create jobs and make Canada a world leader in clean technology. The Government will ensure Canada is the most competitive jurisdiction in the world for clean technology companies.

Additionally, the Government will:

Transform how we power our economy and communities by moving forward with the Clean Power Fund, including with projects like the Atlantic Loop that will connect surplus clean power to regions transitioning away from coal;

And support investments in renewable energy and next-generation clean energy and technology solutions.

Canada cannot reach net zero without the know-how of the energy sector, and the innovative ideas of all Canadians, including people in places like British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Government will:

Support manufacturing, natural resource, and energy sectors as they work to transform to meet a net zero future, creating good-paying and long-lasting jobs;

And recognize farmers, foresters, and ranchers as key partners in the fight against climate change, supporting their efforts to reduce emissions and build resilience.

The Government will continue its policy of putting a price on pollution, while putting that money back in the pockets of Canadians. It cannot be free to pollute.

This pandemic has reminded Canadians of the importance of nature. The Government will work with municipalities as part of a new commitment to expand urban parks, so that everyone has access to green space. This will be done while protecting a quarter of Canada's land and a quarter of Canada's oceans in five years, and using nature-based solutions to fight climate change, including by planting two billion trees.

The Government will ban harmful single-use plastics next year and ensure more plastic is recycled. And the Government will also modernize the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

When the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration was closed by a previous government, Canada lost an important tool to manage its waters. The Government will create a new Canada Water Agency to keep our water safe, clean, and well-managed. The Government will also identify opportunities to build more resilient water and irrigation infrastructure.

At the same time, the Government will look at continuing to grow Canada's ocean economy to create opportunities for fishers and coastal communities, while advancing reconciliation and conservation objectives. Investing in the Blue Economy will help Canada prosper."

Reaction to climate change provisions:

From *The Tyee*, "**What's in This Throne Speech Stew?** Straight from the pandemic cookbook, it's light on green garnishes. No election on the menu." Reporters at *The National Observer* agree in "**Liberal throne speech targets COVID-19 over climate**" (Sept. 23), stating: "Though the Trudeau Liberals promised an "ambitious green agenda" ahead of the throne speech, the vision for the coming months unveiled Wednesday focused more on COVID-19 and its economic fallout." Their compilation of reaction from green groups echoes the cautious optimism in a **Greenpeace Canada statement** and from **West Coast Environmental Law** – which commends "promising signals" but asks "how the climate goals set out in the Throne Speech tally with the federal government's continued support for climate-destructive projects such as the Trans Mountain pipeline and tankers project."

In the lead up to the Throne Speech, many green groups had lobbied with their specific proposals : a few examples include an **Open Letter to Ministers coordinated by the Climate Action Network**; the **One Earth One Voice campaign**; and the Draft Throne Speech offered by **Greenpeace Canada**.

The National Observer highlighted the proposals of the Smart Prosperity Institute in an Opinion Piece by Mike Moffatt and John McNally, "**Want a green, inclusive recovery? You can't rush that**" (Sept. 24). They condense the arguments from an earlier blog post, "**Making a green recovery inclusive for all Canadians**" which lays out specific green recovery proposals but warns that a "full recovery" cannot begin until Covid-19 has been brought under control: "The risks of infection from bringing people together, potentially leading to future lockdowns, are too great."

Recommendations and research from Scotland's Just Transition Commission

Posted on [September 16, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **Just Transition Commission in Scotland** released an *Interim Report* in February 2020, and has continued to provide research as it works towards its Final Report and recommendations for a green and fair transition. In August, the Commission released *Just Transition: Comparative Perspectives*, which provides both theoretical discussion and case studies of JT experiences in Canada, Germany, Peru, Norway and the U.S.. In a section on Lessons Learned, the report states that the experiences of Norway's oil and gas industry, and of Peru, are the most relevant to the Scottish situation.

In July, the Just Transition Commission released its *Advice for a Green Recovery* from Covid-19. Subsequently, Government's measures were announced in early September, in *Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2020-2021*. The government's press release highlights "nearly £1.6 billion to directly support up to 5,000 jobs and tackle fuel poverty". Specific commitments include £100 million for a Green Job Fund; £60 million to help industrial and manufacturing sectors decarbonise, grow and diversify; boosting youth employment opportunities in nature and land-based jobs by expanding apprenticeship and undergraduate schemes in public agencies"....; and £70 million to improve refuse collection infrastructure, improve recycling, and achieve a circular economy. The plan received **lukewarm reaction** from Friends of the Earth Scotland.

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U.K. Citizens Climate Assembly report reveals a window on public opinion

Posted on [September 15, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 10, after meetings which spanned 5 months and the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the **Citizens' Climate Assembly** issued its final, 556-page report, *The Path to Net-Zero*, with over 50 recommendations on how the U.K. should reach net-zero emissions by 2050. The 108 member group, ages 16 to 79, was selected to be representative of the country in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, education, rural versus urban, geography and level of concern about climate change. Their recommendations, summarized by *The Guardian* [here](#) and by *Carbon Brief* [here](#), were built on agreed-upon principles that included urgency and fairness – "Fair to people with jobs in different sectors. Fair to people with different incomes, travel preferences and housing arrangements. Fair to people who live in different parts of the UK". In general, participants preferred protecting and restoring nature over technological solutions, and stressed the value of 'co-benefits' of improved health and local community and economic benefits. Specific recommendations included measures to decarbonize transport (including a ban on SUV's and a frequent flyer tax for air travelers) and a reduction in meat and dairy consumption by between 20% and 40%.

The recommendations will be tabled and debated in the U.K. House of Commons, and the six select committee chairs that commissioned the report will provide responses. A [press release](#) by the Assembly describes the process further.

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Scientists actually DO know how climate change contributes to California's wildfires

Posted on **September 15, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Despite Donald **Trump's off-hand dismissal of climate scientists** on his visit to California's apocalyptic wildfires, there are plenty of scientists who ACTUALLY DO know how climate change contributes to these disasters. Below are some recent examples of this well-established relationship and impacts.

"Climate change is increasing the likelihood of extreme autumn wildfire conditions across California" appeared in *Environmental Research Letters* in August. One of the co-authors, Daniel Swain, writes an ongoing blog, **Weather West**, which chronicles and explains "California weather and climate perspectives" from his perch at the University of California at L.A. Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. The Union of Concerned Scientists have also posted an **Infographic: Wildfires and Climate Change**, which summarizes trends, impacts and costs, including health costs.

Some mainstream media is giving voice to climate scientists :

"How Can We Plan for the Future in California?" by transplanted Canadian climate scientist Leah Stokes, appeared in *The Atlantic* (Aug. 23). She is also interviewed by *Democracy Now* in **"This is climate change : West Coast Fires Scorch Millions of Acres & Blot Out the Sun"** (Sept. 10).

"The Burning West" special feature compilation of articles from *Inside Climate News*, which includes **"California and Colorado Fires May Be Part of a Climate-Driven Transformation of Wildfires Around the Globe"** (Aug. 22) and **"10 Days of Climate Extremes: From Record Heat to Wildfires to the One-Two Punch of Hurricane Laura"** (Aug. 29), and **"A Siege of 80 Large, Uncontained Wildfires Sweeps the Hot, Dry West"** (Sept. 9), which catalogues the fire events to date.

"A Climate Reckoning in Fire-Stricken California" in the *New York Times* (Sept. 10, updated Sept. 14)

"These Are Climate Fires": Oregon Firefighter Ecologist Says Devastating Blazes Are a Wake-Up Call in *Democracy Now* (Sept. 14)

"Climate change is worsening California's hellish wildfires" in *Yale Climate Connections* (Aug. 24).

"California wildfires getting bigger, moving faster than ever" in the *Toronto Star* (Sept. 10)

"Climate grief is burning across the American West" in *Wired* (Sept. 14)

Wildfire Impact on workers

On the Front Lines: Climate Change Threatens the Health of America's Workers was released in July by the Natural Resources Defense Council, and documents the "myriad threats" posed by wildfires, explaining "Increases in wildfires will put more emergency responders and recovery workers in dangerous situations and expose more outdoor and indoor workers to unhealthy wildfire smoke." The report also explains some of the mental health aftermath and provides dozens of links to scientific research.

"Pandemic, Wildfires & Heat Wave: Undocumented Farmworkers Face "Triple Threat" as West Coast Burns" in *Democracy Now* (Sept. 14).

"A Human Tragedy": Wildfires Reveal California's Reliance on Incarcerated Firefighters" in *Democracy Now* (August 25).

“In the US West Scorched by Wildfires, We Can Barely Breathe. It’s Going to Get Worse” from the Union of Concerned Scientists (Sept. 14) – an overview which briefly discusses outdoor workers and relies on [a 2016 article from Climate Change](#) to conclude: “All told, there are roughly 4.8 million outdoor workers across the western US who are exposed to wildfire smoke in an average year.”

“California Bill Clears Path For Ex-Inmates To Become Firefighters” at NPR (Sept. 11) , describing [AB2147](#) , a Bill which lets prisoners who had worked in California’s prisoner-firefighting program petition the courts to dismiss their convictions after completing their sentences.

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Green skills training for recovery

Posted on **September 14, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Many green recovery proposals have recognized the importance of energy efficiency and retrofitting. Below, some examples from voices within the Canadian building sector itself, focusing on green skills training:

Workforce 2030 is a practical initiative launched in Toronto on July 23 – a cross-sectoral coalition of employers, educators, and workers in Ontario’s building sector, coordinated by [The Atmospheric Fund \(TAF\)](#) and [Canada Green Building Council \(CaGBC\)](#). John Cartwright, President of Toronto and York Region Labour Council, and a member of the 14-person Advisory Council states: “Workforce 2030 is a collaboration that will increase the capacity of the skilled trades to meet the low-carbon standards required in the built form of tomorrow. We need to continuously improve low-carbon skills for the entire sector, deepen our commitment to high-quality training, and grow our workforce through equity and inclusion.” The [Statement of Principles](#) outlines values of collaboration, accountability, and equity. More details are [here](#).

Canada’s Green Building Council published [Ready, Set, Grow: How the green building industry can re-ignite Canada’s economy](#) in May 2020. Some of its proposals are endorsed in Efficiency Canada’s [Pre-budget submission to the Government of Canada](#) (August 5) – specifically, a call to allocate \$500 million (\$1000 per employee) to access existing training programs, and a further investment of \$1 billion to attract and train new people to create energy efficient and green building careers. The pre-Budget submission states: “The multiple benefits of energy efficiency can help Canada manage both demand and supply shocks from COVID-19 while improving the operation of our buildings to reduce virus transmission.” Its recommendations also include \$1.5 billion in government funding to expand green building workforce training.

In September, Efficiency Canada released [Tiered Energy Codes: Best Practices for Code Compliance](#) , which “explores the evolution of energy codes, reviews compliance regimes, and provides high-level recommendations to assist in the compliant expansion of advanced tiered energy codes nationwide.” As the paper explains, codes and practices vary widely across jurisdictions in Canada. The report points to the British Columbia Step Code, B.C. Hydro projects, and Toronto Ontario as best practice models. Regarding training, it focuses on the training needs of builders and building inspectors, rather than on the skilled trades.

The Pembina Institute published recommendations for British Columbia, in [Accelerating B.C.’s economic recovery through building retrofits Submission to the Government of British Columbia](#) (July 28). One of its Guiding Principles is : “Build the workforce: Partner with public and private organizations to deliver subsidized training programs, develop design guides, conduct integrated design sessions (charrettes), create data tools (e.g. remote energy audits), etc. Provide retraining support for impacted economic sectors to join the retrofit economy workforce.”

Much more detail is provided by Pembina in [Training up for deep retrofits](#) (July), which enumerates what green skills are needed, how governments can help, and where existing training opportunities are currently available in Canada. The Pembina Institute is one of the partners in the [Reframed Initiative](#), which works with designers, builders, owners, financiers, and policy-makers to scale up deep retrofits.

The Toronto Atmospheric Fund, partner in Workforce 2030, submitted a formal [Presentation to the federal Pre-Budget Consultations](#), calling for the federal government to invest at least \$50 billion over five years in climate-focused clean stimulus measures, including at least \$27 billion in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings, with at least \$2 billion over 5 years to support deep retrofits that maximize carbon reduction and community benefits.

On July 22, the [Task Force for a Resilient Recovery released its Interim Report](#), costing out five key policy directions for the next five years, with a total price tag of just under \$50 billion. The Task Force lists key actions and actors to achieve five broad goals: “Invest in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings; Jumpstart Canada’s production and adoption of zero-emission vehicles; Go big on growing Canada’s clean energy sectors; Invest in the nature that protects and sustains us; Grow clean competitiveness and jobs across the Canadian economy . As part of #1, investment in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings, the Task Force calls for “investing \$1.25 billion in workforce development for energy efficiency and climate resiliency, including for enhancing access to training programs and for developing new approaches.” The Task Force Final Report is scheduled for release on September 16 at their [website](#) .

Seven renewable energy co-ops send a 9-page [Letter](#) to federal ministers on June 24 , titled “Federal Post COVID 19 Recovery Stimulus to Unlock Community Investment in Clean Energy”. While their suggestions focused on clean community power , they also called for incentive grants of \$100 million over 5 years for community- financed mass, deep retrofits of community, institutional, and multi-residential buildings. Participating co-ops include the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-op (OREC)/CoEnergy, SES Solar Co-operative Ltd. in Saskatoon, Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative in Calgary area, Colchester-Cumberland Wind Field Inc. in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, the Solar Power Investment Co-operative of Edmonton, Wascana Solar Co-op in Regina, and SolarShare in Toronto.

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Labour union proposals for Green Recovery

Posted on [September 14, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canadian Labour Congress

To coincide with Labour Day and in advance of the federal government plan, expected to be released in the Throne Speech on September 23, the Canadian Labour Congress unveiled its new social media campaign, “Forward Together: A Canadian Plan” with a [press release](#) which says: “We need the government to reject calls for austerity and make real investments in our future. The only way to fix what’s broken is to invest,” “Workers are key to the recovery. The federal government can help alleviate a lot of anxiety by investing in jobs, making long-term care part of public health care, supporting a child care strategy, and implementing national pharmacare.”

Media coverage related to this launch focussed on the employment impacts and the CLC recommendations to expand employment insurance: for example, in the [Opinion piece by CLC President Hassan Yussuff](#) in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and in [“Canada’s Top Labour Leader on Building a Better Life for Workers after the Pandemic”](#), published by *The Tyee*. Yet this focus doesn’t match up with the CLC pre-Budget Submission to the federal government in August, [Forward Together: A Good Jobs and Climate Budget](#).

That formal document states : “Budget 2021 must be a Climate Action budget” and makes the first of its five recommendations: “Budget 2021 should set out a plan, with clear targets, benchmarks and timetables, for achieving Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions targets, committing \$81 billion over 5 years to expand renewable energy, home and building retrofits, public transit, and Just Transition measures supporting workers and their families.”

Under the heading “*Climate Action and Just Transition*”, the CLC states: “Budget 2021 must be a Climate Action budget. The CLC recommends that the federal government adopt a five-year plan setting out a bold plan with clear targets, benchmarks and timetables for accomplishing a systematic shift in Canada’s energy system, its transportation networks, and housing and building stock. Expanded public investments in renewable energy production, green building construction,

and public transportation offer major opportunities for skills training and the large-scale creation of good jobs. Along with its partner organizations in the [Green Economy Network](#), the CLC calls for investments of \$81 billion over 5 years in order to develop renewable energy, home and building retrofits, and low-emissions public transportation in urban centres.

The CLC recommends that the federal government establish a Crown corporation mandated to overhaul and transform Canada's energy industry in collaboration with provinces and territories. It would identify renewable energy projects and ensure that existing and new manufacturing sources increase capacity to supply parts, equipment and new technology to meet Canada's renewable energy needs. Through direct investment and procurement policy, the federal government should support continued conversion of idle plant for the manufacture of medically-necessary and green economy products and equipment. Consistent with this, it should invest in the conversion of the General Motors Oshawa facility to produce zero-emission vehicles to electrify the Canada Post fleet.

Budget 2021 must significantly expand investments in Just Transition measures to assist workers, their families and their communities affected by climate change policy to access training and employment services, relocation, childcare and housing assistance to adjust to new jobs, and support for older workers to transition to retirement.

Following the experience of the European Union, the federal, provincial and territorial governments should establish a guarantee that all young people under the age of 25 will receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. This could include a focus on providing decent jobs in land remediation and restoration, climate adaptation, and energy efficiency. It should also include green skills training and learning opportunities through partnerships with public education and training providers, with an emphasis on women, marginalized, low-income and at-risk youth."

Green Recovery proposals have been made by other Canadian unions and union-affiliated groups are described in a previous WCR post, [Update: Summer Proposals for Canada's Green Recovery focus on public infrastructure, retrofitting](#).

United States unions endorsing a THRIVE Agenda:

Although the U.S. labour unions are famously independent-minded and following different paths, but on September 10, a new initiative launched. The [THRIVE Agenda](#) is an economic renewal plan created by the [Green New Deal Network](#) and endorsed by more than 100 climate justice, civil rights and labour organizations – including the American Federation of Teachers, American Postal Workers Union, Amalgamated Transit Union, Communication Workers of America, Railroad Workers United, Service Employees International, United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE) as well as the Labor Network for Sustainability. Notably, it is also [endorsed by prominent Congressional leaders](#) including Senators Bernie Sanders, Ed Markey, Elizabeth Warren, Chuck Schumer, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, among many others.

The THRIVE Agenda proposes “to revive our economy while addressing these interlocking crises of climate change, racial injustice, public health, and economic inequity with a plan to create dignified jobs for millions of unemployed workers and support a better life for the millions more who remain vulnerable in this pivotal moment.” A [6-page Resolution document](#) offers details of the goals, condensed into “8 Pillars” which include: Pillar 5: “Combating environmental injustice and ensuring healthy lives for all; Pillar 6 “Averting climate and environmental catastrophe”; Pillar 7 “Ensuring fairness for workers and communities affected by economic transitions” and Pillar 8 “Reinvesting in public institutions that enable workers and communities to thrive”.

The THRIVE Agenda claims that their proposals would create nearly 16 million new jobs and sustain them over the next critical decade, based on modelling by Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty, published by the University of Massachusetts Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) in September 2020. Their report, [Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures](#) models the costs and job creation benefits of economic recovery proposals made by various groups in the U.S.

For recent context on the political stance of U.S. unions: [“Unions fracture over climate”](#) is a long-read from *Politico's* newsletter, *The Long Game*, published on Sept 1 and [re-posted to Portside](#) on Sept. 6. It argues that “Environmental

protection and union jobs are a fault line among Democrats, which will only be magnified nationwide if Joe Biden defeats President Donald Trump in November. The article includes quotes from union members from building trades in California, SEIU in New Jersey, United Mine Workers, and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. Also, "[The Green New Deal Just Won a Major Union Endorsement. What's Stopping the AFL-CIO?](#)" (Aug. 20) and "[Why Every Job in the Renewable Energy Industry Must Be a Union Job](#)" (Sept. 3) both appeared in *In these Times*.

United Kingdom Trades Union Congress

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) released a series of reports over the Spring and Summer with recommendations for economic recovery. Most recently, on September 13, [A plan for public service jobs to help prevent mass unemployment](#) calls for direct government investment to create 600,000 jobs in health care, social services, local government, education, and public administration. In June, they released [Rebuilding after recession: A Plan for Jobs](#), which calls for government action, including sectoral recovery panels composed of unions, employers and government, and a new government-funded jobs guarantee, with increased training rights for workers who lose their jobs. The [Rebuilding after Recession report](#) was based on economic research conducted by Transition Economics, titled [Can an infrastructure stimulus replace UK jobs wiped out by COVID19 crisis?](#) That study concluded that "1.24 million jobs across the UK can be created in the coming two years through a two year emergency clean infrastructure stimulus, reabsorbing workers who have lost employment due to the COVID19 crisis. Our analysis recommends 19 infrastructure projects totalling £85 billion public investment." An earlier report from TUC, [A Better Recovery](#) had been released in May, and in June, the TUC in Wales released [A Green Recovery and a Just Transition](#)

International Trade Union Confederation

The International Trade Union Confederation [announced a new campaign](#), "A New Social Contract for Recovery and Resilience", to be focused on the World Day for Decent Work on October 7. The [Social Contract statement](#), released in July, is a broad statement of principles which address "the convergent challenges of the pandemic, climate change and inequality".

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Job creation is a co-benefit of reducing air pollution

Posted on [September 11, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

1.5 million jobs in Canada in 2050 by meeting Net-Zero emissions targets

[The Healthy Recovery Plan](#) released by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) on July 14 quantifies the potential health benefits related to improved air quality in Canada, makes detailed recommendations for green recovery stimulus, and estimates the job creation benefits of those recommendations: notably decarbonization of electricity generation and public transit by 2040, and decarbonization of vehicles, residential and commercial buildings, and healthcare by 2050.

The report presents original research, conducted for CAPE by Navius Research, which simulated the health benefits of climate actions that meet Canada's emissions reduction targets, using Health Canada's own [Air Quality Benefits Assessment Tool](#). Navius estimates that by meeting its climate targets, Canada will save 112,000 lives between 2030 and 2050 due to air quality improvements alone. Navius Research also simulated key economic impacts of an emissions scenario in line with Canada's climate target of net-zero emissions by 2050, and found that clean jobs could increase from 210,000 full-time equivalent positions in 2020 to 1.5 million in 2050.

U.K. Employers group calls for air pollution reduction as part of a green recovery.

Polluted air in the U.K. is responsible for the loss of 3 million working days each year, according to research commissioned by the British [Clean Air Fund](#), and conducted by CBI Economics, part of the British employers' group, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). [Breathing life into the UK Economy](#) quantifies the economic benefits if the UK were to meet air quality guidelines recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). The report estimates that improved health of workers would translate into a £1 billion gain for the economy in the first year, a £600 million gain to businesses from reduced absenteeism, and a £900 million increase in wages each year. The report also includes estimates for individual urban areas (London, Manchester, Bristol, and Birmingham). Air pollution is a high profile issue in British politics, with [U.K. unions campaigning since 2017 for a legal obligation on employers](#) to address air pollution from their activities. The Clean Air Fund [press release](#) which accompanied the release of the report quotes the CBI position: "Not only is there a clear moral responsibility to address air pollution and the impact it has on human health and the environment, there's also a striking economic rationale. That is why the CBI has been absolutely clear that a focus on green recovery should be central to our COVID-19 response.... From mass energy efficiency programmes to building new sustainable transport infrastructure, the green economy offers incredible opportunities for the UK. Improving air quality should be a key part of the UK's journey to net zero."

Dangers of air pollution for road workers increases in summer

"[Asphalt roads make city air pollution worse in summer, study finds](#)" appeared in *The Guardian* (Sept. 2), summarizing U.S. research that found a 300% increase in emissions of secondary organic aerosols (SOA) when asphalt was exposed to hot summer conditions. The [full academic article](#) appeared in *Science Advances* in September. Dr Gary Fuller, air quality expert at Imperial College London is quoted in *The Guardian*: "We have historically thought of traffic pollution as coming from vehicle exhausts. This has been the focus of policy and new vehicles have to be fitted with exhaust clean-up technologies. ..With heavier and heavier vehicles, the combined total of particle pollution from road surface, brake and tyre wear is now greater than the particle emissions from vehicle exhaust but there are no policies to control this." Also quoted, Drew Gentner of Yale University and one of the study's co-authors : "Hotter, sunnier conditions will lead to more emissions. Additionally, in many locations, asphalt is predominantly applied during the warmer months of the year." Bad news and added danger for construction workers.

A more general discussion of the extent and impacts of pollution was published by the European Environment Agency (EEA) on September 8. [Healthy environment, healthy lives: how the environment influences health and well-being in Europe](#) reports that environmental pollution caused more than 400,000 premature deaths in the EU per year, and 13% of deaths in Europe were the result of environmental pollution, with air pollution the leading cause.

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U.S. Labour and climate justice activists advocate for recovery proposals which include the Care Economy

Posted on [September 10, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [THRIVE Agenda](#) is an economic renewal plan for the U.S., created by the [Green New Deal Network](#) and endorsed by more than 100 climate justice, civil rights and labour organizations – including the American Federation of Teachers, American Postal Workers Union, Amalgamated Transit Union, Communication Workers of America, Railroad

Workers United, Service Employees International, United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE) as well as the Labor Network for Sustainability.

The website states: The THRIVE Agenda presents a bold new vision to revive our economy while addressing these interlocking crises of climate change, racial injustice, public health, and economic inequity with a plan to create dignified jobs for millions of unemployed workers and support a better life for the millions more who remain vulnerable in this pivotal moment.” A 6-page **Resolution document** fleshes out these goals, and a framework of “8 Pillars” itemizes them. Regarding climate change, Pillar 5 is: “Combating environmental injustice and ensuring healthy lives for all; Pillar 6 is “Averting climate and environmental catastrophe”; Pillar 7 is “Ensuring fairness for workers and communities affected by economic transitions” and Pillar 8 is “Reinvesting in public institutions that enable workers and communities to thrive” .

Modelling job creation in infrastructure, clean energy, agriculture and the care economy.

The THRIVE Agenda claims that their proposals “would create nearly 16 million new jobs and sustain them over the next critical decade”, based on modelling by Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty. Their report, ***Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures*** , published by the University of Massachusetts Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) in September 2020, models the costs and job creation benefits of economic recovery proposals made by various groups in the U.S., including ***Making the Grade*** by the BlueGreen Alliance (2017, re infrastructure), and ***Sierra Club proposals*** to Congress (April 2020). The report offers projections in four categories: Infrastructure; Clean Energy; Agriculture and land restoration programs; and notably, the “Care economy, public health, and postal service”. The Care Economy modelling is based on proposals in the Joe Biden’s ***Plan for Mobilizing American Talent and Heart to Create a 21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce*** released in July 2020.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [care economy](#), [climate change activism](#), [labour environment cooperation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Labour Congress calls for “a climate-action budget” for post Covid recovery

Posted on **September 8, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

To coincide with Labour Day, the Canadian Labour Congress unveiled its new social media campaign, “Forward Together: A Canadian Plan” with a [press release](#) which says: “We need the government to reject calls for austerity and make real investments in our future. The only way to fix what’s broken is to invest,” “Workers are key to the recovery. The federal government can help alleviate a lot of anxiety by investing in jobs, making long-term care part of public health care, supporting a child care strategy, and implementing national pharmacare.”

The CLC campaign comes in advance of the federal government’s recovery plan, scheduled for release in the Throne Speech of September 23, and urges Canadians to contact their members of parliament. The campaign launched was amplified by member labour unions, and covered in mainstream press: for example, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* published an **[Opinion piece by CLC President Hassan Yussuff](#)** ; *The Tyee* published **[“Canada’s Top Labour Leader on Building a Better Life for Workers after the Pandemic”](#)**; the CBC posted **[“Workers’ group marks Labour Day with push for changes in Liberals’ throne speech”](#)**. In all of these articles, the focus was on the employment impacts of Covid-19 and recommendations to expand employment insurance.

CLC’s Pre-Budget Submission to the Government prioritizes Climate Action and Just Transition

This coverage doesn't match up with the CLC's associated pre-Budget Submission to the federal government in August, [Forward Together: A Good Jobs and Climate Budget](#). It states : "Budget 2021 must be a Climate Action budget" and makes the first of its five recommendations: "Budget 2021 should set out a plan, with clear targets, benchmarks and timetables, for achieving Canada's greenhouse gas emissions targets, committing \$81 billion over 5 years to expand renewable energy, home and building retrofits, public transit, and Just Transition measures supporting workers and their families."

In the full text of the Submission, under the heading "*Climate Action and Just Transition*", the CLC states: "Budget 2021 must be a Climate Action budget. The CLC recommends that the federal government adopt a five-year plan setting out a bold plan with clear targets, benchmarks and timetables for accomplishing a systematic shift in Canada's energy system, its transportation networks, and housing and building stock. Expanded public investments in renewable energy production, green building construction, and public transportation offer major opportunities for skills training and the large-scale creation of good jobs. Along with its partner organizations in the [Green Economy Network](#), the CLC calls for investments of \$81 billion over 5 years in order to develop renewable energy, home and building retrofits, and low-emissions public transportation in urban centres.

The CLC recommends that the federal government establish a Crown corporation mandated to overhaul and transform Canada's energy industry in collaboration with provinces and territories. It would identify renewable energy projects and ensure that existing and new manufacturing sources increase capacity to supply parts, equipment and new technology to meet Canada's renewable energy needs. Through direct investment and procurement policy, the federal government should support continued conversion of idle plant for the manufacture of medically-necessary and green economy products and equipment. Consistent with this, it should invest in the conversion of the General Motors Oshawa facility to produce zero-emission vehicles to electrify the Canada Post fleet.

Budget 2021 must significantly expand investments in Just Transition measures to assist workers, their families and their communities affected by climate change policy to access training and employment services, relocation, childcare and housing assistance to adjust to new jobs, and support for older workers to transition to retirement.

Following the experience of the European Union, the federal, provincial and territorial governments should establish a guarantee that all young people under the age of 25 will receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. This could include a focus on providing decent jobs in land remediation and restoration, climate adaptation, and energy efficiency. It should also include green skills training and learning opportunities through partnerships with public education and training providers, with an emphasis on women, marginalized, low-income and at-risk youth."

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New report offers sector-based strategies for greening California with high road jobs

Posted on [September 4, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Center for Labor Research](#) at the University of California, Berkeley, was commissioned by the California Workforce Development Board under [legislated mandate](#) to provide strategies "to help industry, workers, and communities transition to economic and labor-market changes related to statewide greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals." The demand-side practices of community benefits agreements and project labour agreements were singled out for special attention. The resulting 636-page report, [Putting California on the High Road: A Jobs and Climate Action Plan for 2030](#), was presented to the Legislature on September 3. The official [summary is here](#); coverage in the *Los Angeles Times* is [here](#).

The *High Road* report is built on the framework of [California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan](#), which has target of a 40 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 from 1990 levels. It incorporates existing academic research, economic models, and industry studies to present information about current labor conditions and the impact on jobs of

California's major climate measures. Most importantly, it provides strategic guidance and best practice examples for policymakers, agencies and institutions with a goal to “generate family-supporting jobs, broaden career opportunities for disadvantaged workers, deliver the skilled workforce that employers need to achieve California's climate targets, and protect workers in declining industries.”

Construction sector and blue-collar jobs are key

The Scoping Plan and the new report are organized into sectors based on the state's major sources of greenhouse gas emissions: Transportation, Industry, Energy, Natural and Working Lands (including Agricultural Lands), Waste, and Water. The report notes the out-sized importance of the construction sector and of blue-collar work – defined as occupations in construction, production, transportation, maintenance, repair, and similar occupations, and specifically emphasizes that “blue collar” does not equate to “low skilled”. This has important policy implications, including the need for industry-based training, and emphasis on addressing job quality, because: “The quality of blue-collar jobs varies tremendously, even within the same industry, depending on the degree of subcontracting and outsourcing, ease of employment law enforcement, unionization rates, and other factors. These differences in job quality within industries and between high and low road employers are often difficult to discern from government data, which also is not able to capture wage theft and other employment violations. Examples are given of many sectors where greening of jobs may have resulted in lower emissions but not necessarily in job quality.

Recommendations

There are dozens of sector-specific recommendations, both demand-side and supply-side including:

Expand the use of Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs) on climate investments involving large-scale construction projects;

Use inclusive procurement policies for public procurement of large capital equipment, contracts for public services, and in grant programs;

Include responsible employer standards in all climate incentive programs. Include skill standards to ensure safe and proper performance in programs receiving public or ratepayer funds; Incorporate wage and benefits standards and verification of compliance with all employment and labor law, including health and safety standards, into incentive program requirements.

Use metrics to measure the impact of climate policies on job growth, job quality, and job access.

Support existing apprenticeship programs and, where conditions are favorable, create new apprenticeship programs.

Support curriculum upgrades and teacher training for emerging technologies in occupations critical to the transition to a carbon-neutral economy.

Recommendations regarding Just Transition are: Short term: “Fully explore alternatives to plant closures when there are other strategies available that will achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions and local pollution abatement. Longer term: Convene an interagency task force to develop concrete, specific plans for short-term and long-term transition.”

The full report is 636 pages long, with Lead Author Carol Zabin, Director of the Green Economy Program at the Labor Center, University of California Berkeley. Co-authors include J. Mijin Cha , author of Chapter 4 on Just Transition. Much of the research was undertaken in 2018, relying on data from 2017, though the report is dated June 2020, and was only publicly released in September 2020. Previous related reports from the Green Economy Program are [listed here](#). Other relevant articles by J. Mijin Cha include “[Environmental Justice, Just Transition, and a Low-Carbon Future for California](#)” in *Environmental Law Reporter* 2020 and “[A just transition for whom? Politics, contestation, and social identity in the disruption of coal in the Powder River Basin](#)” in *Energy Research & Social Science*, Volume 69, 2020. Both academic articles have restricted access to the full text.

NRDC report details climate change threats to workers' health and champions workers' action

Posted on **September 2, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On the Front Lines: Climate Change Threatens the Health of America's Workers was released on July 28 by the Natural Resources Defense Council, with input from the BlueGreen Alliance, American Federation of Teachers, Communications Workers of America, and Service Employees International Union in the U.S. (press release [here](#) and a blog summary [here](#)). The authors analyse the extensive existing literature and include first-hand stories from outdoor and indoor workers to describe the physical, mental health, and wage-related impacts of heat stress, wildfires, drought, floods, hurricanes, and the spread of infectious diseases. Over 200 reports and articles are cited. The report calls for amendments to the Occupational Safety and Health Act in the U.S.- including a federal heat standard – with sufficient budgeting and staff for effective enforcement, with a broader overall call: “Adapting to our new climate means overhauling existing safeguards to respond to an intensified set of occupational hazards; extending occupational health and safety protections to all workers; and ensuring workers have the training, job security, flexibility, and empowerment they need to collectively demand protection from climate change. Because climate disruption is sure to create cascading failures through multiple sectors and to bring some nasty surprises, occupational health and safety activists and professionals must also build a better way to track, analyze, and quickly act on existing and emerging health threats to workers.”

“Every worker health and safety accomplishment came about by [agitating and organizing](#)”

Although the report also calls on legislators, regulators and employers to act, the emphasis is on the role of collective action by workers, noting that “Every worker health and safety accomplishment came about by agitating and organizing.” The report also stresses the need to protect workers’ right to organize: “Legislators at all levels of government must honor the right of workers to a safe and healthy workplace by strengthening and enforcing legal protections for unionization and collective bargaining. To stay safe on the job, workers and their representatives must have adequate knowledge, training, and freedom from retaliation to help shape and improve occupational health programs, refuse hazardous work, report workplace injuries and illnesses, and file complaints with state or federal inspectors.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [indoor air quality](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [outdoor workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Can new Conservative Party Leader Erin O’Toole appeal to Canadians with his Climate Change platform?

Posted on **August 31, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Erin O’Toole, Member of Parliament for Durham Ontario, was elected as the new Leader of Canada’s Conservative Party in the early hours of August 25. General press reaction emphasized his hawkish stance on relations with China, the strength of social conservative forces within his party, and his stated intention to carve out a middle ground to fight the next election. A sampling of articles: “**Erin O’Toole works to sell Tories as big tent party**” in the *Globe and Mail* (Aug. 25) ; “**Erin O’Toole and the search for a new Canadian centre**” by Paul Wells in *Maclean’s* (August 24); “**Erin O’Toole promises to fight for West, human rights**” (Aug. 26) in the *National Observer*; “**Will Erin O’Toole Confront**

Conservatives' Covid Sickness" in *The Tyee* (Aug. 31); and "**The inside story of how Erin O'Toole won the Conservative leadership race**" in the *Toronto Star* (Aug. 29) .

On the issues of Climate Change and Energy Policy:

The Narwhal offers this Explainer: "**Where new Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole stands on climate change, carbon tax, oil and LNG**" and, from Bruce Lourie in *The National Observer*: "**O'Toole's climate plan has a carbon price — just don't call it a tax**" by (Aug. 26). Also from *The National Observer*: "**Memo to O'Toole: The road down the middle is paved with a credible climate plan**" (Aug. 31) .

It is yet to be seen what will happen to O'Toole's climate change platform when votes are on the line in an election campaign. As a leadership candidate, he published this ***Climate Change Plan*** and this ***Action Plan for Alberta and the West*** – the latter promising to repeal Bill C-69; pass a National Strategic Pipelines Act; scrap the tanker ban; and implement a national LNG Export Strategy. No wonder he won the endorsement of Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta.

From his **Climate Change platform statement**: "I will respect the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories by scrapping Trudeau's carbon tax. If provinces want to use market mechanisms, other forms of carbon pricing, or regulatory measures, that is up to them. The federal government will be there to support them." " The world will still be using oil and natural gas for a long time. The question is whether they will come from free countries like Canada with strong environmental protections, or dictatorships with no environmental protections or respect for human rights" ... "Domestic energy production – including oil and gas – is an important part of making our country more self-reliant and more resilient in future, as we cannot afford to become reliant on energy from countries like Russia...." And from O'Toole's stated priorities: "Working with industry on a plan to get to net zero emissions in the oil and gas industry through the use of technologies like electrification generated from sources such as nuclear and wind and carbon capture, with the government providing incentives similar to those that were used to stimulate the early development of the oilsands."

In **Bruce Lourie's assessment**: "The six priorities are hit-and-miss, and revert back to traditional technological solutions in the energy sector while missing many of the important economy-wide measures to help the regions of Canada without oil, as well as addressing the bulk of Canada's climate change challenges. No mention of the auto sector or transportation at all, or building efficiency (the single most cost-effective measure), and no mention of the agricultural sector..."

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and politics** | **Leave a reply**

Workforce 2030 coalition launches to encourage low-carbon skills training for Ontario building sector

Posted on **August 28, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Workforce 2030 was launched in Toronto on July 23 – a cross-sectoral coalition of employers, educators, and workers in Ontario's building sector. **The press release** states: "Workforce 2030's goal is to accelerate workforce capacity by collectively impacting government policy, business practices, and education." The **Statement of Principles is here**, outlining values of collaboration and accountability, and equity.

From John Cartwright, member of the Advisory Council and President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council: "Workforce 2030 is a collaboration that will increase the capacity of the skilled trades to meet the low-carbon standards required in the built form of tomorrow. We need to continuously improve low-carbon skills for the entire sector, deepen our commitment to high-quality training, and grow our workforce through equity and inclusion."

The Coalition is "catalyzed" by **The Atmospheric Fund (TAF)** and **Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC)**, which hosts the **Workforce 2030 website** and whose research reports are highlighted there. The coalition will be organized into

working groups, with the following themes: Green Recovery Stimulus: Advocating for Workforce Capacity Investments; Workforce Capacity for Tall Timber Residential New Construction; Low-carbon Workforce Readiness: In-depth skills gaps assessment and industry co-developed action plan; Equitable and Inclusive Recruitment and Training; and Workforce Capacity for Retrofits.

The 14-person Advisory Board includes Julia Langer, (CEO, The Atmospheric Fund (TAF)); Akua Schatz, Canada Green Building Council; John Cartwright, President, [Toronto and York Region Labour Council](#); Sandro Perruzza, CEO of [Ontario Society of Professional Engineers](#); Rosemarie Powell, Executive Director, [Toronto Community Benefits Network](#); Steven Martin, Business Manager, [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers \(IBEW\) Local 353](#); Mike Yorke, President, [Carpenters District Council of Ontario](#); and Corey Diamond, Executive Director, [Efficiency Canada](#), among others.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Building](#), [Green skills training](#), [Labour Training](#), [labour union policies](#), [Ontario](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Over 60,000 Green jobs in Toronto in 2019

Posted on [August 28, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The City of Toronto Office of Economic Development and Culture recently released estimates showing that there were 60,700 jobs in Toronto's Green sector in 2019, with 38% of those in Sustainable Transportation and 21% in Green Building. The other sectors included in the report of jobs and GDP: Bioeconomy, Clean Energy, and Resource Management. For the green sector as a whole, employment growth rate was 3.9%, compared to the city's overall employment growth of 1.9%. The report also provides data on five-year average weekly wages (2015-2019), showing the highest wages earned were in the Clean Energy subsector, at C\$1,384. A summary appeared in the [Toronto Green Industries Blog](#) on June 23; the full economic results are available at the [City of Toronto website](#), which also provides related reports on green industry in the city, including the 2019 report, [Best Practices on Growing Green Clusters](#).

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BlueGreen, AFL-CIO endorse Joe Biden as president

Posted on [August 27, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. BlueGreen Alliance made its first-ever political endorsement on August 26: for the presidential ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. [BlueGreen's press release](#) states that "Biden's manufacturing, environmental justice and sustainable infrastructure and clean energy plans align well with the organization's [Solidarity for Climate Action](#) platform." That overall platform, released in 2019, has been fleshed out most recently in June, with [Manufacturing Agenda: A National Blueprint for Clean Technology Manufacturing Leadership and Industrial Transformation](#). It offers practical discussion of its vision: "With this agenda, the BlueGreen Alliance and our partners put forward a bold program of action to transform the U.S. manufacturing and industrial sectors at the scale and speed our economic and climate challenges demand. By taking the lead in manufacturing the clean technology needed to dramatically reduce the emissions driving climate change, and by upgrading, retooling and cutting emissions across critical industry, we can also rebuild American competitiveness in the global economy, reinvest in hard hit communities, and secure and create good-paying local jobs across America. "

The AFL-CIO has also endorsed the Biden/Harris ticket, though not on the grounds of its climate change platform. President Richard Trumka's speech at the Democratic National Convention Labor Council was re-posted by [Portside](#) as ["Trumka to DNC Labor Council: Our Democracy Is at Stake"](#) (Aug. 19) .

And a commentary from Kate Aronoff in *The New Republic*: “[Biden’s Setting Himself Up to Get Blamed for Lost Blue-Collar Jobs](#)” (August 21) is critical of the establishment Democratic policy :

“A transition off of fossil fuels isn’t some far-off theoretical policy debate: It’s happening now in the most unjust way possible. Failing to reckon with that reality sets up Democrats in 2022 and 2024 to take the blame for the industry’s decline. This is all easy to avoid, but Democrats have to be willing to build a generous safety net instead of catering to deficit hawks. And they have to start a frank conversation within the Democratic coalition about the fact that fossil fuel jobs are already disappearing—even without robust climate policy.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BlueGreen Alliance](#), [climate change and politics](#), [labour union policies](#), [Natural Gas](#), [UA Plumbers and Pipefitters](#), [United Steelworkers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Launch of a new research program on Just Transition in the U.S.

Posted on [August 27, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In early August, Resources for the Future and the Environmental Defense Fund launched a new research initiative examining Just Transition policies and programs in the U.S., introduced and described [here](#). A series of reports and blogs are promised, with a final synthesis report, though timing is not announced. Also in the works, case studies of three US communities in which coal was their economic base: southeastern Ohio (in partnership with Ohio University); Colstrip, Montana (in partnership with Montana State University); and Tonawanda, New York. Some of the questions the research will address: “How is the existing system of interlocking federal workforce development programs structured, and how effective has it been? What have been the environmental and economic effects of clean energy deployment policies? What role can environmental remediation policies play in facilitating a just transition while also addressing the legacy of environmental racism?”

The first report, released on August 11, is [Economic Development Policies to Enable Fairness for Workers and Communities in Transition](#), summarized in this [blog](#). The report describes programs and assesses their effectiveness on local economic development, with programs grouped into two broad categories differentiated by geographic and/or economic scope. Those examined include programs by the Appalachian Regional Commission, and federal departments including the Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development, the Department of Interior’s Secure Rural Schools, the Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration, the Department of Defense’s Office of Economic Adjustment, and the Small Business Administration. In common with many other studies, the report concludes that “Coordination across government agencies and with local stakeholders is a vital part of an economic development program’s success.”

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Lawyers fighting for climate change through litigation and legislative reform

Posted on [August 27, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Global Trends in Climate Litigation: 2020 Snapshot](#), published on July 3, is the latest annual review by researchers at the Grantham Institute in the U.K. .It covers the period of May 2019 to May 2020, reporting on the statistics (e.g 26 new climate change cases brought outside the U.S. in 2019), and analyzing trends in the strategies and types of arguments used in climate litigation. The report particularly focuses on the role of human rights arguments (as pioneered in the [Urgenda case](#), but also used in many of the youth-led court challenges); how litigation has been blended with direct protesting in some countries; and the variety of strategies being used to bring lawsuits against corporate emitters of

greenhouse gases, the ‘Carbon Majors’. Although the report concludes that litigation has not resulted in widespread climate policy change so far, it discusses key developments such as the final resolution of the Urgenda case in December 2019, which demonstrates the enormous potential of litigation: “Depending on the lawsuit and strategies employed, litigation might impact on government policy, company profits, share prices and broader public framings around climate change. However, litigation as a governance strategy is costly and risky, and it takes place alongside other political and social mobilisation efforts.” A summary of the Grantham study appeared in *The Energy Mix* (August 24), headlined: **“Litigation drives global policy change on climate, study shows”**. A related academic analysis is available as an NBER Working Paper: Eskander, Fankhauser, and Setzer . **“Global Lessons from Climate Change Legislation and Litigation”** a paper presented at the 2nd Annual NBER Environmental and Energy Policy and the Economy Conference, June 2020.

The *Global Trends 2020 Snapshot report* is based on two publicly available databases of case law and legal documents: **Climate Change Laws of the World** database maintained by the Grantham Institute in the U.K. (with 374 court cases in 36 countries, including 23 from Canada but excluding the U.S.; and the **Climate Case Chart** database maintained by the Sabin Center at Columbia University in the U.S. (featuring 1,213 U.S. climate lawsuits). The Sabin Center also maintains a **smaller database of non-U.S. cases**, which includes 24 Canadian cases.

Advocating for Legislative Reform:

As noted in the Grantham *2020 Snapshot* report, 80% of global climate litigation occurs in the United States. In addition to litigation, Canadian legal activists also focus on legislative reform: for example, West Coast Environmental Law, Ecojustice, Équiterre, working with Climate Action Network Canada, Environmental Defence and the Pembina Institute **released their latest proposals for climate accountability**, in the form of a June report, ***A New Canadian Climate Accountability Act: Building the legal foundation to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050***. It proposes five “pillars” for a new statute that would include: long-term, ambitious GHG reduction targets for 2030 and 2050; 5-year carbon budgets; 5-year impact reports tabled before Parliament to assess the risks of current and predicted climate impacts; and an arm’s-length expert climate advisory committee to monitor and report on progress. The recently-formed Canadian Institute for Climate Choices supported this goal with its own report in June, ***Marking the Way: How Legislating Climate Milestones Clarifies Pathways to Long-Term Goal*** . The **press release** provides a summary of the report; it is accompanied by case studies of the existing climate accountability legislation in the provinces of **British Columbia** and **Manitoba**, as well as the **U.K** and **New Zealand**, considered model jurisdictions.

U.S. Lawyers offer Model Laws for Decarbonization:

In 2019 ***Legal Pathways to Deep Decarbonization in the United States*** was published by the Washington-based **Environmental Law Institute**, in which 59 legal experts offer over 1,000 recommendations for federal, state, local and private action to drastically reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. A 161-page **Summary of Legal Pathways** was published in an effort to take the message outside the “expert” community – besides succinct summaries of the recommended legal changes, it includes an index by actor – providing recommendations for action by “Companies, Associations, NGOs, and Other Private Entities”. Now, a new website seeks to enable more activism: the **Legal Pathways to Deep Decarbonization website**, hosted by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University and the Commonwealth Law School of Widener University, with provides a compilation of actual laws, and model laws drafted and peer-reviewed pro bono by volunteer lawyers. All can be downloaded and customized for other jurisdictions. Some examples: regarding energy efficiency in buildings: the existing **St. Louis’ Building Energy Performance Standard 2020**. So far, model laws posted on the website deal chiefly with green transportation, for example: **Legislation Mandating Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Reduction as Part of Metropolitan Transportation Planning**. For more on this project, read **“Lawyers wanted to help decarbonize the U.S. economy”** in *Resilience* (August 27) .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate accountability, climate change legislation, climate change litigation, Decarbonization, Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction, Lawyers, Urgenda Decision** | **Leave a reply**

How human rights approaches can aid climate activism and litigation

Posted on **August 24, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Climate change, justice and human rights is a collection of ten essays, released by Amnesty International Netherlands in August 2020 (published in English). It is a thoughtful and critical discussion of the opportunities and problems of taking a human rights lens to climate change. “The language, policies and (campaigning) strategies around climate change and human rights are still in development, leading to new insights, (re) definitions, and new challenges for human rights and environmental activists.” The opening essay, “*Amnesty’s approach to climate change and human rights*” discusses whether Amnesty should become involved in climate change, and if so, how. It concludes “Simply framing the crisis as a human rights crisis will by itself make only a modest difference. However, with determination, sound strategy and humility we can use our strengths to support and be guided by those who are at the front line of the climate crisis, and who have been leading the struggle for climate justice for a long time.” Specifically, when options for tactics were presented at a People’s Summit in 2019, participants voted for: Changing public opinion (25%); Civil disobedience (19%); Litigation (17%); Divestment (14%); Mass demonstrations (9%); Consumer boycotts (9%); or something else (7%). Not all of these are tactics commonly used by Amnesty International, but the report discusses how they determine to go forward.

Besides the considerations of Amnesty’s future direction and tactics, the essays look at the concept of climate justice, and finally, at specific policies areas, in chapters such as “*Climate change and the human rights responsibilities of business enterprises*” by Sara Seck, Associate Professor, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University; “*The use of human rights arguments in climate change litigation and its limitations*” by Annalisa Savaresi, one of two Executive Directors of Greenpeace Netherlands; “*The climate crisis and new justice movements: supporting a new generation of climate activists*” by Anna Schoemakers, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Law at Stirling University, UK; and “*Human rights and intergenerational climate justice*” by Bridget Lewis, Senior Lecturer at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Activism, climate change activism, climate change litigation, environmental responsibility, Human Rights** | [Leave a reply](#)

Total, Exxon announce stranded assets but some Canadians aren’t listening

Posted on **August 24, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Just as the long-predicted weather disasters are **coming to pass** before our eyes, so too are the stranded assets of the oil and gas industry. In July, French fossil fuel multinational **Total announced** “asset impairment charges” caused by low oil prices, and “in line with its new **Climate Ambition** announced on May 5, 2020 , which aims at carbon neutrality, Total has reviewed its oil assets that can be qualified as “stranded”, meaning with reserves beyond 20 years and high production costs, whose overall reserves may therefore not be produced by 2050. The only projects identified in this category are the Canadian oil sands projects **Fort Hills** and **Surmont**.” Total also cancelled its membership in the **Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)** , as had **Teck Resources in May 2020** as part of the cost-cutting which saw it **withdraw from the Frontier mine project** in February.

As reported by **Bloomberg News on August 5**, a regulatory filing to the SEC by Exxon announced that low energy prices render as much as 20% of its oil and natural gas reserves as stranded assets, without book value. The massive **Kearl oil-sands mine** near Fort McMurray Alberta was the only operation specifically named in Exxon’s filing, and a separate filing of Exxon subsidiary Imperial Oil Ltd also singled out Kearl’s reserves as “imperiled”.

The Energy Mix summarized and commented on these developments in “[Colossal fossil Total declares \\$9.3b in stranded assets in Alberta tar sands/oil sands](#)” (July 31) and “[Exxon rips up \\$30 Billion rebuilding plan, could declare stranded assets at Kearl Lake](#)” (Aug. 19).

A different future?

In sharp contrast to the companies' announcements: the Alberta office of Price Waterhouse has posted a rosy consultants' view in a series titled: [Energy Visions 2020: What's ahead for Canada's oil and gas industry](#) . Part 1, “[The Evolving Role of oil and gas in the Energy Transition](#)” acknowledges the current low demand, but hones to that persistent industry view: “Given the cyclical nature of the industry, we anticipate that within five years we'll have moved into a period of recovery and growth. By then the current oversupply will likely have been drained.” PWC's prescription for Canadian oil and gas producers: “to differentiate themselves from global competitors, they'll have to continue to focus on important differentiators aligned with environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) measures... Canadian oil and gas companies are already global leaders on some ESG principles. These include demonstrating high employee health-and-safety standards, a record for empowering and investing in the communities in which they operate, support for reasonable government carbon pricing and a commitment to new technologies to reduce emissions. But the challenge remains around how our industry communicates this story to investors.”

Part 2, “[Finding Opportunity for Canada in the Global Energy Transition](#)” states: “Canadian energy companies have the opportunity to proactively address climate issues, take advantage of new opportunities where possible and find ways to create additional value for their communities, employees and shareholders.... We can and must raise our profile by highlighting all the positive achievements we've made in producing our energy more efficiently by using new technologies...”. Post Covid, “there may be opportunities for those companies that have the desire and balance-sheet strength to pursue new capital-intensive energy investments. Companies for which diversification isn't an option must stay focused on their core business and continue to execute more efficiently, digitally and diversely than any global competitor.....We can expect that federal government support for all industries will come in some form of infrastructure investment, and the adoption of alternative energies will likely be part of the government's infrastructure agenda.”

Finally, Part 3, “[New World, New Skills: Preparing your workforce for the Energy Transition](#)” discusses “The Transformation Imperative”, but focuses on automation and artificial intelligence as the disruptors. The report offers the general advice that employers need to create an “upskilling” organizational culture for their employees, while acknowledging that millennials rank the oil and gas as their least attractive career destination.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

25 million jobs forecast by electrifying American buildings, industry, and vehicles

Posted on [August 20, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Mobilizing for a Zero-Carbon America](#) was released in July as the launch to a new project called [Rewiring America](#). The report details a strategy which would create 25 million jobs over an intense transition period of three to five years, and 5 million jobs in the subsequent maintenance phase. Likening the intense mobilization phase to World War 2, the authors call for electrification of almost everything: “The grid would need to be expanded because almost everything would run on electricity, and making it so would require a great many workers....That will need millions of miles of new and upgraded transmission and distribution to get to the end user. Finally on the demand side, we'll need to electrify our 250 million vehicles, 130 million households, 6 million trucks, all of manufacturing and industrial processes, and 5.5 million commercial buildings covering 90 billion square feet. ”The transition can be done using existing technology and American workers. Indeed, work such as retrofitting and electrifying buildings will by necessity have to be done by American workers in America. No outsourcing. The jobs will be created in a range of sectors, from installing solar panels on roofs to electric vehicles to streamlining how we manufacture products. They will also be highly distributed geographically. Every zip code

in America has hundreds, if not thousands, of buildings ripe for electrification in the years to come.” The full report *Mobilizing for Zero-carbon America* is [here](#) ; the Executive Summary is [here](#) .

The report was summarized and analyzed by David Roberts at Vox, in “[How to drive fossil fuels out of the US economy, quickly](#)” (Aug. 6). Roberts, a well-respected climate journalist, states: “Griffith’s work is among the most interesting contributions to the climate discussion in ages”. Roberts’ article is a detailed examination of the data, modelling, and political context of the report, and contends that the job projections are not as important as the underlying argument that it is possible to eliminate 70 to 80 percent of US carbon emissions by 2035 through rapid deployment of five existing electrification technologies: wind and solar power plants, rooftop solar, electric vehicles, heat pumps, and batteries.

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Update: Summer Proposals for Canada’s Green Recovery focus on public infrastructure, retrofitting

Posted on [August 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the mainstream press zeroing in on the implications of [Mark Carney’s return to Ottawa policy circles](#), and [rumours of a “deepening rift”](#) between Prime Minister Trudeau and Finance Minister Morneau over covid-recovery plans, perhaps the moment for a Green Recovery has arrived. Here are highlights of some proposals made since the last WCR compilation in [a June 17 post](#).

Proposals from the labour movement:

Unifor released its [#Build Back Better campaign](#) in June, detailed in a 58-page document, *Unifor’s Road Map for a Fair, Inclusive and Resilient Economic Recovery*. There are five core recommendations, with detailed discussion of each: 1. Build Income Security Programs that Protect All Workers; 2. Rebuild the Economy through Green Jobs and Decarbonization; 3. Expand and Build Critical Infrastructure 4. Rebuild Domestic Industrial Capacity; and 5. Strong, Enforceable Conditions on Corporate Support Packages. Recommendation #2 “Rebuild the Economy through Green Jobs and Decarbonization”, understandably advocates for the sectors which Unifor represents – auto manufacturing, energy, forestry, transit etc. and calls for, among other things, targeted industry support programs, and a federal Just Transition fund (for example, for orphan well clean up and methane reduction initiatives and expansion of the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund. On the issue of transit, Unifor also calls for the federal government to convene special committee, bringing together municipalities, labour unions, private and public transit agencies, academics, urban planners and transit rider groups to develop a National Public Transit Strategy. The *Road Map* also calls for a National Auto Strategy to support zero-emission electric vehicle manufacturing, a national charging infrastructure, and a call to develop a joint government-union accredited green jobs training system. Unifor calls on the government to institute a tripartite model for advisory groups and oversight bodies so that labour unions are involved in any initiatives to develop climate/green transition policy frameworks.

[#Build Back Better](#) also addresses issues affecting all workers, such as income security, equity, and pension security. Key to these appear in Recommendation #5. “Strong, Enforceable Conditions on Corporate Support Packages”, which states: “Government must require an environmental sustainability plan, restrict wage reductions for non-executive workers and establish job protection guarantees to prevent layoffs due to restructuring and offshoring. Any capital investment enabled by government support must include Canadian content when equipment is purchased or capital investments are made. Support packages must include a union neutrality clause and prevent recipients from accessing employee pensions for short-term liquidity.”

Rebuilding our Economy for All describes the priorities of the British Columbia Federation of Labour, as submitted to the provincial Economic Recovery Task Force in May. The sixth of eight priorities states: “We must make up for lost time in

addressing the climate crisis, with an accelerated and inclusive path to a green economy”, but doesn’t suggest any specifics beyond the existing Clean BC program . Priority 7, “Use public investment to restart the economy” translates into mid-term goals to electrify the transit fleet, launch conservation programs and habitat restoration projects; undertake remediation of industrial sites; replace all government vehicles at end of life with e-vehicles; develop and install zero-emission vehicle infrastructure throughout BC.; and continue to expand public, commercial, and residential building retrofits.

The Ontario Federation of Labour also produced an economic recovery plan in June, ***The New Normal: Building an Ontario for All – Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.*** The document calls for investment in public infrastructure, but makes only one brief mention of climate, calling for the government to : “Develop, support, and resource a climate action plan that focuses on green jobs, carbon emission reductions, and the impact on equity-seeking communities – with clear mandates for industry.”

The Canadian Labour Congress released ***Labour’s Vision for an Economic Recovery*** in May, which with an emphasis on health and safety, and job and income security. It touched on climate-related priorities by calling for “Green industrial policy and sector strategies, anchored in union-management dialogue”, and endorsed the **Just Recovery for All principles**. On July 17, the CLC issued a **statement of support for the ‘Safe Restart’** agreement reached between the federal, provincial and territorial governments, commending the provision of sick leave entitlements so that every worker can take time off when they are sick and need to self-isolate. Also in July, the CLC made six **recommendations for reforms to the Employment Insurance system** to ensure a smooth transition from CERB to EI benefits.

Labour and Green Groups pulling together

It is worth noting that the environmental movement has included job and worker concerns in its proposals for Green Recovery, beginning with the **Just Recovery for All** campaign in May . Other examples: ***Green Strings: Principles and Conditions for a Green Recovery from COVID-19 in Canada*** , published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in June lists seven “strings”: Support only companies that agree to plan for net-zero emissions by 2050; Make sure funds go towards jobs and stability, not executives and shareholders; Support a just transition that prepares workers for green jobs; Build up the sectors and infrastructure of tomorrow; Strengthen and protect environmental policies during recovery; Be transparent and accountable to Canadians.



The Green Budget Coalition, representing twenty-four leading Canadian environmental organizations, presented a ***Discussion Paper for their pre-Budget recommendations*** at the end of June, with their final submission promised for September. Their focus: 1) Stimulus investments for clean transportation industries; 2) Building retrofit jobs 3) Nature-based climate solutions 4) Conservation and Protected Areas, including Indigenous Protected Areas and Guardian programs.

The David Suzuki Foundation has included “Transform the Economy” as one of the three pillars of its **Green and Just Recovery campaign** . Blog posts with accompanying online petitions have been published on “**Pandemic and climate crises unmask inequalities**” in May, and “**Four Day Workweek can spur necessary Transformation**” in August .

Other Proposals of Note, with a focus on Retrofitting:



The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released its **Alternative Federal Budget Recovery Plan** in July, stating: “The AFB Recovery Plan is a collective blueprint for how Canada can get through this crisis in the short, medium, and long term. It closes the chapter on the old normal.”..... “COVID-19 exposed the impossibility of a healthy economy without a healthy society. The status quo is no longer an option. This is our chance to bend the curve of public policy toward justice, well-being, solidarity, equity, resilience, and sustainability....”. The CCPA calls for “immediate action to implement universal public child care so people can get back to work, reform employment insurance, strengthen safeguards for public health, decarbonize the economy, and tackle the gender, racial, and income inequality that COVID-19 has further exposed.” Within this broad framework there is a section titled Climate Change, Just Transition and Industrial Strategy” (pages 50 – 54), which points out that “Governments at all levels have taken unprecedented action to respond to COVID-19 and that same level of ambition and speed must also be applied to the zero-carbon transition...A just recovery from COVID-19 will not be a return to the status quo of an exploitative fossil fuel-based economy.” In the short-term, the Recovery Plan repeats calls for a Just Transition Act for displaced workers and affected communities, (first announced in 2019), a Just Transition Commission, a Strategic Training Fund and a Just Transition Transfer. Furthermore, the Recovery Plan calls for a clear regulatory phase-out of oil and gas production for fuel by 2040 (modeled on the national phase-out of coal power by 2030), beginning immediately so that recovery funds are not invested into the stranded assets of the oil and gas industry. In the medium term, the Recovery Plan calls again for a National Decarbonization Strategy to achieve a net zero-carbon economy through public investments in industries such as electricity generation, public transit, forestry and building and home retrofitting, especially in Canada’s North. This Decarbonization Strategy would allow for \$250 million per year to establish a new Strategic Training Fund; \$10 billion per year to establish a youth Green Jobs Corps. Amongst the long-term recommendations for rebuilding: high impact green infrastructure projects under direct public ownership, with social enterprises and other forms of cooperative, community-based ownership also encouraged.

On July 22, the **Task Force for a Resilient Recovery released its Interim Report** , costing out five key policy directions for the next five years, with a total price tag of just under \$50 billion. The Task Force lists key actions and actors to achieve five broad goals: “Invest in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings; Jumpstart Canada’s production and adoption of zero-emission vehicles; Go big on growing Canada’s clean energy sectors; Invest in the nature that protects and sustains us; Grow clean competitiveness and jobs across the Canadian economy . As part of #1, investment in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings, the Task Force calls for “investing \$1.25 billion in workforce development for energy efficiency and climate resiliency, including for enhancing access to training programs and for developing new approaches.” Under the policy goal of investing in nature, the Task Force includes a call for \$400 million investment “to connect unemployed and underemployed Canadians with opportunities in the nature economy, and to boost the planning and implementation capacity of local governments, Indigenous groups, conservation agencies, forestry and agriculture operations, NGOs and tourism bodies.” The Task Force Final report is promised for September 2020.

The Labour Council of Toronto and York Region, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 353, and the Carpenters District Council of Ontario have signed on as foundation partners in a new coalition of employers, educators, and unions, formed to fast-track green building as an economic and jobs solution to re-start the economy. The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) is the seed funder for the coalition, called **Workforce 2030** . It is based on the recommendations of the Canada Green Building Council, **Ready, Set, Grow: How the green building industry can re-ignite Canada’s economy** , published in May. The TAF proposals are outlined in their submission to the government, [here](#).

Efficiency Canada, another founding partner of the Workforce 2030 coalition, released its [Pre-budget Submission to the government](#) on August 5. It calls for \$1.5 billion to expand green building workforce training, \$10.4 billion over three years to expand provincial and municipal energy efficiency portfolios, \$13 billion to capitalize a building retrofit finance platform implemented through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; \$2 billion for large-scale building retrofit demonstration projects; and additional incentives to provinces that adopt higher energy performance tiers of the 2020 model national building codes, with a plan to achieve a 90% compliance rate.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [Green Building](#), [Green Recovery](#), [labour union policies](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Teachers' pension fund invests in Abu Dhabi oil pipelines

Posted on [June 24, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP), has outdone the May decision of [AimCo in Alberta to invest in the Coastal GasLink pipeline](#), with its announcement on June 23d that it is part of a consortium which has invested \$10.1 billion in a gas pipeline network under development by the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. Details appear in the [Globe and Mail](#) and [Energy Mix](#) on June 23. The consortium partners are Toronto-based Brookfield Asset Management, New York-based Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP), and investors from Singapore, South Korea, and Italy. The [Ontario Teachers Pension Plan](#) is quoted by the *Globe and Mail*, stating: "This strategic transaction is attractive to Ontario Teachers' as it provides us with a stake in a high-quality infrastructure asset with stable long-term cash flows, which will help us deliver on our pension promise."

Advocacy group Shift Action for Pension Wealth and Planet Health responded [with a scathing statement](#), which says:

"Investments like the OTPP's in fossil fuel infrastructure are betting the hard-earned retirement savings of thousands of Ontario teachers against the long-term safety of our climate... Ensuring the growth of pensions in the long-term requires ending investments that lock-in fossil fuels and redeploying massive pools of finance into climate solutions like renewable energy and clean technology."

Shift also links to a 25-page [Toolkit for OTPP members](#) on the risks of fossil fuel investment of their pension funds. (May 2020). The OTPP Statement on Responsible Investing for 2019 is [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Oil and gas industry](#), [Ontario](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#), [teachers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta Pension fund invests in Coastal GasLink pipeline, the latest risky fossil fuel investment

Posted on [June 23, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Carbon Tracker, the group which originated the term "stranded assets, published two new reports about the financial risks of fossil fuel investment in June: [It's Closing Time: The Huge Bill to Abandon Oilfields Comes Early](#) and [Decline and Fall: The Size & Vulnerability of the Fossil Fuel System](#) on June 4. Banking giant Goldman Sachs also released a new report, [Carbonomics: The Future of Energy in the age of climate change](#), which sees a fundamental shift from fossils to renewable energy investments.

Yet even as the drumbeat of fossil fuel decline continues, the public sector pension funds of Alberta and South Korea purchased a majority ownership stake in the Coastal GasLink pipeline from TC Energy on May 25, using the retirement

savings of millions of individuals. “[Alberta and South Korea’s pensions just bought the Coastal GasLink pipeline: 8 things you need to know](#)” in *The Narwhal* (June 10) analyses the situation and cites a report from [Progress Alberta : Alberta’s Failed Oil and Gas Bailout](#) , with this subtitle provided: “How AIMCO invested more than a billion dollars of pensioners and Albertans money into risky oil and gas companies with more than \$3 billion in environmental liabilities and how the people running those companies got rich through huge salaries, share buybacks, dividends and conservative political connections.” Besides exposing the political shadows and environmental liabilities of many AimCo energy investments, the report makes recommendations, including for a public review of the investment performance and governance of Aimco; to divest from risky fossil fuel investments; to allow pension plans whose funds are being managed by AIMCo to appoint representatives to its board ; and to allow pension funds the freedom to leave AIMCo.

The recommended reforms are necessary because of the changes made by the Kenney government in November 2019, described by WCR [here](#) and by Alberta unions in: [Union leaders tell UCP: ‘The money saved by Albertans for retirement belongs to them, not to you!’](#) [Alberta’s Failed Oil and Gas Bailout](#) report urges: “The mismanagement of pensions and the Heritage Fund today offers opportunities for unions, political parties, civil society groups and organizers to engage and activate people who otherwise might never get involved in political collective action. People’s retirements and Alberta’s savings fund from its fossil fuel wealth are at stake.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Alberta Federation of Labour](#), [Coast GasLink pipeline](#), [LNG](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International Energy Agency roadmap for a sustainable recovery forecasts job growth led by retrofitting and electricity

Posted on [June 19, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Energy Agency, in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund, released a roadmap which would require global investment by governments of USD 1 trillion annually between 2021 and 2023 to create jobs and accelerate the deployment of clean energy technologies and infrastructure. The [World Energy Outlook Special Report: Sustainable Recovery](#) , released on June 18th states: “Through detailed assessments of more than 30 specific energy policy measures to be carried out over the next three years, this report considers the circumstances of individual countries as well as existing pipelines of energy projects and current market conditions.” The report data and analysis will form the basis for the IEA Clean Energy Transitions Summit on July 9 2020, where decision-makers in government, industry and the investment community will meet to discuss policy options for economic recovery post Covid-19.

From the report: “ Our new IEA energy employment database shows that in 2019, the energy industry – including electricity, oil, gas, coal and biofuels – directly employed around 40 million people globally. Our analysis estimates that 3 million of those jobs have been lost or are at risk due to the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis, with another 3 million jobs lost or under threat in related areas such as vehicles, buildings and industry. “ The recommendations promise to save or create approximately 9 million jobs per year, with the greatest number in building retrofitting for energy efficiency, and in the electricity sector. The *Sustainable Recovery Plan* also seeks to avoid the kind of rebound effect which occurred after the 2008/2009 recession, claiming that it would stimulate economic growth while achieving annual energy-related greenhouse gas emissions which “would be 4.5 billion tonnes lower in 2023 than they would be otherwise”, decreasing air pollution emissions by 5%, and thus reducing global health risks.

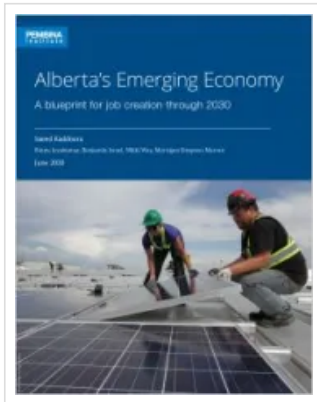
Under the heading of “Opportunities in technology innovation”, the report examines four specific technologies: “hydrogen technologies, which have a potentially important role in a wide range of sectors; batteries, which are very important for electrification of road transport and the integration of renewables in power markets; small modular nuclear reactors, which have technology attributes that make them scalable as an important low-carbon option in the power sector; and carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), which could play a critical role in the energy sector reaching net-zero emissions. We also compare the near-term job creation potential of some of these measures.” The IEA is preparing an *Energy*

Technology Perspectives Special Report on Clean Energy Technology Innovation, which will be released in early July 2020.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [carbon capture and storage](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Covid 19](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Energy policy](#), [green hydrogen](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Job Creation](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Pembina proposes a low-carbon blueprint to create 67,200 jobs in Alberta

Posted on **June 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A report released on June 15 calculates that, with supportive government policies, 67,200 jobs could be created in Alberta by 2030 in four key areas: renewable electricity; transit and electric vehicle infrastructure; energy efficiency in buildings and industry; and environmental cleanup and methane reduction in the oil and gas industry. ***Alberta's Emerging Economy: A blueprint for job creation through 2030*** was funded by the [Alberta Federation of Labour](#) and written by researchers at the Pembina Institute. It provides detailed data for each of the four sectors, along with well-informed policy discussion. Notably, the number of jobs forecast represents a significant diversification of the labour market for the province: 67,200 jobs is equal to 67% of the total workforce of the mining, and oil and gas extraction industry in 2019.

Alberta's Hydrogen initiative

Alberta's Emerging Economy does not consider the potential jobs from new technologies such as carbon capture and storage, or hydrogen production. Fundamental to understanding that technology is the difference between “grey hydrogen”, “blue” hydrogen and “green” hydrogen- explained by an expert at the International Energy Agency [here](#) , or in *Green Tech Media* in ***“The Reality Behind Green Hydrogen’s Soaring Hype”***.

On May 14, the **Alberta Industrial Heartland Hydrogen Task Force** was launched as “an independent working group created to develop a framework to implement a hydrogen economy in the region” and “produce a public report detailing the approach and steps needed to advance a zero-emission fuel economy in Alberta’s Industrial Heartland.” The Task Force includes local mayors from Alberta and Saskatchewan (including Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson). The full list of Task Force members and advisors [is here](#) , and is organized by **Transition Accelerator** – itself launched in 2019, by the University of Calgary research group CESAR. A recent report in their “The Future of Freight” series, ***Implications for Alberta of Alternatives for Diesel*** advocates for “blue hydrogen” production (hydrogen made from natural gas by steam-methane reforming (SMR) coupled to carbon capture and storage (CCS)).

Hydrogen production is described in the *Globe and Mail* on June 14, ***“Ottawa, Alberta develop new hydrogen strategies”*** . An overview in *Corporate Knights* magazine on May 14 claims ***“Hydrogen can make Canada an energy superpower again”***. It concludes:

We live in Alberta, so know the danger in including the words 'national' and 'energy' in the same sentence. But picture a Canada where hydrogen is the focus of a pan-Canadian strategy that would have all provinces working together for a net-zero emission energy future that revitalizes our economy and again positions Canada as an energy superpower.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [green hydrogen](#), [Job Creation](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Global reports call for renewables to lead a green recovery from Covid-19

Posted on **June 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

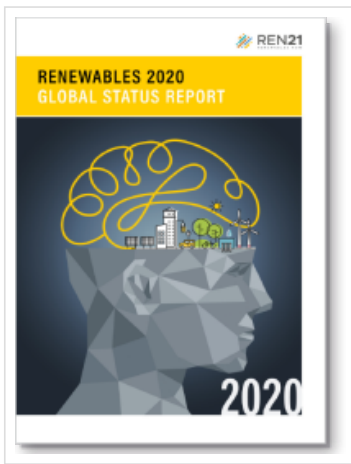
Renewable Power Generation Costs in 2019 was released on June 2 by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), showing that “more than half of the renewable capacity added in 2019 achieved lower power costs than the cheapest new coal plants.” The analysis spans around 17,000 renewable power generation projects from around the world, and includes discussion of job impacts in the industry. A [statistical dashboard is searchable by country](#), including Canada, and by jobs statistics.

The report emphasizes the importance of renewables in a global economic recovery strategy, stating:

“Renewables offer a way to align short-term policy action with medium- and long-term energy and climate goals. Renewables must be the backbone of national efforts to restart economies in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. With the right policies in place, falling renewable power costs, can shift markets and contribute greatly towards a green recovery.”

On June 10, the ***Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment*** report was released by the U.N. Environment Programme, with a [press release](#) with a similar message: “As COVID-19 hits the fossil fuel industry, the GTR 2020 shows that renewable energy is more cost-effective than ever – providing an opportunity to prioritize clean energy in economic recovery packages and bring the world closer to meeting the Paris Agreement goals. In 2019, the amount of new renewable power capacity added (excluding large hydro) was the highest ever, at 184 gigawatts, 20GW more than in 2018.” The 80-page ***Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment*** is an annual report commissioned by the UN Environment Programme in cooperation with Frankfurt School-UNEP Collaborating Centre for Climate & Sustainable Energy Finance, produced in collaboration with Bloomberg NEF, and supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety.

The argument for the cost advantage of clean energy is demonstrated with detailed modelling for the United States by researchers at the University of California Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy. Their new report, ***2035: The Report: Plummeting solar, wind and battery costs can accelerate our clean electricity future*** “uses the latest renewable energy and battery cost data to demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of achieving 90% clean (carbon-free) electricity in the United States by 2035. “The 90% Clean case avoids over \$1.2 trillion in health and environmental costs, including 85,000 avoided premature deaths, through 2050”... and “ supports a total of 29 million job-years cumulatively during 2020–2035.These jobs include direct, indirect, and induced jobs related to construction, manufacturing, operations and maintenance, and the supply chain. Overall, the 90% Clean case supports over 500,000 more jobs each year compared to the No New Policy case.”



Another report, [Renewables 2020 Global Status Report](#) was released by REN21 on June 16, with a 36-page summary of **Key Findings**. The report provides detailed global statistics re capacity and investment trends, and also discusses the considerable impact of the coronavirus. There is much good news – for example, over 27% of global electricity now comes from renewables, up from 19% in 2010.... The share of solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind power has grown more than five times since 2009”. But there is also an urgent call to end fossil fuel subsidies and for other policy actions under the heading: “Momentum in renewable power hides a profound lag in the heating, cooling and transport sectors”. The report states:

“It would be short-sighted to celebrate advances in the power sector without acknowledging the alarmingly low shares and slow uptake of renewables in the heating, cooling and transport sectors. Renewable shares in heating and cooling are low (10.1%) and struggle to increase, even as the sector accounts for more than half of total energy demand. Similarly, energy demand in transport – which accounts for a third of total energy demand – is growing the fastest by far, yet renewable shares barely exceed 3.3%. Ongoing dependence on fossil fuels for heating, cooling and transport is related to a lack of policy support for renewables in these sectors. There is still no level playing field. Many countries continue to uphold fossil fuel subsidies, which in 2018 increased 30% from the year before. Global fossil fuel subsidies totalled USD 400 billion, more than double the amount that governments spent on renewable power. The massive support for fossil fuels hinders the already difficult task of reducing emissions and must be brought to a halt. “ In 2019, a record 200 gigawatts (GW) of renewable power capacity was added, more than three times the level of fossil fuel and nuclear capacity. Over 27% of global electricity now comes from renewables, up from 19% in 2010.– a remarkable rise attributed largely to continued cost declines for these technologies.”

On June 11, the U.S. Solar Energy Industry Association released its [Solar Market Insight Report](#) for the 2nd Quarter of 2020, forecasting a 31% drop in solar installations in 2020 over 2019, mostly as result of Covid-19. The SEIA [press release](#) estimates that 72,000 workers in the U.S. have lost their jobs. The [Executive Summary](#) discusses the impact of the coronavirus extensively; only the Executive Summary is available for free. The report analysis is done by Wood MacKenzie consultants, and the full report is pricey.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [Energy policy](#), [Green Recovery](#), [International](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Lessons for Canada’s EV policy in new IEA EV Global Outlook report

Posted on [June 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 15, the International Energy Agency released [Global EV Outlook 2020](#), a



comprehensive annual report which provides historical analysis and projections to 2030, along with policy recommendations. It states that global electric car sales in 2019 were 2.1 million – a 6% growth from 2018, but at a slower rate than previous years – partly explained by the Covid-19 pandemic. The report discusses electric vehicle and charging infrastructure deployment, ownership cost, energy use, carbon dioxide emissions and battery material demand, as well as the performance and costs of batteries. Further, it updates its life-cycle analysis re end-of-life treatment for batteries. It also includes case studies on transit bus electrification in Kolkata (India), Shenzhen (China), Santiago (Chile) and Helsinki (Finland). The press release summary is [here](#) .

Ben Sharpe and Jesse Pelchat argued that “[Canada is falling behind on transition to electric vehicles](#)” in *Policy Options* (May 1), summarizing the findings of a report by the International Council on Clean Transportation, [Canada’s role in the electric vehicle transition](#) (March 31). They state that “One of the most impactful things governments in Canada can do to stimulate manufacturing of zero-emission cars and trucks is to ramp up the effort to deploy policies aimed at growing the domestic market for these vehicles” – an argument expanded by Clean Energy Canada in [Catching the Bus : How Smart Policy Can Accelerate Electric Buses Across Canada](#) (June 11).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta dissolves Energy Efficiency agency, weakens oil and gas approval process

Posted on [June 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Bill 22, The Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act](#) passed first reading in the Alberta legislature on June 11. The latest in Alberta’s environmental roll-backs, Bill 22 is a 14-point omnibus bill which eliminates the need for cabinet approval for oil and gas projects, and dissolves the Energy Efficiency Alberta agency, begun in 2017. Alberta’s Environment Minister has said it will be wound down by September and most staff re-assigned to the [Emissions Reduction Alberta](#) agency, which focuses on large-scale industry such as the oil and gas industry. The changes are summarized in an article in [in The Energy Mix](#) (June 14) and in [The Globe and Mail](#) . Efficiency Canada reacted with a critical press release on June 12, titled “[Alberta cuts successful job-creation engine in the midst of recession](#)” – which asserts that Energy Efficiency Alberta created more than 4,300 private-sector jobs between 2017 and 2019”. The [Pembina Institute reaction](#) also cites the job losses which will come from the decision, and states: “This move reinforces the negative image that the Government of Alberta was attempting to change when the EEA was installed as a major pillar of Alberta’s climate plan.”

The government justifies its decision [in a blog](#) which doesn’t mention the job creation success of the agency.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [energy efficiency](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Returning to work after Covid-19 – by transit or by cycling?

Posted on [June 15, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) in Canada **reported** on May 12 that a Probe Research poll found that 78% of Canadian respondents support \$5 billion in emergency government funding for public transit services, and 91% agree that governments have a responsibility to ensure access to safe, reliable, and affordable public transit. Yet when asked whether they would use public transport after Covid-19, city-dwellers in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the U.K. and the Brussels metropolitan area, expressed “lukewarm enthusiasm for public transport, due to a fear of the risk of infection”. The European survey also was conducted in mid-May, by YouGov poll, and according to **an article in Politico Europe**, preference was for “active transportation” such as walking and cycling, with a majority supporting new zero-emissions zones, banning cars from urban areas, and maintaining the gains in road space dedicated to bikes and pedestrians that were implemented during the Covid-19 crisis.

In Canada, the cycling issue is explored in **“Bike lanes installed on urgent basis across Canada during COVID-19 pandemic”** by CBC (June 7), highlighting a movement to establish permanent, protected cycling lanes – which is one of the demands of the **2020 Declaration for Resilience in Canadian Cities**, a statement championed by Jennifer Keesmaat, former City of Toronto Chief Planner. (a list of over 100 signatories **is here**). Other proposals from the *Declaration* include a moratorium on the construction and reconstruction of urban expressways; congestion pricing policies, with 100% of the revenues dedicated to public transportation expansion, and electrification of the public transit fleet.

Catching the Bus : How Smart Policy Can Accelerate Electric Buses Across Canada is a policy report released by Clean Energy Canada on June 11, but unfortunately researched before the transformational impacts of Covid-19. In an updated introduction, Clean Energy Canada argues that emergency financial relief for transit agencies should be the government’s top priority, but points out that transit procurement cycles run approximately 12 to 18 years, so that “investment decisions today will last for decades.” According to a **blog by the Amalgamated Transit Union** , the pandemic has resulted in a 75-85% decrease in ridership, with over 3,000 layoffs announced by mid-May and more expected. The ATU **has called on the federal government** to provide a \$5 billion stimulus investment just to stave off the bankruptcy of transit agencies – the ATU position on electrification is stated in a **February blog here** .

Clearing the Air: How electric vehicles and cleaner trucks can reduce pollution, improve health and save lives in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area was released on June 3, a joint project by Environmental Defence , the Ontario Public Health Association, and the University of Toronto’s Transportation and Air Quality Research Group. The report considers the impact of electrification of passenger cars, urban buses, and freight trucks, with the main purpose of demonstrating the considerable health effects of lower pollution. Policy prescriptions for buses are scanty, though the report estimates that electrifying all public transit buses in Canada would provide social benefits of up to \$1.1 billion per year. The report and a series of interactive maps of the region are **here** .

Of these recent reports, only the **2020 Declaration for Resilience in Canadian Cities** addresses the issue of transit equity, so evident in the pandemic world as low-wage and essential workers may not have the luxury of replacing their transit commute with a passenger car. *Work and Climate Change Report* summarized Canadian initiatives pre-Covid in **“Transit Equity and Free Transit: addressing social justice, climate justice and workplace justice** (Feb.10) . Also pre-Covid in November 2019, **an interview** with University of Toronto professor Steven Farber discusses how transit policy is a social justice issue. Farber also spoke at the **ATU Transit Equity Summit** in December 2019 .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **commuting, Covid 19, Electric Vehicles, Transit Policy** | **Leave a reply**

Updating Job proposals for a Green Recovery: Canada, U.S., Europe

Posted on **June 15, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Green Recovery proposals in Canada:

The *Work and Climate Change Report* has **previously highlighted** proposals for a Green Recovery from Covid-19, including **Labour’s Vision for Economic Recovery** by the Canadian Labour Congress, the **Just Recovery for All**

coalition campaign and the [Task Force for a Resilient Recovery](#) . Another very focused campaign is [Inclusive Recovery](#) , which states that Canada's federal government is planning to invest over \$187 billion dollars on infrastructure projects over the next ten years as part of its Green Recovery funding. The [Inclusive Recovery](#) campaign, organized by the Toronto Community Benefits Network, Toronto & York Region Labour Council, the Labour Education Centre, and other unions and social service agencies, is [seeking support and endorsement of a joint letter](#) to the Federal government calling on them "to integrate and expand community benefit expectations in publicly funded infrastructure projects".

On June 4, *Corporate Knights* magazine published "[Building Back Better: A roadmap to the Canada we want](#)" , which consolidates the already-published articles and roundtable discussions from its [Green Recovery series](#) . The resulting "roadmap" , written by consultants Ralph Torrie and Céline Bak, with Toby Heaps, argues that " By 2030, Canada could create more than five million quality job-years of employment by greening the power grid, electrifying transport and upgrading our homes and workplaces to be more comfortable and flood resilient." In estimating the cost, that job-creation number goes even higher: "the federal investment in the programs we have proposed would total \$106 billion, crowding in an additional \$730 billion in private and other sector investment, creating 6.7 million years of employment – more than twice the jobs that have been lost due to COVID-19", and continues: "These investments would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 237 million tonnes from 2018 levels. That would meet our Paris Climate Agreement commitments and put us on a path to a carbon-free economy within a generation." In a postscript, the authors state: "The best chance we have for the green economy to prevail is by marrying the green economy movement with social justice movements, which on a practical level means Building Back Better with vastly enhanced supports for eldercare, childcare and living wages, and as we've noted repeatedly throughout the series, by supporting thriving Indigenous communities."

Green recovery studies: United States

The Sierra Club in the U.S. released a new report in June, [Millions of Green Jobs: A Plan for Economic Revival](#) . It lays out estimates and a policy options for the "multiple, mutually reinforcing crises" of Covid-19 , economic inequality, and global heating, and importantly, states that "All investments in this economic renewal plan must uphold the following environmental, labor, and equity standards" – which include Buy America and domestic procurement policies to stimulate manufacturing. Also included: "All construction and related contracts should require community benefit agreements; a mandatory "ban the box" policy to ensure fair employment opportunities for all; hiring preferences for low-income workers, people of color, people with disabilities, and returning citizens; and contracting preferences for businesses led by women and people of color." Using job creation estimates produced by Robert Pollin, the report argues for "family-sustaining jobs for over 9 million people every year for the next 10 years while building an economy that fosters cleaner air and water, higher wages, healthier communities, greater equity, and a more stable climate. That includes supporting over 1 million manufacturing jobs each year." The report offers a sectoral breakdown of the 9 million jobs per year, in infrastructure for clean water, clean transportation, and clean energy; renewable energy; energy efficiency; and regenerative agriculture.

[Millions of Green Jobs: A Plan for Economic Revival](#) is based on a technical report released in May 2020: [Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures: Modeling Proposals by Various U.S. Civil Society Groups; Macro-Level and Detailed Program-by-Program Job Creation Estimates](#) , written by Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty at the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Another data-driven report from researchers at the University of California Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy is [2035: The Report: Plummeting solar, wind and battery costs can accelerate our clean electricity future](#) . It "uses the latest renewable energy and battery cost data to demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of achieving 90% clean (carbon-free) electricity in the United States by 2035." Two central cases are simulated using state-of-the-art capacity expansion and production-cost models from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. "The 90% Clean case avoids over \$1.2 trillion in health and environmental costs, including 85,000 avoided premature deaths, through 2050"... and "supports a total of 29 million job-years cumulatively during 2020–2035. Employment related to the energy sector increases by approximately 8.5 million net job years, as increased employment from expanding renewable energy and battery storage more than replaces lost employment related to declining fossil fuel generation. The "No New Policy" case requires one-third fewer jobs, for a total of 20 million job-years over the study period. These jobs include direct, indirect, and induced jobs related to construction, manufacturing, operations and maintenance, and the supply chain. Overall, the 90% Clean case supports over 500,000 more jobs each year compared to the No New Policy case."

A [dedicated website](#) offers downloads of the [report](#) and an interactive "Data Explorer" which includes a jobs component.

Green Recovery plans: Europe

Influential consultants McKinsey published [“How a post-pandemic stimulus can both create jobs and help the climate”](#) on May 27, written by McKinsey partners from Frankfurt, London, Paris, Stockholm, as well as San Francisco. The report focuses on 12 potential stimulus measures with a strong emphasis on European experience, and estimates the jobs created per Euro spent, as well as total jobs created, for each of its twelve low-carbon strategies. The McKinsey report highlights the 2017 econometric study of the U.S., [“Green vs. Brown”](#) by Heidi Garrett-Pelletier, which concluded that “on average, 2.65 full-time-equivalent (FTE) jobs are created from \$1 million spending in fossil fuels, while that same amount of spending would create 7.49 or 7.72 FTE jobs in renewables or energy efficiency. Thus each \$1 million shifted from brown to green energy will create a net increase of 5 jobs.”

In the U.K., the Local Government Authority released [Local green jobs – accelerating a sustainable economic recovery](#), on June 11. It predicts that “Soaring demand for green jobs will require a diverse range of skills and expertise to roll-out clean technologies”. Specifically, the report forecasts that by 2030, an estimated 693,628 low-carbon jobs and “between 2030 and 2050, the low-carbon workforce in England could increase by a further 488,569, taking the total level of jobs to more than 1.18 million by 2050.”

In its own interest, the LGA argues for increased funding at the local level, to “fast-track green jobs” with concentrated action to introduce national skills programmes for training and retraining. [Local Green Jobs](#) is supplemented by an [interactive regional breakdown of statistics by local authority](#), and a supportive [policy framework](#) document.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green Recovery](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental rollbacks during Covid-19 in Canada and the U.S.

Posted on [June 11, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

This post was updated on June 17 to include new developments in Alberta and Ontario.

On June 3, Canadian journalist Emma McIntosh compiled and published a Canadian list of environmental rollbacks, and continues to update it as changes continue in almost every province. [“Here’s every environmental protection in Canada that has been suspended, delayed and cancelled during COVID-19”](#) in the *National Observer*, is a compilation built by scouring news reports and legislative websites. Although it includes all Canadian provinces, the Alberta and Ontario governments are highlighted as the worst offenders, including changes to [Alberta’s environmental monitoring in the oil sands](#) and [weakening of air quality monitoring](#). The inventory was updated to include Bill 22, [The Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act](#), which passed first reading in the Alberta legislature on June 11. A 14-point omnibus bill, Bill 22 eliminates the need for cabinet approval for oil and gas projects, and dissolves the Energy Efficiency Alberta agency, begun in 2017. Alberta’s Environment Minister has said it will be wound down by September and most staff re-assigned to the Emissions Reduction Alberta agency, which focuses on the oil and gas industry. Efficiency Canada reacted with a critical press release on June 12, titled [“Alberta cuts successful job-creation engine in the midst of recession”](#) – which states that “The agency created more than 4,300 private-sector jobs between 2017 and 2019”.

In Ontario, early on, the government suspended part two of the provincial Environmental Bill of Rights, [excusing the government from notifying or consulting the public on environment-related projects](#), changes or regulations. Changes were also made to zoning requirements, to speed the development approval process. Unexpectedly, the government restored the protections on June 15, although it has been vague about its reasoning, and more importantly, has not revealed what projects were approved during the suspension period. [“Doug Ford government restores environmental protections it suspended amid COVID-19”](#) (June 15). The article notes that since Premier Doug Ford took office in 2017, “Ontario has cancelled 227 clean energy projects, wound down conservation programs, weakened endangered species protections and has taken away powers from the province’s environmental commissioner.”

In Newfoundland

Although it is not noted in the *National Observer* inventory yet (updating is ongoing) – Newfoundland joined the ranks of major actors on June 4, when the government press release announced a **“New Regional Assessment Process Protects the Environment and Shortens Timelines for Exploration Drilling Program Approval”**. This action reverses a 2010 decision and places authority for exploration approval back with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB), rather than the federal Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA). Calling the drilling of offshore exploration wells a “low impact activity”, the press release promises a faster approval process which “allows the province to become more globally competitive while maintaining a strong and effective environmental regulatory regime.” A June 4 press release from the federal government endorses the move, according to their press release: **“The Government of Canada announces new regulatory measure to improve review process for exploratory drilling projects in the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore”** .

It is notable that the **Just Recovery for All campaign** launched in Canada on May 25 calls for a fair and just recovery from COVID-19 through relief and stimulus packages, and includes as one of its six principles:

“Bailout packages must not encourage unqualified handouts, regulatory rollbacks, or regressive subsidies that enrich shareholders or CEOs, particularly those who take advantage of tax havens. These programs must support a just transition away from fossil fuels that creates decent work and leaves no one behind.”

In the United States

Donald Trump’s environmental rollbacks during the Covid-19 pandemic have been well-reported, with the *New York Times* maintaining an ongoing register in **“The Trump Administration Is Reversing 100 Environmental Rules. Here’s the Full List”** (last updated on May 20) and more recently, on June 4, **“ Trump, Citing Pandemic, Moves to Weaken Two Key Environmental Protections”**. This article notes his Executive Order allowing agencies to waive required environmental reviews of infrastructure projects, and a new rule proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency which weakens air pollution controls under the Clean Air Act regulations.

Greenpeace USA issued a response highlighting the racist intent of these changes, and DeSmog Blog published a blog **“Trump EPA’s Refusal to Strengthen Air Quality Standards Most Likely to Harm Communities of Color, Experts Say”**.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Covid 19](#), [Environmental Assessment](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Newfoundland](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadians report mixed feelings about working from home – but is it good for the environment? for workers?

Posted on [June 11, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Angus Reid Institute is a Canadian non-profit public opinion research foundation Their recent survey of Covid-related experiences is summarized at their [June 11 press release](#), with the full 11-page report was released under the title **So long, office space? Two-thirds of Canadians who work from home expect it to continue after pandemic** .

Of the 30% of Canadians who have been working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic, only 36 % expect to return full-time to their workplace after the pandemic subsides – others expect to split working time between workplace and home,

and 20% expect to work primarily from home. The survey measured productivity and mental health impacts of working from home, showing mixed results re mental health: 15% said it had been “terrible”, 16% said it had been “great”, and 68% ranking it as “okay” – notably, 20% of women 18 to 34 years old rank it as “awful”. The survey also reports on the job loss experiences of respondents since the March beginning of lockdown, with a high of 31% experiencing job loss in May, and 28% in June. Responses concerning job loss, economic outlook, and incidence and attitudes to government financial assistance are available by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics.

Is working from home good for the planet? or for workers?

An earlier WCR post in May, “[Working from home may not save as much energy as we think](#)” summarizes an article from *Environmental Research Letters* which found little empirical evidence that working from home benefits the environment or climate change. Initially some environmentalists saw a [possible \(though temporary\) upside in a reduction of GHG emissions](#) from commuting, and the concept is being embraced by corporate management – for its own reasons. The complexity of the issue is discussed in “[Office work will never be the same](#)” in *Vox* (May 27), which argues that flexibility *may* benefit the privileged white collar workers who can work from home, but also opens the door to increased workplace surveillance with its greater dependence on technology (not to mention the equity question for those who don’t have the option). In “[Working from Home: Post-Coronavirus Will Give Bosses Greater Control of Workers’ Lives](#)” (June 4) in *Jacobin*, author Luke Savage cites examples of Canadian workplace policies from the Bank of Montreal and Shopify, and quotes an unnamed Canadian unionist . Savage concludes with this warning:

“With every home an office and every office a home, the residual boundaries between work and private life will be gone for good. Still worse, the whole or even partial demise of the physical office space could become a catalyst for a deeper precarization of work wherein many workers are effectively remote contractors, their homes operating like quasi-franchises over which employers can exercise discretionary control with minimal restriction.

Socialists have long argued that bosses and markets exert far too much power and control over our time, our private lives, and our individual autonomy. Unless we resist the burgeoning shift to remote work, both are about to devour an even bigger share of all three.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [office workers](#), [remote work](#), [telecommuting](#), [Working Conditions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Export Development Canada continues to undermine climate change goals, using Covid-19 recovery to fund Coastal GasLink pipeline

Posted on [June 10, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Reforming Export Development Canada: Climate-Related Risk Management and the Low Carbon Transition](#) is an important new report released on June 9, commissioned by advocacy groups Above Ground and Oil Change International. The report analysis was conducted by consultancy Horizon Advisors, who calculate that the crown corporation Export Development Canada (EDC) has provided roughly \$45 billion in support for the oil and gas sector since 2016, compared to \$7 billion for clean technology. “These investments not only undermine Canada’s international climate efforts but also increase EDC’s exposure to carbon risks.” The report recommends that the government amend the Export Development Act to bar EDC from supporting any fossil fuel energy projects, including new fossil fuel infrastructure such as pipelines, and that the agency should “stress-test its investment decisions against Canada’s climate targets.”

The [Reforming Export Development Canada](#) report is not the first time EDC has been examined for its fossil-friendly investment strategy and criticized for undermining Canada’s climate change progress. Oil Change International and Above Ground published [Risking it All: How Export Development Canada’s Support for Fossil Fuels Drives Climate](#)

Change in 2018, which documents investments of more than \$10 billion a year to oil and gas between 2012 and 2017 (twelve times more support than it offered for clean technologies).

Fossil fuel companies cashing in on Covid-19 Recovery Funds in Canada and worldwide



Dianne Saxe, the former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, cited the 2018 *Risking it All* report in her **April 2020 Opinion piece** in the *National Observer*, reacting to the federal \$750 million Emissions Reduction funding as part of the Covid-19 Recovery stimulus. Environmental Defence voiced similar suspicions in their **April response** : "... hidden inside this new law were changes that will make it easier for Canada's export credit agency, Export Development Canada, to funnel billions more towards domestic oil and gas operations — without public scrutiny."

And sure enough, following the recovery stimulus announcement, in May **EDC signed an agreement to loan up to \$500 million to Coastal GasLink pipeline** – the same pipeline project which Wet'suwe'ten First Nations had blockaded, causing RCMP arrests which triggered Canada-wide solidarity protests and crippling rail blockades in Ontario and Quebec in the winter of 2020. (And despite objections from the Wet'suwe'ten Hereditary chiefs, **reported in the Toronto Star**). "**Meet Export Development Canada , the secretive crown agency financing the big oil bailout**" (May 27) is a blog by Environmental Defense Canada, calling out EDC investments and calling for greater transparency.

Oil Change International and Friends of the Earth U.S. address this ongoing issue



in **Still Digging: G20 Governments Continue to Finance the Climate Crisis** , released on May 27. From the Oil Change International Press release: "G20 countries have provided at least \$77 billion a year in public finance to oil, gas and coal projects since the Paris Climate Agreement was reached. This government-backed support to fossil fuels from export credit agencies, development finance institutions, and multilateral development banks is more than three times what

they are providing to clean energy. China, Japan, Canada, and South Korea are the largest providers of public finance to oil, gas, and coal, together making up over two-thirds of the G20 total.” The report is **endorsed** by Environmental Defense Canada and Climate Action Network Canada , among many others.

From **Still Digging**, a warning:

“with the health and livelihoods of billions at immediate risk from Covid-19, governments around the world are preparing public spending packages of a magnitude they previously deemed unthinkable..... The fossil fuel sector was showing long-term signs of systemic decline before Covid-19 and has been quick to seize on this crisis with requests for massive subsidies and bailouts. We cannot afford for the wave of public finance that is being prepared for relief and recovery efforts to prop up the fossil fuel industry as it has in the past. Business as usual would exacerbate the next crisis—the climate crisis—that is already on our doorstep.”

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Coastal GasLink, Covid 19, Export Development Canada, First Nations, Fossil Fuel Subsidies, Oil and gas industry, oil and gas pipelines, Pandemic** | [Leave a reply](#)

Linking the crises of Covid-19, environmental justice, and police violence – updated

Posted on **June 5, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“**Why Racial Justice is Climate Justice**” in *Grist* (June 4) compiles the comments of five environmental justice leaders in the U.S., and links the incidence of Covid-19 with the environmental injustices of the past.

“We now know that coronavirus — much like police brutality, mass incarceration, and climate change — is not colorblind. It’s not that the virus itself differentiates by race, but, as with other crises, the factors that make communities of color more susceptible to it are shaped by the United States’ long history of discriminatory policies and practices.

Many of the places that have been dealt the harshest blow by COVID-19 are simultaneously dealing with other serious threats to residents’ well-being. Even under the cover of the pandemic, environmental rollbacks and pipeline plans continue to threaten the health of people of color.”

Robert Bullard, often acknowledged as the founder of the environmental justice movement and now a distinguished professor at Texas Southern University, Houston, also makes the connection in “**The Coronavirus Pandemic and Police Violence have Reignited the Fight against Toxic Racism**” in *The Intercept* (June 17), where he describes his efforts to revive the **National Black Environmental Justice Network** ; In “**Q&A: A Pioneer of Environmental Justice Explains Why He Sees Reason for Optimism**” , Bullard reflects on the past and offers optimistic views on the current demonstrations: “you see young people out there from different economic groups, different ethnic groups and racial groups, there is an awakening unlike any that I’ve seen on this earth in over 70 years.” Bullard is also quoted as one of the panelists in **an Environmental Justice Roundtable** from the journal *Environmental Justice* (June 5) in which he states:

“This moment in time is just as important as the birth of our movementEnvironment is where we live, work, play, worship, learn, as well as the physical and natural world. So that means housing and transportation. It means energy. It means employment. It means health. It means all of that. Intersectionality is the word of the day. These things interlace all of our institutions, whether we are talking about unions, black colleges and universities, small businesses, faith-based institutions, or any other type of institution.”

One recent study which links the environmental links to Covid-19 death rates was **conducted by the T.H Chan School of Public Health** at Harvard University – **summarized by the New York Times** in April). Two subsequent blogs from Data for Progress expand that focus to include the links to race and environmental justice: on May 6, “**In Georgia, Coronavirus and Environmental Racism Combine**”, and on May 19 “**The Bronx Is An Epicenter for Coronavirus and Environmental Injustice** “. Among the alarming statistics: “Data from the New York City Department of Health finds that the asthma hospitalization rate for children in the Bronx is 70 percent higher than the rest of NYC and 700 percent higher

than the rest of New York State, excluding New York City.” (In Canada, we have no such detailed data, and data collection and transparency has been **widely criticized in Ontario**. On May 27, the **CBC reported on the “hot spots”** of Covid incidence in the Greater Toronto area, corresponding to low income neighbourhoods with high density.)

“Q&A: A Human Rights Expert Hopes Covid-19, Climate Change and Racial Injustice Are a ‘Wake-Up Call’ – transcribing an interview with Philip Alston, recently-retired UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and now professor of law at New York University . He states: “The optimistic way is to see Covid-19 as a trial run for what’s on the way with climate change in the sense that it really is a crisis that has affected vast numbers of people that has shown up the importance of being prepared and the importance of listening to the warning signals, and the potential for totally disproportionate impact on different groups of the population—whether by gender, class, race and so on. Covid-19 could provide some sort of wake-up call to those of us who are pretending that climate change is going to be manageable and we don’t really need to do anything until it actually starts to hit ever more dramatically..... A much more pessimistic way of looking at it is to wonder if Covid-19, followed by the George Floyd pandemic of racial violence and inequality, is going to lead to a sort of crisis fatigue.”

Yet **“Climate activists have a lot to learn from listening”** in the *National Observer* (June 9) is a thoughtful call for a shift in tactics and approach: “The climate change movement is learning to listen. If we can learn to listen to people’s concerns about their health, and respond by talking about health first — and then about how action on climate is important to protect it — we may yet win.”

How does environmental justice relate to racial justice?

Despite the **denialism of dinosaurs such as Rex Murphy**, most Canadians realize that, as explained in *The Tyee*, **“Canada Has Race-Based Police Violence Too. We Don’t Know How Much”** (June 2). A current example is **the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet** still under investigation after she fell to her death from a high rise apartment, in the company of Toronto police. The winter of 2020 saw demonstrations across Canada in support of **Indigenous protestors at the Wet’suwet’en blockades** of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, facing police violence and intimidation, documented in **“No Surrender”** in *The Intercept* . In their 2018 book ***Policing Indigenous Movements: Dissent and the Security State*** , authors Jeffrey Monaghan and Andrew Crosby examined four prominent movements in Canada, including the climate-related struggles against the Northern Gateway Pipeline and the anti-fracking protests surrounding the Elsipogtog First Nation. A June 3 article, **“How Militarizing Police Sets up Protesters as ‘the Enemy’”** is highly relevant for Canadian climate and social justice activists – re- published by *The Tyee* from an article in *The Conversation*.

“‘This is about Vulnerability’: Ingrid Waldron on the links between environmental racism and police brutality” in *The Narwhal* (June 3) summarizes an interview with Professor Ingrid Walton, associate professor at Dalhousie University in Halifax, head of the **ENRICH Project** that tracks environmental inequality among communities of colour in Nova Scotia, and the author of the 2018 book, ***There’s Something in the Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous and Black Communities***. In the interview, Walton raises the January 2020 closure of the Northern Pulp mill in Pictou, Nova Scotia as an example of environmental racism – the Mi’kmaq First Nations community had been calling for decades to stop the discharge of toxic effluent into Boat Harbour , but Walton argues that action took so long because “closing the mill was a risk for white people in power who were profiting from these industries. ...With police violence, it’s similar. It’s different, but it’s similar in that the physical and emotional impacts on Black bodies are not the kinds of things white people care about.”

Emilee Gilpin, journalist and managing director of the **First Nations Forward Special Reports series** at the *National Observer*, writes an eloquent Opinion piece: **“If life before this was ‘normal,’ I don’t want to go back”** (June 1) . Emphasizing the need for solutions, she concludes:

“I want to live in a world where the murder of innocent Black boys and men is not a normalized reality, where Indigenous women do not get murdered or go missing and turned into a statistic, where reconciliation means reparation, where people aren’t shot with rubber bullets and tear gas for demanding accountability and change, and where every system of power is representative of the society it’s meant to serve.....I want to live in a world that listens and respects the natural world, rather than trying to dominate, colonize and control it. ...”

“Indigenous and Black people in Canada share social exclusion and collective outrage” in the *National Observer* (June 10) links environmental justice, the natural world, and health, and concludes: “While the momentum of what is being called Black Spring continues, it is important to address the constant trespasses against Indigenous rights. It is past due that we set our ambitions toward rectifying the damage being done to the environment and its impact on the health outcomes of First Nations Peoples.”

In the U.S.

“As Protests Rage Over George Floyd’s Death, Climate Activists Embrace Racial Justice” (June 3), and **“Louisville’s ‘Black Lives Matter’ Demonstrations Continue a Long Quest for Environmental Justice”** (June 21) both appeared in *Inside Climate News*, providing examples of practical actions in the U.S..

In **“Racism, police violence and the climate are not separate issues”** in *The New Yorker*, Bill McKibben states: “The job of people who care about the future—which is another way of saying the environmentalists—is to let everyone breathe easier. But that simply can’t happen without all kinds of change. Some of it looks like solar panels for rooftops, and some of it looks like radically reimagined police forces. All of it is hitched together.” His article reports on an interview with Nina Lakhani, an environmental-justice reporter for *The Guardian*, who discusses her new book, **“Who Killed Berta Cáceres?: Dams, Death Squads, and an Indigenous Defender’s Battle for the Planet”** – the indigenous environmental activist in Honduras, killed for her opposition to a hydroelectric dam in 2015.

In **“Defunding the Police Is Good Climate Policy”**, Kate Aronoff in *The New Republic* (June 4) argues “there’s plenty of common cause to be found in calls to defund the police and invest in a more generous, democratic, and green public sphere, well beyond the scope of what any carbon-pricing measure can accomplish. For green activists, that will mean seeing decarbonization less as a narrow battle for line items that incentivize renewables than as a contest to shape who and what society values in a climate-changed twenty-first century; many, including in the Sunrise Movement, are already making these connections.”

Aronoff refers to a call to action by the youth-led Sunrise Movement : **“The Climate Justice Movement must Oppose White Supremacy Everywhere — By Supporting M4BL”** (May 29). It concludes: “Much as we support defunding fossil fuel companies to invest in the future of humanity, we must also support the defunding of white supremacist institutions — including the police and prison-industrial complex — to invest in healing and reparations for Black communities. That is what it means to fight for racial justice, and nothing less.”

Geoff Dembicki discusses the Sunrise Movement in his June 18 article in *Vice*, **“Why ‘Defunding the Police’ Is Also an Environmental Issue”**, which argues that “Defunding the police isn’t a distraction from organizing mass numbers of people to fight the climate emergency. It’s part of the same theory of change and political vision.” (Dembicki also penned a relevant article profiling Extinction Rebellion U.S., which appeared in *Vice* in April, **“A Debate Over Racism Has Split One of the World’s Most Famous Climate Groups”** . The statements of other groups are reviewed in **“Responding to protests, green groups reckon with a racist past”** in *Grist* (June 1) ,including the League of Conservation Voters, Earthjustice, 350.org, and the Sierra Club , all of whom issued statements condemning the killing of George Floyd and vowing to work towards racial justice. Others were signatories to an **Open Letter** sent to leaders of the U.S. House and Senate from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights . The letter begins: “we urge you to take swift and decisive legislative action in response to ongoing fatal police killings and other violence against Black people across our country.” Environmental groups signing on include: Greenpeace USA, League of Conservation Voters, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Parks Conservation Association, NextGen America, and the Sierra Club.

“Black environmentalists talk about climate change and anti-racism” in the *New York Times* (June 3) summarizes interviews with three U.S. environmental activists: Sam Grant, executive director of [MN350.org](https://mn350.org), (Minnesota affiliate of 350.org); Robert Bullard, and Heather McGhee, a senior fellow at Demos, a nonpartisan research and advocacy group.

“An anti-racist climate movement ... should be led by “a real multiracial coalition that endorses environmental justice principles” and its goals should seek to uplift the most vulnerable. That means,... the creation of green jobs, rather than cap-and-trade policies that allow companies to keep polluting in communities of color as they have been able to do for decades..... Success is measured by the improvement in the environmental and economic health of the people who have borne the brunt of our carbon economy.”

An interview by Yale Environment 360 titled “[Unequal Impact: The Deep links between Racism and Climate Change](#)” (June 9) asked Elizabeth Yeampierre (co-chair of the [Climate Justice Alliance](#), and executive director of UPROSE) “What would you hope the climate movement and the environmental justice movement take away from this moment and apply going forward?” Her reply: “ I think it’s a moment for introspection and a moment to start thinking about how they contribute to a system that makes a police officer think it’s okay to put his knee on somebody’s neck and kill them, or a woman to call the police on an African-American man who was bird-watching in the park..... These institutions [environmental groups] have to get out of their silos and out of their dated thinking, and really need to look to organizations like the Climate Justice Alliance and Movement Generation and all of the organizations that we work with. There are so many people who have been working with each other now for years and have literally put out tons of information that there’s no need to reinvent the wheel. It’s all there.”

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [environmental racism](#), [First Nations](#), [Protests & Rallies](#) | [3 Replies](#)

Alberta oil and gas voices calling for innovation while Newfoundland’s Hibernia workers face layoffs on June 12

Posted on [June 4, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Alberta’s Minister of Energy, Sonya Savage outraged many Canadians with her comments on May 25 that [the Covid-19 pandemic offers a “great time to build pipelines”](#) because of the lack of protestors , and [construction on the TransMountain pipeline](#) began in Kamloops B.C. on June 2. Yet, Max Fawcett, former editor of Oil and Gas magazine writes in a CBC Opinion piece, [“Alberta could be fighting its last pipeline battle”](#) (May 27), stating:

“It will be difficult for a government that prides itself on its willingness to fight for one vision of the oil and gas industry to adapt to this rapidly changing landscape.....It will be tempting for it to continue railing against the federal government, environmental activists, and all of its other enemies, foreign and domestic. And if Biden wins the White House, and follows through on his pledge to cancel Keystone XL’s presidential permit, that temptation may prove overwhelming.

But the ground has shifted under the Government of Alberta’s feet, just as it has for all of us, due to COVID-19.

The sooner it comes to terms with that, and helps the rest of Alberta do the same, the better.”

Fawcett also criticized the Alberta government of Jason Kenney in [“Still waiting for Alberta to get the memo on climate-conscious investing”](#), commenting on the implications of the Norway’s Government Pension Fund decision to divest from Canadian oil and gas companies because of their excessive climate impacts. Fawcett calls for Alberta to tell a “more honest story”.

Notably, voices from Canada’s oil sands industry “Establishment” are also speaking out and signalling a shift in attitude.

On June 1, as part of the [Climate Knights](#) Planning for a Green Recovery series, Mark Little, the CEO of Suncor Energy and Laura Kilcrease, CEO of the government agency [Alberta Innovates](#) wrote an OpEd titled, [“Canada’s oil sands are best positioned to lead the energy transformation”](#). Harkening back to the 1970’s in Canada and citing a [2019 BNP Paribas](#) report on the declining future of oil , they acknowledge the inevitable coming transition with this:

“While Canadian oil and gas will remain a significant part of the global energy mix for some time, we have to take advantage of new opportunities that offer attractive growth prospects. The temporary economic lockdown triggered by the 2020 pandemic is giving us a glimpse into a not-too-distant future where the transformation of our energy system

could *disrupt* demand on a similar scale. Disruption breeds opportunity and forward-looking companies and countries will need to step up and lead.

Now is the time to take a big step forward. As the history of the oil sands reveals, disruption and transformation are nothing new for Albertans and we're optimistic that the Canadian energy industry is up to the challenge and best positioned to invest in and lead energy transformation."

Industry response to the joint OpEd appears in **"Suncor, Alberta Innovates op-ed a game-changer as oil and gas industry finally embraces energy transition"** appeared in EnergiMedia (June 2). noting " it cannot be a coincidence that the same day the op-ed was published, Alberta finance minister Travis Toews **told** Postmedia that the Alberta government is preparing an economic recovery plan that will focus on diversifying "various industry sectors that we know have a great future in the province, certainly energy and agriculture as you would expect."

Layoffs in June as Newfoundland's Hibernia and offshore oil industry in crisis



On June 3, CBC reported **"Hibernia layoffs about to begin 'with heavy hearts,' drilling company says"** , summarizing the announcement by Hibernia Management Development Corporation (HMDC) that it will suspend drilling operations starting June 12, as a cost-cutting measure in response to a collapse in oil prices. The 18-month suspension of drilling **had already been announced in April** , even before the negative impacts on demand by the COVID-19 pandemic. The total number of layoffs may approach 600 members of **Unifor Local 2121** , which represents workers at the Hibernia offshore installation and also at the affected Terra Nova FPSO vessel. According to Article 32 of **the current collective agreement** , six months' written notice was required "In the event of platform closure, partial platform closure, technological change or restructuring, which will involve permanent reduction of regular rotation employees...."

These developments are the latest in a series of setbacks which constitute a crisis for the oil and gas industry in Newfoundland, summarized in **"How a pandemic and production war thrashed one of N.L.'s 4 producing oil fields"** (May 20) . The political lobbying for federal funds is described in **"N.L. oil industry, former premier, rally behind MP Seamus O'Regan in quest for federal help"** (May 14) and a Canadian Press article **"N.L. warns of exodus of oil and gas industry without more federal help"** (May 26).

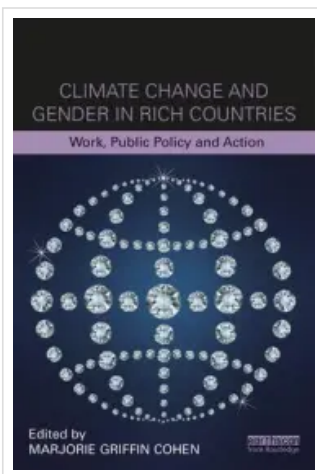
On June 4, the provincial government of Newfoundland announced a **"New Regional Assessment Process Protects the Environment and Shortens Timelines for Exploration Drilling Program Approval"** which reverses a 2010 decision and places authority for exploration approval back with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB), rather than the federal Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA). Calling the drilling of offshore exploration wells a "low impact activity", the press release promises a faster approval process which "allows the province to become more globally competitive while maintaining a strong and effective environmental regulatory regime." This comes a week after the government-appointed Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council released their long-delayed report, **A Home for Nature** which proposes 32 protected areas and a framework for ecological protection on land and offshore.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Newfoundland, offshore oil and gas industry, Oil and gas industry, Transmountain Pipeline** | [Leave a reply](#)

Marjorie Griffin Cohen, author of “Climate Change and Gender in Rich Countries”, awarded the Charles Taylor Prize

Posted on **May 29, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Professor Emeritus at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, was awarded the 2020 Charles Taylor Prize for Excellence in Policy Research, **as announced on May 28**. Marjorie’s research has focused on the intersection of gender and sexuality issues, as well as climate and labour policy. Amongst her many publications, Marjorie authored “**Does Gender Matter in the Political Economy of Work and Climate Justice?**” in 2011 as part of the Work in a Warming World research project, the predecessor to the **Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces project**. Along with John Calvert, she also authored “Climate Change and Labour in the Energy Sector”, as a



chapter in *Climate@Work* in 2013. In 2017, Marjorie edited the path-breaking *Climate Change and Gender in Rich Countries*, published by Routledge.

Over her career, Marjorie has served on several boards and commissions in British Columbia, including as the first Chair of the B.C. chapter of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in B.C. (which she helped to establish). The Charles Taylor Prize, normally awarded at the Broadbent Institute Progress Summit, could not be delivered in person, but Marjorie’s **acceptance speech is available on YouTube**. In it, she discusses her work as the Chair of the B.C. Fair Wages Commission from 2017-2018, which contributed directly to the increase in the provincial minimum wage to \$15 per hour.

Notably, the same **YouTube video** also includes a speech by Catherine Abreu, Executive Director of **Climate Action Network – Canada**, who was awarded the 2020 Jack Layton Progress Prize for her international leadership on climate policy and action.

Both awards represent welcome recognition of the increasing importance of climate change research in public policy.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change research, Gender, Marjorie Griffin Cohen** | **1 Reply**

EU €750 billion Recovery Plan announced to mixed reaction

Posted on **May 28, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a speech before the European Parliament on May 27, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced an updated seven-year €1 trillion budget proposal and a €750 billion recovery plan for the European Union, focused on a green and digital economy. [Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the next generation](#) describes the major structure of the plan, accompanied by a [5-page Fact Sheet](#) which highlights "Next Generation EU", the new recovery instrument.

The EU recovery strategy affirms a commitment to a European Green Deal and promises:

- "A massive renovation wave of our buildings and infrastructure and a more circular economy, bringing local jobs;
- Rolling out renewable energy projects, especially wind, solar and kick-starting a clean hydrogen economy in Europe;
- Cleaner transport and logistics, including the installation of one million charging points for electric vehicles and a boost for rail travel and clean mobility in our cities and regions;
- Strengthening the Just Transition Fund to support re-skilling, helping businesses create new economic opportunities.
- Also, recovery goals include a short-term European Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme (SURE) will provide €100 billion to support workers and businesses;
- A Skills Agenda for Europe and a Digital Education Action Plan will ensure digital skills for all EU citizens;
- Fair minimum wages and binding pay transparency measures will help vulnerable workers, particularly women";

Some European reactions to the proposals are compiled in the summary article "[Do no harm': EU recovery fund has green strings attached](#)" in *Euractiv*. More negative views come from Climate Action Network Europe, which calls the proposals "greenwashing" and in a more detailed [press release](#) states: "Despite repeated commitments by the European Commission to make the European Green Deal the blueprint of the recovery, the proposal still allows for money to be spent on supporting fossil fuels and is lifting climate spending targets in regional development funding, while the climate emergency would need a rapid phase-out of these polluting fuels and strong climate earmarking."

Friends of the Earth Europe had earlier released their own proposals for a European recovery plan, [here](#), and reacted to the EU announcement on May 27 with [EU Recovery Package falls short of Building Back Better](#) – which states:

"today's package would not prevent investments in new fossil fuel infrastructure nor put conditions on bailing out polluting industries like airlines – leaving a gaping hole in achieving the aims of the European Green Deal. Nor are there conditions related to compliance with human rights, not paying out dividends, or buy-back of shares for companies that receive funding. The plan gives significant political support to the development of hydrogen, without stipulating that this comes from renewable electricity alone. This could open the door to more climate-damaging fossil fuels in our energy system. The Commission will direct welcome financial support to renovating buildings, creating jobs and cutting carbon; this will need to be backed by legislation to reduce energy poverty and ensure every home in Europe meets minimum efficiency standards. Friends of the Earth welcomes an increase in funds for the Just Transition Fund, and the focus on jobs and skills."

In "['Defining moment' as EU executive pushes for €500bn in grants](#)" (May 27) The Guardian summarizes the proposals and focuses on the political fight ahead amongst EU members: For example, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, (a group called the "frugal four"), who want recovery funding to take the form of loans, not grants. The potential financial and political wrangling is also the focus of the *New York Times* article, "[A €750 Billion Virus Recovery Plan Thrusts Europe Into a New Frontier](#)". *The Energy Mix* reported on North American reaction to a version of the EU proposals leaked by Bloomberg, in "[EU'S massive green recovery plan includes 15-GW renewables tender, support for green hydrogen](#)" (May 24).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [EU](#), [European Union](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

CLC, TUC publish visions for post-Covid just economic recovery; new campaign launches

On May 25, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) posted [Labour's Vision for Economic Recovery](#). Rejecting austerity-thinking, the CLC guiding principles call for government action which focuses on getting Canadians back to work and fully employed in decently paid, productive jobs, based on labour market planning, coordination and concerted government action. Priorities include protection for worker health and safety, including mental health, in the return to work. The CLC also introduces a call for a Green Youth Job Guarantee: "Following the experience of the European Union, the federal, provincial and territorial governments should establish a guarantee that all young people under the age of 25 will receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.... This could include a Green Youth Corps providing decent jobs in renewable energy, land remediation and restoration, climate adaptation, building retrofits and sustainable transportation. Additionally, it should include green skills training and learning opportunities. The Green Youth Corps would target marginalized, low-income and at-risk youth in urban centres, as well as in rural and isolated communities."

[Labour's Vision](#) also calls for public investment in physical, social and green infrastructure, and on renewal and expansion of public services. "Green industrial policy and sector strategies, anchored in union-management dialogue, should provide the framework for expanded investment in manufacturing capacity, skills training and workforce development." [Labour's Vision](#) concludes: "... It is time to address the precarity, poor working conditions and wage discrimination in sectors dominated by women, including care work, retail and health services. This work is essential to the health and well-being of our communities and economy." More broadly, it calls for reform of Canada's long term care sector, accelerating universal pharmacare, and fair taxation.

The CLC, along with other unions and social justice and climate action groups, endorsed the [Just Recovery for All](#) campaign launched on May 25. The campaign calls for a fair and just recovery from COVID-19 through relief and stimulus packages based on these six foundation principals: Put people's health and well-being first; Strengthen the social safety net and provide relief directly to people; Prioritize the needs of workers and communities; Build resilience to prevent future crises; Build solidarity and equity across communities, generations, and borders; and Uphold Indigenous rights and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

Regarding the "**Prioritize the needs of workers and communities**" principal, the campaign expands with:

"Support must be distributed in a manner consistent with Indigenous sovereignty, a climate resilient economy, and worker rights, including safe and fair labour standards and a right to unionize. Improved conditions for essential service workers must be maintained beyond this crisis.

Bailout packages must not encourage unqualified handouts, regulatory rollbacks, or regressive subsidies that enrich shareholders or CEOs, particularly those who take advantage of tax havens. These programs must support a just transition away from fossil fuels that creates decent work and leaves no one behind."

In answer to the question "Why did you call it a "just recovery" and not a "healthy", "resilient", or "green" recovery?", [Just Recovery for All](#) explains: "We were inspired by principles and organizers in the US and internationally who started the idea of principles for a "Just Recovery" we wanted to align ourselves with global allies. We also wanted to lead with the idea that justice – fairness and equity – needed to be part of the focus of the work coming out of COVID."

Those who have endorsed the Just Recovery campaign are listed [here](#), with union endorsements from the Canadian Labour Congress, ACTRA, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, CUPE Local 3903, Confederation des syndicats nationaux, Federation de la sante et des services sociaux, Syndicate de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Quebec, and Toronto and York Regional Labour Council, as well as climate/union coalitions including Blue Green Canada, Green Economy Network, Good Jobs for All. A [COVID-19 Yellow Pages](#) lists and summarizes many of the Canadian campaigns currently underway by endorsing organizations.

In the U.K., the Trades Union Congress (TUC) published [A Better Recovery](#) on May 20 – like the CLC, rejecting austerity economics and proposing an "investment for growth" approach for post Covid recovery. The report highlights six principles: Decent work (with a higher minimum wage and new collective bargaining rights); Economic stimulus for Just Transition and

a low-carbon economy; social security reforms including a job guarantee; rebuilding public services with good jobs in care work; equality at work; new internationalism. Other TUC articles re Covid-19 are [here](#) .

Business is offering advice re Economic Recovery too

Just as unions are advocating for their versions of economic recovery, so are businesses. One such Canadian campaign launched in mid-May and now numbers more than 280 Canadian companies and business organizations. The **Resilient Recovery** campaign is a collaboration between Clean Energy Canada and the Canada Cleantech Alliance—calling for direct and immediate investment in Canadian clean energy and clean tech companies.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce established a **Canadian Business Resilience Network** to coordinate over 450 chambers of commerce, boards of trade, and business and industry association. In addition to serving their membership, they aspire to “Provide a consistent and reliable flow of accurate, up-to-date, authoritative information; and “Work closely with government to ensure the right supports are in place, and to be a conduit for information from the government to the private sector.” On May 21, they released **Reopening Canada’s Economy, A National Guide for Business**, “designed to provide guidance, or access to guidance, for business owners and senior managers responsible for re-establishing their operations while ensuring the health and safety of operators, staff, customers and the general public is at the forefront.”

Internationally, on May 19 the **Science Based Targets initiative**, the UN Global Compact, and the We Mean Business coalition issued a joint press release titled: **“Over 150 global corporations urge world leaders for net-zero recovery from COVID-19”** . Their **signed statement** urges governments “to prioritize a faster and fairer transition from a grey to a green economy by aligning policies and recovery plans with the latest climate science....We must move beyond business-as-usual and work together in solidarity to deliver the greatest impact for people, prosperity and the planet.” The 150 companies who signed on to the statement are from 33 different countries, but only two are Canadian: Arc’teryx Equipment , SkyPower Global .

(The **Science Based Targets initiative** is a collaboration between CDP, the UN Global Compact, World Resources Institute and WWF, and independently assesses and validates corporate climate targets against the latest climate science. It includes 885 companies which are taking some science-based climate action and 373 companies whose targets have been approved by the SBTi.)

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Proposals for Canada’s Covid-19 recovery promised from a Task Force for a Resilient Recovery

Posted on **May 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A **press release** on May 19 announced the launch of a **Task Force for a Resilient Recovery** , funded by private foundations and led by two research organizations: the **Smart Prosperity Institute** and the **International Institute for Sustainable Development** . The Task Force promises to develop “actionable recommendations on how governments can help get Canadians back to work while also building a low-carbon and resilient economy” and will release their final report at the end of July 2020.

The Resilient Recovery website is available in **English** and **French** . The websites already include the proposals of the two research organizations: from the Smart Prosperity Institute – a 25-page “manual” which provides a **Framework** based on nine criteria, clustered in three categories: 1. does the measure stimulate timely, lasting economic benefits and jobs? 2.

does the measure help the environment and support clean competitiveness? 3. is the measure equitable, implementable and feasible?

From the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#), a discussion which endorses the May 4 report from the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University, [Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change?](#).

Who is involved in this Task Force?

Members are [listed at the website](#). In addition to Stewart Elgie of the Smart Prosperity Institute and Richard Florizone of the IISD, there are fourteen, including Elizabeth Beale, former President and CEO of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council; Barbara Zvan, former Chief Risk & Strategy Officer for the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan; Don Forgeron, President and CEO of the Insurance Board of Canada; Bruce Lourie, President, Ivey Foundation; James Meadowcroft, Professor, Carleton University; and Merran Smith, Executive Director, Clean Energy Canada. The initiative is funded by the Jarislowsky Foundation, Ivey Foundation, McConnell Foundation, Schad Foundation, and the Echo Foundation.

Notably, this Task Force is unrelated to the [May 11 statement which appeared in The Hill](#) (May 11) from Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff and Chamber of Commerce president Perrin Beatty. Describing their co-operative efforts in the Covid-19 crisis, they continue: "we are calling on the federal government to strike a task force to develop recommendations on how to reboot the economy. The sheer scale of these decisions requires a variety of perspectives, not least of which will be accommodating the varied needs of the vastly diverse sectors. When it comes time for recovery, we will need broad engagement with governments, labour, businesses both large and small across sectors, public health experts, Indigenous groups, non-profits and academics."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [Covid 19](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Disaster capitalism in Alberta – oil and gas producers exempted from emissions reporting, testing for methane leaks

Posted on [May 13, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Although the Green Party of Canada has stirred up the hornet's nest of oil politics in Canada by the "[Oil is Dead](#)" [statement in May](#), Alberta Premier Jason Kenney [continues to reject that idea](#), in word and deed. Since the onset of Covid-19, Alberta environmental rollbacks [have been described](#) as a textbook case of "disaster capitalism" and the government has been accused of "[out-Trumping Trump](#)". In April, the Alberta government made amendments to the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, *Water Act*, *Public Lands Act* and the newly implemented *Technology Innovation and Emissions Regulations* – providing exemptions to oil and gas operators from reporting air quality emissions from smokestacks, tailings ponds, transportation and dust until Dec. 31, 2020. Amendments to the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act* and the *Pipeline Act* could allow the [Orphan Well Association to use federal and provincial emergency relief funds](#) to produce and sell oil from abandoned wells and operate abandoned pipelines. Professor Saun Fluker summarizes the changes in a University of Calgary Faculty of Law blog post, "[COVID-19 and the Suspension of Energy Reporting and Well Suspension Requirements in Alberta](#)" (April 10). A broader analysis by two academics from the University of Guelph appears in "[Disaster capitalism: Coronavirus crisis brings bailouts, tax breaks and lax environmental rules to oilsands](#)" (April 29, *The Conversation*), and Sharon Riley has written an in-depth article, "[8 environmental responsibilities Alberta can skip](#)" (*The Narwhal*, April 27). Randy Christensen of Ecojustice has also written a brief article, "[Warning: disaster capitalism](#)", which argues that "the governments of Alberta and Ontario have now made moves that are more far-reaching and potentially riskier" than the Trump [EPA roll-backs announced in March](#). The reference to Ontario is based on the Ontario government's [April 1 regulation](#) which temporarily suspends public consultation under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights. And Newfoundland could also be considered for the list,

according to [“Newfoundland offshore drilling: a case of bending environmental impact rules”](#) (*National Observer*, April 3) .

On May 6, the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Toronto Star* reported further exemptions by the Alberta government: from the *Star*: “A decision by the Alberta Energy Regulator in May, means that Imperial Oil, Suncor, Syncrude and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. don’t have to perform much of the testing and monitoring originally required in their licences – including monitoring of most ground and surface water; most wildlife and bird monitoring, and a reduction of air quality monitoring – with the suspension of testing for methane leaks.” *The Star* article argues that many of the changes correspond closely to the demands made by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) in March in a 13-page letter sent to federal ministers: [Covid-19 Crisis Response – Actions Required regarding federal Policy and Regulations](#) . Keith Stewart of Greenpeace Canada is [quoted in The Star](#), saying he “isn’t aware of any other jurisdiction in the world that has gone as far as Alberta to roll back environmental protections during the pandemic, including the United States under President Donald Trump.”

On May 7, *Vice* published [“What the hell is going on in Alberta?”](#), with this opening statement: “It’s safe to say Alberta is in crisis.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Covid 19](#), [Emissions Regulations](#), [Methane Emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Only 24% of Canadians willing to give up flying to fight climate change – compared to 41% globally

Posted on **May 12, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On Earth Day, public opinion polling company Ipsos Global Advisor released a survey titled, [How does the world view climate change and Covid-19?](#) . The survey was conducted during March and April and so includes Covid-19 questions, along with measuring the top environmental concerns of respondents, and their willingness to act to combat climate change. Top-line results show that: 71% globally agree that climate change is as serious a crisis as Covid-19 and 65% globally support a ‘green’ economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. Sadly, however, there has been no increase since the 2014 survey in the number of people willing to make sacrifices to combat climate change, and the changes they are willing to make are mostly low effort and low impact.

How do Canadian opinions compare to other countries?

Only 64% of Canadians agree with the statement that “In the long term, climate change is as serious a crisis as Covid-19 is” – compared to a 71% global agreement, and 87% in the highest country, China. Only Australia and the United States have a lower rate than Canada. Similarly, only 61% of Canadians supported the statement: “In the economic recovery after Covid-19, it’s important that government actions prioritize climate change”, compared to 81% in India and 65% globally.

Globally, the top-ranked environmental concerns reported are global warming/climate change; air pollution; waste; deforestation; water pollution; depletion of natural resources. For Canadians, when asked “what are the top environmental issues you feel should receive the greatest attention from your local leaders?”, 44% responded “global warming/climate change” – the third highest response in the world after Japan and South Korea. A similarly high concern (44%) was recorded for the amount of waste we generate. Other concerns ranked surprisingly low – for example, air pollution (23%); water pollution (22%); future energy sources and supplies (20%); emissions (16%); depletion of natural resources (15%); deforestation (15%); flooding (7%).



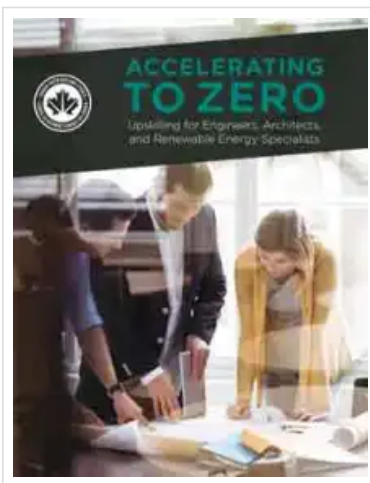
The final section of the report reports on understanding of climate change and what changes respondents are willing to make to combat climate change. Globally, people are most willing to 1. avoid products which have a lot of packaging; 2. Avoid buying new goods in favor of mending or buying used; and 3. Conserve energy at home. The three behaviour changes least favoured: 1. Not flying; 2. Eating less meat; 3. Eating fewer dairy products. Canadians are the least likely in the world to give up flying, with only 24% willing to make that change – well below the global average of 41%. Similarly, only 28% are willing to eat less meat (28% – only 1% more than Australians and Americans) and 22% to eat less dairy.

The Ipsos summary and press release are [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [behaviour change](#), [climate change activism](#), [Consumer Behaviour](#), [Covid 19](#), [public opinion polls](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to improve zero carbon skills amongst architects, engineers and renewable energy specialists

Posted on **May 12, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Canadian Green Building Council released a new report on April 30, ***Accelerating to Zero: Upskilling for Engineers, Architects, and Renewable Energy Specialists***. The **Executive Summary** states: “To better understand what these key professions require in zero carbon education and training, this study was designed to: • Establish Canada’s first professional industry baseline of zero carbon building skills and knowledge among engineers, architects, and renewable energy specialists; • Identify knowledge and skills gaps, as well as a preferred learning approach for engineers, architects, and renewable energy specialists for the design, construction and operation of zero carbon buildings; and, • Recommend ways that education and training providers, accreditation and professional bodies, and policy decision-makers can support zero carbon building education and training for engineers, architects, and renewable energy specialists.”

The report is based on 318 survey respondents who self-reported their perceived knowledge and practical experience for the competencies derived from the CaGBC’s Zero Carbon Building Standard. The report makes seven recommendations for actions by professional associations and educational and training organizations, including: updating education and training curricula; use of common terminology across the field; incentivizing members of professional organizations and

accreditation agencies to achieve zero carbon competencies; development of a wider variety of learning platforms to suit a variety of learning preferences; making zero carbon building competencies part of the core public sector training curriculum, and supporting the adoption of zero carbon building codes and related training and education.

Accelerating to Zero: Upskilling for Engineers, Architects, and Renewable Energy Specialists is a 48-page report; it was accompanied by a brief **press release** and a 7-page **Executive Summary**. It includes a bibliography, including the related CAGBC 2019 reports ***Making the Case for Building to Zero Carbon***, and ***Trading Up: Equipping Ontario Trades with the Skills of the Future***. Not mentioned, but highly relevant is the 2017 study by John Mumme and Karen Hawley, ***The Training of Canadian Architects for the Challenges of Climate Change***, published by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project in 2017.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **architects, Competencies, Education and Training, Engineers, Green Building, renewable energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

B.C.'s Covid-19 economic recovery plans, and safety, WCB coverage for workers

Posted on **May 12, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

“What Kind of Recovery Economy Is BC Planning to Build?” appeared in *The Tyee* (May 6) discussing the **British Columbia Economic Recovery Task Force**, appointed in early April. The article points out that the 19-member Task Force lacks any representation from environmental advocacy groups – although **Laird Cronk**, president of the B.C. Federation of Labour was appointed, along with the leaders of major business and community organizations, in addition to the Premier, cabinet ministers, and senior



civil servants. The province also consults with their **Climate Solutions Advisory Council**, and on May 11, released **the Final Report of the Emerging Economies Task Force**, appointed in 2018. The **press release** affirms that it “will also be a valuable resource to help inform the province’s COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery”, despite the fact that it was submitted to the government in March 2020, and so pre-dates the Covid-19 crisis. One of its five strategic priorities of the Emerging Economies report is titled “Leveraging B.C.’s Green Economy”.

Worker safety as the economy re-opens

On May 6, Premier Horgan **announced** Phase 2, a cautious re-opening the economy. Responsibility for the safe opening and operation of workplaces is delegated to WorkSafe B.C., whose **media release** states: “As employers prepare to resume operations, they will need to have a safety plan in place that assesses the risk of COVID-19 transmission in their workplace, and develops measures to reduce these risks. This planning process must involve workers as much as possible to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed — this includes frontline workers, supervisors, Joint Health and Safety Committees, and/or worker representatives.” WorkSafeB.C. will issue industry-specific guidance and promises consultation with workers and employers; their general resources for Covid-19 return to work is **here**.

The B.C. Federation of Labour **reacted** on May 11 to the announcement that the Workers Compensation Board will add COVID-19 to **Schedule 1** of the *Workers Compensation Act*, thereby granting “presumptive coverage” and expediting workers’ claims. According to the B.C. Fed, there were 317 COVID-19-related WCB claims in B.C. as of April 29. The B.C. Fed **had advocated** for the enhanced WCB protection, as well as for the enhanced sick leave protections and \$1,000 tax-free provincial Emergency Benefit for Workers, announced in March.

Related Note: On May 7, the **Vancouver Just Recovery Coalition** released **a statement** signed by community, advocacy groups and unions, stating: “As our federal, provincial and municipal governments begin to strategize on their post-COVID recovery and rebuilding strategies, we need to prioritize those most impacted, ensuring that our economic recovery lessens existing inequalities, respects Indigenous rights, and tackles the climate emergency. The pre-COVID status quo was failing too many people.”

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia, Covid 19, Just recovery, Occupational Health and Safety, Pandemic, Workers Compensation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian academics, experts describe plans for a Green Recovery after Covid-19

Posted on **May 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An April 28 Opinion piece in the *New York Times* makes an eloquent statement which summarizes global calls for a green recovery from the pandemic. In **“A Time to Save the Sick and Rescue the Planet”** António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, writes: “Addressing climate change and Covid-19 simultaneously and at enough scale requires a response stronger than any seen before to safeguard lives and livelihoods. A recovery from the coronavirus crisis must not take us just back to where we were last summer. It is an opportunity to build more sustainable and inclusive economies and societies — a more resilient and prosperous world.” He proposes a 6-point plan, stating: “As we spend trillions to recover from Covid-19, we must deliver new jobs and businesses through a clean, green transition. Investments must accelerate the decarbonization of all aspects of our economy....Where taxpayers’ money rescues businesses, it must be creating green jobs and sustainable and inclusive growth. It must not be bailing out outdated polluting, carbon-intensive industries....Fiscal firepower must shift economies from gray to green, making societies and people more resilient through a transition that is fair to all and leaves no one behind.....Looking forward, public funds should invest in the future, by flowing to sustainable sectors and projects that help the environment and climate. Fossil fuel subsidies must end and polluters must pay for their pollution.”

Calls for a Green Recovery in Canada

The state of the federal government’s Green Recovery planning is described in an article in *La Presse* **“Trudeau misera sur une «relance verte» après la crise”** (April 22, French only), summarized in English by the *Energy Mix* as **“Guilbeault, McKenna and Wilkinson assigned to chart post-Covid green recovery”** (April 26). It states that “planning for the “green reboot” is still in its earliest stages” – giving experts time to weigh in on strategies.

One of the latest Green Recovery visions came on May 7, when a group of 50 academics sent an **Open Letter** to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and three ministers, called “Springing Canada Forward”. It sets out key principles “to guide investments that can future-proof our economies against climate catastrophe. Investments should link job creation and green infrastructure. They should include funding for both initial capital and long-term operations. COVID-19 has acutely highlighted that social inequalities threaten Canada’s resilience. Thus, investments should include principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and be consistent with Indigenous rights. Finally, to support an evidence-based approach, pilot projects, experimentation, rigorous testing and evaluation should be built into all major post-COVID investments.”

Specifically, the Open Letter calls for leveraging the existing programs of the Infrastructure Canada (with its formal **“climate lens”**) and the national Housing Strategy, thus calling for a transition to low-carbon energy, green infrastructure investment, and a national program of whole house energy retrofits.

In a surprisingly detailed statement regarding workers' issues, the Open Letter states:

“Facilitating the development of a climate-literate construction workforce should be a key part of Canada’s recovery investments en route to a low-carbon economy. High-quality, low-carbon construction requires a workplace culture that emphasizes reducing energy consumption. Major investments in developing new and upgraded climate-related construction skills is a key opportunity to expand equity, diversity and inclusion in the workforce while promoting greener practices and technologies. If climate literacy is an integral part of workers’ training, the industry can establish new skill requirements to ensure that newly trained workers can find the good quality jobs they expect and have the capacity to effectively contribute to Canada’s climate objectives. Upskilling workforces must address violence against women and open the road to take advantage of the important contributions that Indigenous workers and women can make to the green new economy.”

The Open Letter is summarized by the National Observer in **“Use pandemic to ‘future-proof’ against climate crisis, academic group urges”** (May 8).

Other Expert statements on Canada’s Green Recovery

The Institute for Climate Choices is publishing articles in an ongoing COVID-19 Recovery series, beginning with **“Climate policy in the long shadow of Covid-19”** by Dave Sawyer . Other articles include: **“Well and good”** (a reaction to the federal relief funding for orphan well clean-up in the oil sands); **“When Disasters collide”** (Apr. 8) and **“When Disasters Collide: the Sequel”** (Apr. 14) .

The journal *Policy Options* is publishing articles under the category, **The Coronavirus pandemic: Canada’s Response** . A few examples from the dozens of articles: **“Economy and climate need more than stimulus”** written by Brendan Haley, published in *Policy Options* (April 27) , which states: “... the clean economy sector requires patient, long-term capital focused on earning returns from productivity improvements and environmental benefits. For a real recovery, capital needs to be funnelled towards building things instead of short-term speculation.” Haley reiterates Jim Stanford’s April call in **“We’re Going to need a Marshall Plan to rebuild after Covid-19”** (April 2) and continues: “... The Canada Infrastructure Bank could lead a national clean energy investment strategy. But it would need to take a more transformative view of green infrastructure, which includes zero-carbon buildings and other decentralized energy technologies. If the Infrastructure Bank is not the right vehicle, policy-makers should create new institutions, Expending the policy effort to create a Canadian climate investment bank makes good sense if the objective is to lay the foundation for the next decades of economic prosperity rather than solely providing short-term stimulus.” Most recently, **“A Deep Retrofit of Homes and Buildings is the megaproject Canada needs”** by Tom-Pierre Frappé-Sénéclauze (May 8).

“The Canada we want: How a green recovery can help us bounce back stronger” in *Corporate Knights* (April 15) introduces their “Build Back Stronger” series of articles which will be published from April 22 to June 3, **here** . Among them, **“Building Back Better with a green renovation wave”** – a roadmap for retrofitting policy, by Ralph Torrie and Celine Bak ; **“To invest in a green power infrastructure, we’ll need to re-boot Canada’s electricity markets”** by Pierre-Olivier Pineau.

Dan Woynillowicz lays out a framework for **“How Canada can build back better”** (April 17) at the Clean Energy Canada website, envisioning three stages: 1. our current relief stage, 2. a stimulus stage (with the goal is to kickstart the economy), and 3. a recovery stage (characterized by “continued government efforts to rebuild the economy, building on and expanding stimulus efforts to ensure sustained and sustainable economic activity.”) He concludes:

“The COVID-19 pandemic, like climate change, isn’t a “black swan” event but a “gray rhino” (“highly obvious, highly probable, but still neglected dangers”). Risk expert Michele Wucker, who came up with the “gray rhino” metaphor, notes that “it matters immensely that decision-makers view risks as gray rhinos instead of obsess in vain about black swans, because we can see gray rhinos in front of us, but black swans by definition only appear in the rearview window. That means we have a chance to do something about gray rhinos. And, in fact, most so-called black swans happen because people ignored the gray rhinos.

The gray rhino of climate change clearly stands before us.”

Working from home may not save as much energy as we think

Posted on **May 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“A systematic review of the energy and climate impacts of teleworking” appeared as an “accepted manuscript” for *Environmental Research Letters* in April. Written by four academics from the University of Sussex, the article aims to identify the conditions under which teleworking can lead to a net reduction in overall energy consumption, and the circumstances where the benefits from teleworking are outweighed by the unintended impacts” (rebound effects)- such as greater private travel or increased non-work energy consumption by home workers. It does not consider the large research about other impacts of telecommuting or homework – such as gender effects, or health and mental health impacts.

The authors identified and examined the results of 39 academic studies from around the world, some dating back to the 1990's. Of those, 26 suggest that teleworking reduces energy use, and 8 suggest that teleworking has a neutral impact, or even possibly causes an increase in energy use. The authors provide a thorough discussion of the topic, and note great variation in methodology and scope. They also note that most research focusses on the U.S., with some from the EU and only three from the Global South. From Canada, only 2 studies were included: (1. Bussière and Lewis (2002) . **“Impact of telework and flexitime on reducing future urban travel demand: the case of Montreal and Quebec (Canada), 1996-2016**, and 2. Lachapelle, Tanguay, and Neumark-Gaudet. (2018). **“Telecommuting and sustainable travel: Reduction of overall travel time, increases in non-motorised travel and congestion relief?”**) .

Both Canadian studies were part of the group which was ranked as average or poor in methodology, and which found neutral or mixed impacts. Relying on the “more rigorous studies that include a wider range of impacts” the authors conclude that, despite a widely-held positive verdict on teleworking as an energy-saving practice, “the available evidence suggests that economy-wide energy savings are typically modest, and in many circumstances could be negative or non-existent.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [commuting](#), [telecommuting](#), [Working Conditions](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. proposals for a green recovery after Covid-19

Posted on **May 7, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A widely-reported study by economists at Oxford University seeks to identify fiscal policies which will best lead the world to post-Covid economic recovery, while also leading to a net-zero economy. ***Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change?*** was published on May 4 as a Working Paper by the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University, (forthcoming as an article in the Oxford Review of Economic Policy). Lead authors Cameron Hepburn and Brian O’Callaghan are joined by economic heavy-weights such as Nicholas Stern and Joseph Stiglitz, among others. The paper states: “The climate emergency is like the COVID-19 emergency, just in slow motion and much graver. Both involve market failures, externalities, international cooperation, complex science, questions of system resilience, political leadership, and action that hinges on public support. Decisive state interventions are also required to stabilise the climate, by tipping energy and industrial systems towards newer, cleaner, and ultimately cheaper modes of production that become impossible to outcompete.”

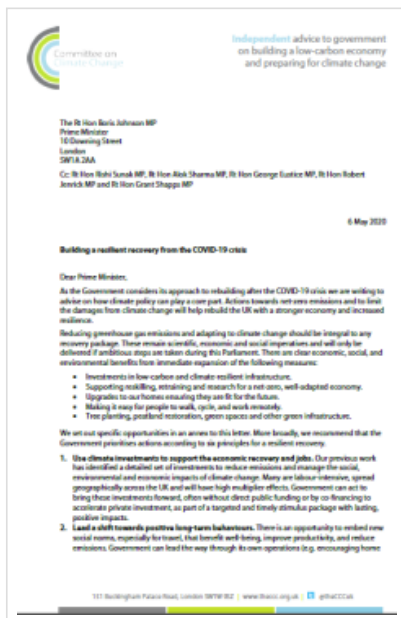
The authors identified over 700 fiscal stimulus policies used since the 2008 financial crisis – both climate-friendly and not – and distilled these down to 25 archetypal policies. They then surveyed the reactions of 231 senior economists and financial experts from over 50 countries to these archetypal policies, and identified the five “with high potential on both economic multiplier and climate impact metrics: clean physical infrastructure, building efficiency retrofits, investment in education and training, natural capital investment, and clean R&D. In lower- and middle income countries (LMICs) rural support spending is of particular value while clean R&D is less important.”

An informal summary of this report, written by the two lead authors, appears as “**Leading economists: Green coronavirus recovery also better for economy**” at Carbon Brief (May 5). Other coverage includes “**Green Stimulus can repair global economy and climate, study says**” (The Guardian, May 5);

Also on May 4, the Smith School released a companion Working Paper “**A net-zero emissions economic recovery from COVID-19**” which discusses the differences between the 2008 financial crisis and the economic damage of the Covid-19 pandemic. It builds on the paper by Hepburn et al., and makes 10 specific recommendations for a U.K. green stimulus package, with strategies clustered around:

1. Large-scale investment (including Transforming energy generation, storage and distribution; transforming industrial energy usage, especially in the energy-intensive industrial sectors (steel, cement, ceramics, chemicals, pulp and paper) ; high-speed broadband internet connectivity to embed working from home practices ; investment in nature-based solutions for disaster resiliency.
2. Accelerate investment in high-sustainability impact technologies
3. Incentivize individual-level change – in transportation, home energy efficiency, and job training for green economy jobs
4. Make Bailouts conditional on a legal commitment and a pathway and timeline to net-zero emissions, particularly for fossil fuel intensive industries such as airlines.

The paper concludes with proposals for institutional structures to implement these policies, including a Climate Change Emergency Committee and a Net Zero Delivery Body in the U.K. , and perhaps most remarkably, proposes an international Sustainable Recovery Alliance (SRA) to be launched at COP 26. The purpose: to act “As a flexible “coalition of the willing” outside of the UNFCCC architecture, the group would promote a shared vision of a sustainable recovery.”



And on May 6, the existing U.K. Committee on Climate Change issued a **press release** announcing its Letter to the Prime Minister, setting out six key principles to for a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The principles call for fairness to be embedded as a core principle, a shift to new behaviours such as cycling and working from home, the possibility of raising carbon taxes, and, “Support for carbon-intensive sectors should be contingent on them taking real and lasting action on climate change, and all new investments need to be resilient to future climate risks.”

Dutch government announces measures to comply with Urgenda Supreme Court decision; Ontario government seeks to dismiss youth-led climate case

Posted on **May 6, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **Urgenda Climate Case** against the Dutch Government was the first in the world to establish that a government has a legal duty to its citizens to prevent dangerous climate change. The case began in 2013, with a District Court ruling in 2015 that the government must cut its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by the end of 2020. Following appeals by the government, in a December 2019 decision **hailed** as a landmark, the Dutch Supreme Court ordered the government to reduce emissions by 15 megatonnes in 2020. A timeline with links to all the decisions in the case is maintained by the Urgenda Foundation [here](#) .

Now finally, in April 2020, the Dutch government announced how it will comply, accepting 30 of the measures proposed in Urgenda's "**54 Climate Solutions Plan**". Most importantly, the government ordered a 75% reduction in capacity at the country's three coal-fired power stations; the full list of actions is summarized in "**Climate action under duress: how Dutch were forced into emissions cuts**" (*The Guardian*, May 4) , which also describes the long and contested route to this precedent-setting achievement.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights noted in [a press release](#) after the Supreme Court decision in December 2019 :

"The recognition by the highest Dutch court that the Netherlands' human rights obligations provide a legal basis to compel stronger and more rapid action by the Government is vitally important. This landmark ruling provides a clear path forward for concerned individuals in Europe – and around the world – to undertake climate litigation in order to protect human rights, and I pay tribute to the civil society groups which initiated this action. more ambitious climate action, in all parts of the world, is a human rights obligation rather than simply a policy choice."

Ontario's Youth-led climate case

The importance of the Urgenda decision may offer encouragement for the citizens around the world who are seeking to force governments to act on climate change. In Ontario on April 15, Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General filed a motion asking the courts to dismiss a youth-led lawsuit, as described in "**Ford government files motion to strike down youth-led climate lawsuit**" (April 16) . Seven young people are being represented in the case, *Mathur et. al. v. Her Majesty in Right of Ontario* . According to the [Case Background](#) by Ecojustice, one of the representatives: "The lawsuit aims to strike down Ontario's current 2030 target as unconstitutional and enshrine the right to a safe, healthy climate as part of the right to life, liberty and security of the person in Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This would require the Government of Ontario to set a new target in line with the scientific consensus, and revise its policies accordingly. "

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate litigation](#), [The Netherlands](#), [Urgenda Climate Case](#), [Urgenda Decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

“Staggering” decline of fossil fuels reported by International Energy Agency

Posted on **May 5, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The complexity of the global energy landscape has been changed profoundly, according to the International Energy Association’s flagship publication, the *Global Energy Review*, released on April 30. It forecasts a minimum 6% decline in global energy demand for 2020, (9% in the United States and 11% in the European Union), stating, “The projected 6% decline would be more than seven times the impact of the 2008 financial crisis on global energy demand, reversing the growth of global energy demand over the last five years. The absolute decline in global energy demand in 2020 is without precedent, and relative declines of this order are without precedent for the last 70 years.” The accompanying [press release](#) describes the decline of fossil fuels as an “historic shock to the entire energy world” and “staggering”, especially for coal, oil and gas. The IEA forecasts that renewables will be the only energy source to grow in 2020.

Here are a few of the many recent news articles which sum up the dire impacts on oil and gas in Canada:

In [“For oil and its dependents, it’s code blue”](#) (The Tyee, April 18), Andrew Nikofoforuk predicts that the “great price collapse of 2020 will topple companies and transform states”.

[“Fossils Expect Permanent Losses, Renewables Keep Growing As Pandemic Crashes Global Energy Demand”](#) in *The Energy Mix* (May 3);

[“What rock-bottom natural gas prices mean for Canada’s aspiring LNG industry”](#) in *The Narwhal* (May 1);

[“We are in crisis mode’: Newfoundland calls on Ottawa to fund oil and gas exploration”](#) in the *Globe and Mail* (April 29);

And Canadian Press stories reprinted by the *National Observer* on May 1 include: [“Precision Drilling down almost 3000 employees due to oil and gas downturn”](#) (May 1); [“Oil and gas drilling forecast revised to 49-year low”](#); [“Teck Resources leaves energy group CAPP citing cost cutting”](#); and [“Alberta oil and gas company reports include a loss of \\$1.3 billion for Vermillion Energy”](#) (April 29) .

Fatih Birol, Director of the International Energy Agency has promoted clean energy in several public statements, including a March 14 commentary: [“Put clean energy at the heart of stimulus plans to counter the coronavirus crisis”](#), which states, “Governments are drawing up stimulus plans in an effort to counter the economic damage from the crisis. These stimulus packages offer an excellent opportunity to ensure that the essential task of building a secure and sustainable energy future doesn’t get lost amid the flurry of immediate priorities ” The IEA promises a *World Energy Outlook* special report in June “that will quantify how clean energy policies and investments can create jobs, support economic recoveries and achieve emissions reductions. The report’s findings and recommendations will inform the high-level discussions at the [IEA Clean Energy Transitions Summit](#) on 9 July.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Covid 19](#), [Energy policy](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Coal-mining closures and energy transitions – impacts on women, youth, and communities

Posted on **May 5, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In April 2020, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) published a Working Paper which analyses the research to date on mine closures – with an emphasis on coal mine closures. ***Distributional impacts of mining transitions: learning from the past*** states that few studies have dealt with the distributional impacts, and those which do exist focus on developed countries (largely the U.K., but some from Canada – including the closure of iron mines in Schefferville Quebec in the 1990's). Authors Strambo and Aung focus on the financial, psychological and labour-related impacts of mining closure, with a special attention to gender and youth impacts. Their report also discusses the effectiveness of implemented policy responses and initiatives in supporting these two social groups.

Strambo and Aung, along with Atteridge, wrote a related report, ***Navigating Coal Mining Closure and Societal Change: Learning from Past Cases of Mining Decline***, published by the SEI in July 2019. It is an extensive, broader bibliographic review and analysis which includes a detailed explanation of the search methods used. It concludes:

“Economic and employment impacts of closure are much more thoroughly documented in the literature than social and political impacts. On economic impacts, more attention needs to be paid to the distributional impacts of mine closure, because a smooth and “just” transition requires design measures that target the specific vulnerabilities of different groups in mining areas. Reducing social inequality is likely to be a particularly important success factor in post-mining transitions, especially in developing countries, where mining regions have often been characterized by high wealth concentration and very limited (if any) benefits in terms of human or social development ... Political and social impacts of closure have also been understudied.”

The SEI also recently published two Papers related to gender aspects of just energy transitions: ***Assessing the gender and social equity dimensions of energy transitions***, which synthesized findings from 67 peer-reviewed academic articles, mostly related to rural women in Asia and Africa. A brief 5-page synthesis report, ***Ensuring just and equitable energy transitions*** summarizes the state of international research.

In January 2020, the **Stockholm Environment Institute** was ranked as the world's top think tank on environmental policy issues in the annual **2019 Global Go To Think Tanks Index**, by the University of Pennsylvania. SEI, headquartered in Sweden but with seven international locations, is a prominent member of **Think Sustainable Europe**, a network of think tanks created in late 2019. It also hosts the secretariat of the UN-affiliated **Leadership Group for Industry Transition**.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [bibliographic studies](#), [Coal Industry](#), [coal phase-out](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Bargaining for the Common Good- including climate justice and just recovery

Posted on **May 4, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“**Bargaining for Climate Justice**” appears in the March 2020 special issue of **The Forge**, a publication launched in September 2019 by and for community and labour organizers. The article is written by Todd Vachon, Saket Sonni, Judith LeBlanc and Gerry Hudson, and updates their earlier article, “**How Workers Can Demand Climate Justice**”, which appeared in *American Prospect* in September 2019. Both articles describe the new movement of **Bargaining for the**

Common Good, defined as: “an innovative approach for bringing unions and allies together to shape bargaining demands that advance the mutual interests of workers and communities alike. BCG campaigns seek to increase investment in underserved communities and confront structural inequalities—not simply to agree on a union contract.”

The origins of the BCG movement are described in “**Going on Offense During Challenging Times**” (in *New Labor Forum*, 2018) which explains: “Bargaining for Common Good aims to avoid transactional relationships between community and labor by building lasting alignments between unions and community groups, not merely temporary alliances of convenience.” “**Bargaining for Climate Justice**” describes how the element of climate justice fits in to the broader concerns of BCG, and updates it with the example of the February **strike by janitors in Minneapolis**, members of SEIU Local 26, as well as the concept of “bargaining for a just recovery”, expanding it from climate-related disasters such as hurricanes and pipeline spills, to the most recent disaster: the current pandemic. The authors state:

“To date, BCG campaigns have been launched around issues of education, racial justice, public services, immigration, finance, housing, and privatization. But they are in many ways perhaps best suited to taking on the overarching existential issues such as global pandemics and human-caused climate change that intersect with and often exacerbate all of these other issues.”



The **Center for Innovative Workplace Organization at Rutgers University** in the U.S. has established a program to promote concrete initiatives around all aspects of Bargaining for the Common Good – building alliances, convening conferences and regional meetings (now delivered through webinars), and compiling resources such as a “**Common Good**” **Toolkit**. That Toolkit includes examples of bargaining demands related to Climate Justice.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [bargaining for the common good](#), [climate change activism](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A review of Just Transition academic research, and the contribution of think tanks, advocacy groups and unions – corrected

Posted on **April 29, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Correction: The research paper listed below, ***Who is included in a Just Transition? Considering social equity in Canada’s shift to a zero-carbon economy***, by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood and Zaeesh Deshpande, **was co-published** by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change Project (ACW) in August 2019. It is one of several co-publications by these two organizations on the theme of Just Transition.

The **Smart Prosperity Institute** published a Working Paper in April as the latest in its Clean Economy Series. **A systematic review of the key elements of a just transition for fossil fuel workers** is written by three academics from

the University of British Columbia, and sets out to answer the question: “What elements of a just transition for fossil fuel workers and their communities do scholars in different academic fields identify?” The research is intended to “provide policymakers, environmental and trade union organizations who are already invested in creating just transition strategies insight on the kinds of issues they can target in their efforts.”

The paper is the result of a systematic literature review of academic articles, along with “government commissions and international organizations”, published between 2000 and 2019, and focused on a just transition for fossil fuel workers and their communities. The authors found a total of 520 documents and selected 33 for analysis, representing varied locations — most from the United States, some international, six from Australia, and the remainder from other countries. From Canada, only the federal Task force on Just Transition in 2018 was included in the analysis. The authors note that most articles concern OECD countries and coal workers; they were unable to find articles focused solely on Saudi Arabia, Brazil, India, or oil and gas workers. They conclude: “Collectively, the articles we reviewed identify 17 key elements (or strategies) of just transition ranging from requirements of long-term planning to importance of retraining. Moreover, these 17 elements vary in terms of the type of justice they further (distributional, procedural, recognition & restorative justices), spatial scales, and timeframe.”

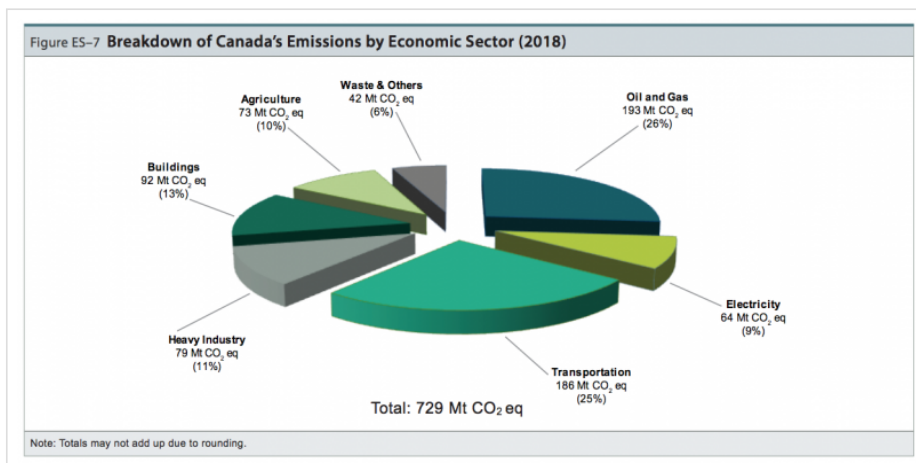
A systematic review of the key elements of a just transition for fossil fuel workers is a solid academic treatment of a huge and ever-growing literature. However, it does not recognize the considerable contributions of advocacy organizations, think tanks, nor labour unions – all of which have been active globally and in Canada.

Below are a few of those documents which add important viewpoints to the Just Transition policy debate in Canada: (in reverse chronological order)

- ***Winding Down BC’s Fossil Fuel Industries Planning for climate justice in a zero-carbon economy*** (March 2020) by Marc Lee and Seth Klein, published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives;
- **“What’s in a just transition? A roundtable on the meaning of the movement”** published as a special issue of *Briarpatch Magazine* in May/June 2019;
- ***Alberta’s Coal Phase-out: A Just Transition?*** published by the Parkland Institute in November 2019;
- ***Who is included in a Just Transition? Considering social equity in Canada’s shift to a zero-carbon economy.*** by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood and Zaeesh Deshpande, co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change Project (ACW), August 2019;
- ***Communicating Climate Change and Energy in Alberta – Alberta Narratives Project*** published by U.K. based Climate Outreach (2018) focused on oil sands workers;
- ***Just Transition and Beyond Just Transition: Canada in Action. Roundtable Summary Report*** (2018) by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project;
- ***Making Decarbonization Work for Workers: Policies for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy*** (2018) and ***Evaluating government plans and actions to reduce GHG emissions in Canada: Just Transition policies*** by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood published jointly by ACW and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2017;
- ***Planning for the Transition in a Carbon Constrained World: Lessons from the Literature for Saskatchewan*** (2017) published by the Saskatchewan Environment Society;
- ***Getting it Right: A Just Transition Strategy for Alberta’s Coal workers*** by the Alberta Federation of Labour (2017);
- ***Just Transition: Creating a Green Social Contract for BC’s Resource Workers*** published by the CCPA B.C. in 2015, and examining forestry, mining, and fossil fuel workers and communities.
- And as far as 2000, the Canadian Labour Congress position paper, ***Just Transition For Workers During Environmental Change***.

Canada's report to the UNFCC shows an increase in GHG emissions

Posted on April 29, 2020 by elizabethperry493



As required by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), Canada submitted its *National Inventory Report* on April 14, available [from the U.N. website](#). The *Executive Summary* at the Canadian government website announces that the Canada's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were 729 million tons of CO₂ and equivalent in 2018, (the latest figures available). This is an increase of 15 million tons from 2017, and a reduction of only 1 million tons from 2005 – making Canada's Paris Agreement target of a 30% reduction from 2005 levels a very challenging goal. The Executive Summary attributes the 2018 performance to "higher fuel consumption for transportation, winter heating and oil and gas extraction." The Toronto Star summarizes the official report in "[Canada's emissions count jumped 15 million tonnes in 2018 from previous year, report shows](#)" (April 15) ; a [summary](#) also appeared in *The National Observer*, focused on British Columbia. The federal [Green Party press release](#) points out that Canada has missed the February deadline to submit its new target for Nationally Determined Contributions, and calls for Canada to reduce our GHG's to 60 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. (In comparison, the latest [EU target under debate](#) is a 55% reduction by 2030).

The full *National Inventory Report* presents statistics since 1990, and analyses trends by region and according to industries – including energy, industrial processes, agriculture, land use (forestry) and waste management. It also measures emissions in 2018 by important gases, including carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) accounted for 80% of Canada's total emissions. Nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions (76% of which come from agriculture) accounted for 5% in 2018, a 2.4% decrease from 1990 levels. Synthetic gases (HFC's, PFC's, SF₆ and NF₃) constituted slightly less than 2% of national emissions.

Canada's other big polluter: methane

According to Canada's *National Inventory Report*, methane accounted for 13% of Canada's total emissions in 2018, an increase of 1% since 1990. 43% of those emissions are attributed to fugitive sources in oil and natural gas systems and another 31% from agriculture. The International Energy Agency also tracks methane emissions from the oil and gas industry [here](#) , and in February 2020 [summarized and critiqued Canada's new policies to reduce methane emissions](#) attributable to the oil and gas industry. Methane (CH₄) is a growing concern for global GHG emissions – as reported in an article in *Scientific American* "[Methane levels reach an all-time high](#)" (April 12) , which summarizes recent reports by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [GHG emissions](#), [Methane Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Blue skies from locked-down economies are fleeting – we still need strong policies to reduce carbon emissions

Posted on [April 24, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A statement from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Earth Day estimates that the pandemic will result in a six per cent drop in carbon emissions in 2020, but warned “COVID-19 may result in a temporary reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, but it is not a substitute for sustained climate action”. The full [WMO Statement on Global Climate Change](#) continues “We need to show the same determination and unity against climate change as against COVID-19. We need to act together in the interests of the health and welfare of humanity not just for the coming weeks and months, but for many generations ahead.”

Scientists are speaking out against the “good news” approach of highlighting clear skies as a silver lining in the Covid crisis. Kate Marvel, a climate scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Columbia University, writes “[I am a mad scientist](#)”, calling for bolder climate change action, and stating :

“I’m angry at the very idea that there might be a silver lining in all this. There is not. Carbon dioxide is so long-lived in the atmosphere that a small decrease in emissions will not register against the overwhelming increase since the start of the Industrial Revolution. All this suffering will not make the planet any cooler. If the air quality is better now, if fewer people die from breathing in pollution, this is not a welcome development so much as an indictment of the way things were before. “

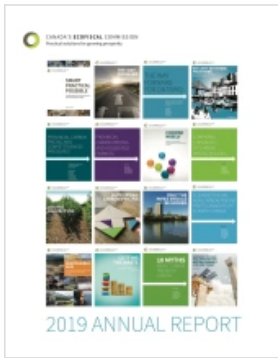
U.K. financial consultants MSCI express similar thoughts from an economic viewpoint in “[Will coronavirus reduce emissions long term?](#) “. “This modeled decline in 2020 emissions does not necessarily indicate a structural change to our current world economy. The estimated emission levels are still comparable to those observed over the past five years, and the economy could readily rebound, returning emissions to prior levels. China already increased its industrial output when their quarantine began to slowly lift. Once Europe and the U.S. lift lockdowns and reopen borders, travel, commuting and economic output could return to “normal” levels. Thus, the projected decrease in global emissions could be short-lived. If so, the risk climate change poses to countries, companies and investors has not dissipated. A much more visible and immediate crisis has simply overshadowed it.”

Researchers from the Stockholm Environment Institute are interviewed in “[COVID-19 pandemic raises new questions about the health impacts of air pollution](#)” and explain how encouraging pictures of blue skies do not reflect the complexities of air pollution. The article, importantly, also seeks to counter the mis-impression that reduced economic activity is necessary to reduce air pollution, by pointing to the more important policy measures in many countries, including Canada, which have been improved air quality and human health without compromising economic growth.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [Covid 19](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Ecofiscal Commission issues final annual report

Posted on [April 23, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

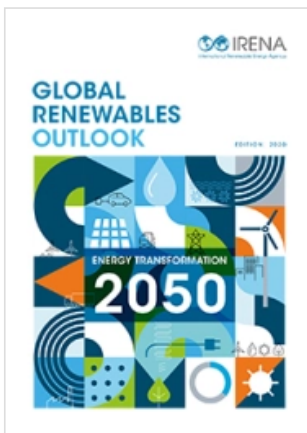


In November 2019, Canada's Ecofiscal Commission announced that their five-year mandate was coming to an end with the release of their final research report, *Bridging the Gap: Real Options for Meeting Canada's 2030 GHG Target*, which recommended quadrupling of Canada's carbon tax by 2030. On April 22, the Commission released their *2019 Annual Report*, with research summaries of their work, and metrics which attest to their strong influence on Canada's policy debate over their five years of operation. With a mission to: "identify and promote practical fiscal solutions for Canada that spark the innovation required for increased economic and environmental prosperity", the Commission's major focus was on carbon pricing – expressed in research, publications, educational events, and in 2019, in supporting the constitutionality of carbon pricing in the court cases brought by Saskatchewan and Ontario. Although not stated explicitly, the final Letter from Director Chris Ragan implies that the resources of the Commission will be archived – the Ecofiscal Commission website is [here](#). Many of the principal authors at the Ecofiscal Commission are finding a new home as part of the new government *Institute for Climate Choices*, announced in April 2019 – for example, Don Drummond, Stewart Elgie, Richard Lipsey, Mike Moffatt and Nancy Olewiler. Chris Ragan (formerly Executive Director of the Ecofiscal Commission) and Mel Cappe are both members of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Climate Choices.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [climate change research](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Renewable energy as a vehicle for sustainable economic recovery – creating up to 30 million jobs globally by 2030

Posted on [April 23, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The first-ever *Global Renewables Outlook* report by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was released in April, following up on their 2019 report, *Global Energy Transformation: A Roadmap to 2050*. At 292 pages, **the full report** provides detailed statistics on the sectors within the renewable energy industry, demand forecasts, economy-wide impacts of energy transformation – including job impacts – and regional analysis for ten broad global regions (Canada is

lumped in with the U.S. and Mexico as “North America”). It addresses the pathways of electrification, system flexibility, renewable energy, green hydrogen, and innovation relating to energy and industry decarbonization. The official Summary Report (54 pages) is [here](#) . Summaries and commentary appear in “[Renewables Agency urges \\$110-Trillion Green Infrastructure Investment to Supercharge Recovery, Boost Resilience](#)” in *The Energy Mix* and in “[Green energy could drive Covid-19 recovery with \\$100tn boost](#)” (April 20) in *The Guardian*. A compilation of the regional fact sheets and infographics is [here](#) .

Although headlines will focus on the price tag of \$1 Trillion for investment, the “Jobs and Skills” section is also notable. It considers two scenarios: “Planned Energy (PE)” and “Transforming Energy” (TE) and forecasts job numbers by subsector, as well as broad occupational demands. Some examples: in the TE scenario, the report forecasts close to 30 million renewable energy jobs by 2030 and 42 million by 2050. Regional-level forecasts are also provided: for example, renewable energy jobs in North America are forecast to represent 23.0% of total energy jobs under the TE scenario by 2030 and 35.3% by 2050.

Coming as it does during the Covid-19 crisis, [Global Renewables Outlook](#) joins the chorus advocating investment in renewables as the vehicle for a sustainable economic recovery:

“With the need for energy decarbonisation unchanged, such investments can safeguard against short-sighted decisions and greater accumulation of stranded assets. COVID-19 does not change the existential path required to decarbonise our societies and meet sustainability goals. Economic recovery packages must serve to accelerate a just transition. ... The time has come to invest trillions, not into fossil fuels, but into sustainable energy infrastructure.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Green Jobs](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Criticism of oil and gas stimulus funds in Canada’s Covid Economic Response Plan

Posted on [April 22, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canadians were generally relieved and positive when Prime Minister Trudeau announced the energy-related provisions of the [federal Covid-19 Economic Response Plan](#) on April 17, with this statement: “Just because we’re in a health crisis, doesn’t mean we can neglect the environmental crisis.” The economic stimulus included \$1.72 billion to clean up orphan or inactive wells in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, which the government claims “ will help maintain approximately 5,200 jobs in Alberta alone.” The second initiative is \$750 million to create an “Emissions Reduction Fund” to help oil and gas companies meet [federal methane-reduction standards](#). The announcement is summarized in a [CBC report](#) and an [article in the National Observer](#) , which also summarizes some of the generally positive reactions from environmental groups. Press releases by [Stand.earth](#) and [Clean Energy Canada](#) reflect that generally-held relief that the government had resisted the extensive lobbying from Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) – as outlined in [a memo leaked by Environmental Defence Canada](#) – and appeared to have listened to the [voices of Canada’s clean energy advocates](#).

An April 17 [press release from Climate Action Network Canada](#) embodies a more cautious reaction:

“While we acknowledge and appreciate what this cash infusion achieves – stimulating the economy through well-paying work, while repairing ecosystems damaged by oil and gas operations – we expect to see the federal government hold companies accountable by making enforcement of existing regulations meant to require those companies to clean up orphaned materials and restore land and waterways a condition of its support to the government of Alberta. We will be watching how fiscal measures available through Export Development Canada (EDC) and Business Development Bank of

Canada (BDC) will further support the government's stated commitment to using COVID-relief public money to move Canada further along its path to a more sustainable and resilient net-zero economic future.”

Many of these same concerns appear in an Opinion piece by Dianne Saxe, the former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, “[Canada's murky bail-out deal for oil and gas will cost us all](#)” (in the *National Observer*, April 21) . Saxe begins with: “it is shameful that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is using your tax dollars to bail out the oil and gas exploration and production industry, perhaps the wealthiest and most polluting industry in human history.” She credits the “one good program” to be the \$200 million loan to Alberta's Orphan Well Association because it is structured as a loan, to be repaid under the oversight of a special committee which will include local and Indigenous representatives. As for the \$750 million Emissions Reduction funding, Saxe criticizes the terms as unclear, and objects to the roles of the Alberta government, the Export Development Corporation and the Business Development Bank of Canada whose previous oil-friendly financial record she documents.

Finally, Saxe objects to the lost opportunity – suggesting other, more impactful ways to spend the economic funds, and stating:

“These multi-billion dollar bailouts are one of the most expensive and polluting ways of protecting jobs. As well as their mountain of debt, the oil and gas extraction industry creates a puny 2.7 jobs per million dollars of output, while pumping out 704 tonnes of greenhouse gases for each full-time job.”

This job creation estimate is based on research by Eric Miller, in an unpublished presentation: [The Pandemic from an Ecological Economics perspective: Assessing consequences and appraising policy options](#) (March 31 2020). More related resources are [here](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [employment impacts](#), [Energy policy](#), [Job Creation](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [orphan wells](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

342,000 jobs by 2040 in zero electric vehicle production in Canada

Posted on [April 16, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A report published by the International Council on Clean Transportation in March, “[Simulating zero emission vehicle adoption and economic impacts in Canada](#)”, was researched by Navius Research of Vancouver. Using economic modelling, Navius forecasts that, even with current policies in place, the ZEV economy in Canada will grow to \$43 billion of GDP and 342,000 workers by 2040. With stronger policies, that job creation potential could approach 1.1 million people by 2040.

The employment forecast accompanies a White Paper by the International Council on Clean Transportation which analyzes sales and production trends for conventional and electric vehicles in Canada. It finds that Canada is the 12th largest vehicle producer in the world, but it's production of electric vehicles is 80% lower than the global average, at only 0.4% of the total. The report, [Canada's role in the electric vehicle transition](#) states that the most important action Canada can take to encourage production is grow its domestic electric vehicle sales market. It also recommends: “Supply-side policies such as research and development funding, loan guarantees, and tax breaks for manufacturing plants are

warranted” and “domestic manufacturing requirements for the procurement of public transit vehicles can serve to increase production of electric buses in Canada.” In addition, “Canada can build on its early leadership in developing and producing hydrogen fuel cell technology—especially for heavy-duty vehicles. ... hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are likely to play a critical role in Canada’s on-road freight sector...”

In February 2020, the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC) **announced** the creation of North America’s first-ever cluster of post-secondary institutions dedicated specifically to researching battery electric and fuel cell electric buses. Canadian manufacturers already producing electric buses include New Flyer Industries, Nova Bus, GreenPower Motor Company, and The Lion Electric Company, as well as U.S. -owned Proterra.

Environmental benefits of electric vehicles and heat pumps

A technical study led by researchers from the Exeter University, University of Nijmegen, and Cambridge University used life cycle analysis to show that in 53 out of the 59 regions studied, electric-powered vehicles and heat pumps generated less carbon dioxide than cars and boilers powered by fossil fuels. The only exceptions came in the heavily coal-dependent regions of Poland. “**Net emission reductions from electric cars and heat pumps in 59 world regions over time**” appeared in *Nature Sustainability* in late March, and is summarized in *The Guardian* as “**Electric cars produce less CO2 than petrol vehicles, study confirms**” (Mar. 23). The Guardian article emphasizes that this study is proof against a campaign of disinformation which has slowed the acceptance of these two technologies – and which they address in an accompanying primer, “**How Green are Electric Cars?**”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [employment impacts](#), [heat pumps](#), [life cycle analysis](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

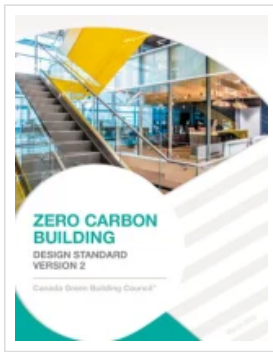
Canada’s Green Building Council updates Zero Carbon Building Standards; government review continues

Posted on **April 16, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A **public review of Canada’s Building Codes** (building, energy, and fire) was open from January 13 to March 13, 2020, under the National Research Council of Canada . The Canadian Green Building Council and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada sent a **joint letter** with three recommendations : First, that “the code requirements should address not only energy efficiency, but also the carbon emissions associated with construction and operations.” 2. Add operational GHG intensity metrics : “The National Model Energy Code for Buildings (NECB) and the National Building Code (NBC) should include the addition of operational GHG intensity metrics in order to better align code outcomes with the objectives of the Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.” 3. Develop embodied carbon metrics: “The next update to the code should include embodied carbon reduction targets using a comparative approach where proposed buildings are compared to a baseline version of the same building.”

The Pembina Institute also made a Submission, summarized in a **press release** on March 13 , and available in full, **here**. Like the CGBC, the Pembina submission calls for GHG intensity metrics in addition to energy efficiency metrics, and goes further in calling for a cap, rather than targets, for the embodied carbon associated with buildings. In a **separate OpEd** on April 15, the Pembina Institute calls for government to “ramp up” all green-building funding models over the next five years, with the goal of retrofitting half of Canada’s building stock by 2030.

Zero Carbon Building Standard v.2 released by Canadian Green Building Council



In the meantime, while government deliberates over the changes to the country's building codes, the Canadian Green Building Council **released** Version 2 of its Zero Carbon Building Standard on March 10, updating the previous version from 2017. The ZCB Standard version 2 itself has two components: ZCB-Design, for new buildings as well as the retrofit of existing structures, and ZCB-Performance, which provides a framework for annual verification that buildings have achieved zero carbon. The Zero Carbon Building Standard 2 technical documents are **here** . Updates from version 1 are highlighted in the **press release** , and relate to: 1. Embodied Carbon: (Projects must now reduce and offset carbon emissions for the building's life-cycle including those associated with the manufacture and use of construction materials.); 2. Refrigerants: (v.2 "encourages" best practices to minimize potential leaks of refrigerants); 3. Energy Efficiency: (more stringent energy efficiency and airtightness requirements), and 4. Innovation: (requires projects demonstrate two innovative strategies to reduce carbon emissions) .

The Canadian Green Building Council published its landmark study in February 2019, ***Making the Case for Building to Zero Carbon*** . It demonstrates that that zero carbon buildings can provide a positive financial return over a 25-year life-cycle, inclusive of carbon pollution pricing, and requiring only a modest capital cost premium.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Building Codes, Green Building, green buildings** | **Leave a reply**

Banks, fossil fuels, and a collapsing oil and gas industry

Posted on **April 15, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Rainforest Action Network is one of the advocacy groups which monitor fossil fuel investment on an ongoing basis: their ***Fossil Fuel Report Card for 2020: Banking on Climate Change*** was released on March 18. As it does every year, the report calculates how much money has been invested in fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015 – in 2020, that has reached \$2.7 Trillion. The report also names and ranks the banks behind the fossil fuel financing, which continue to be dominated by the big U.S. banks: JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citi, and Bank of America. Canada's RBC ranks 5th in the world, having invested \$141 billion since the Paris Agreement, with TD ranking 8th, ScotiaBank 10th and Bank of Montreal ranked 16th.

Against this entrenched position in support of fossil fuels comes the plummeting price of oil and an industry in crisis. An April 1 **blog by the International Energy Agency** explains the five key dimensions – including the Covid-19 crisis – which explain that "The global oil industry is experiencing a shock like no other in its history". The panic setting in to the industry is captured in the *Wall Street Journal* article on April 14, "**Thirst for Oil Vanishes, Leaving Industry in Chaos**". The Carbon Tracker Initiative published "**COVID-19 and the energy transition: crisis as midwife to the new**" which states: "Fossil fuel demand has collapsed and may never surpass the peaks of 2019. By the time the global economy recovers, all the growth may be met by renewable energy sources..... And once the peak is passed, the fossil fuel sector as a whole will face an eternal scrappy battle for survival, struggling with overcapacity and stranded assets, with low returns and high risks."

Forbes is even more blunt in "**After COVID-19, The Oil Industry Will Not Return To "Normal"**" (April 5), which states: "Canada and the United States are in a bind. There is a temptation to bail out oil, if only to keep people employed and

ensure that these over leveraged companies don't drag banks underwater.... Financial support for oil workers is an imperative, but support for the oil sector is a waste of money, whether the Saudis and Russians stay their course or not. Investments in shale and the Canadian oil sands are bound to become stranded assets, even if we return to "normal." Oil's days were numbered before coronavirus, and they will be numbered after it."

The Canadian picture

Andrew Nikoforuk provides a Canadian view in "[The other emergency is crashing oil and gas prices](#)" in *The Tye* (Mar. 18). A [Globe and Mail article](#) on March 19 (updated Mar. 20) outlines political calculations and lobbying, and predicts that the federal government will offer a multi-billion dollar post-Covid-19 rescue package to the oil and gas industry (although determined lobbying is also [pushing for investment in clean energy instead](#). Jim Stanford addresses the issue in "[We're going to need a Marshall Plan to rebuild after Covid-19](#)" (in Policy Options, April 2), and writes: "With the price of Western Canada Select oil falling to close to zero (and no reason to expect any sustained rebound to levels that would justify new investment), it is clear that fossil fuel developments will never lead Canadian growth again. However, the other side of this gloomy coin is the enormous investment and employment opportunity associated with building out renewable energy systems and networks (which are now the cheapest energy option anyway). This effort must be led by forceful, consistent government policy, including direct regulation and public investment (in addition to carbon pricing). Another big job creator, already identified by Ottawa and Alberta, will be investment in remediation of former petroleum and mining sites." By April 9, the *Globe and Mail* published "[Climate, clean tech could take centre stage in federal economic recovery plans](#)". The Narwhal argues "[Doubling down on Alberta's oil and gas sector is a risk Canadians can't afford to take](#)" (April 14).

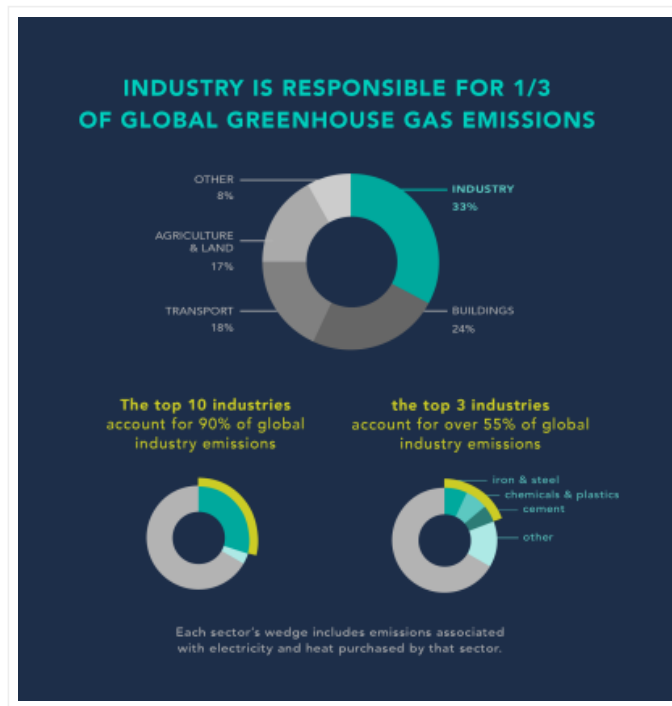
Despite this, in what *Common Dreams* calls "a shameful new low", the Alberta government [announced](#) a \$1.5 Billion cash infusion to "kickstart" the Keystone XL Pipeline on March 31. Ian Hussey of the Parkland Institute reacted with "[Alberta's Keystone XL investment benefits oil companies more than Albertans](#)" (April 2). Bill McKibben reacted with outrage in "[In the Midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic, Construction Is Set to Resume on the Keystone Pipeline](#)" in *The New Yorker*. Other reactions, circling back to the role of Canadian banks: "[Reckless Keystone XL Decision by TC Energy Endorsed by JPMorgan Chase, Citi and Canadian Peers](#)" (Rainforest Alliance Network); and "[Bank of Montreal, RBC, Blackrock Among the Backers for Alberta's 'Reckless' Keystone XL Subsidy](#)" (*The Energy Mix*, April 5).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [financial institutions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to decarbonize global industry and achieve Paris targets

Posted on [April 15, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

"[Technologies and Policies to Decarbonize Global Industry: Review and Assessment of Mitigation Drivers through 2070](#)" is an important research paper written by an international collaboration of 30 experts, including Chris Bataille of Simon Fraser University, British Columbia. Just published in the academic journal *Applied Energy*, the paper argues that "Fully decarbonizing the global industry sector is a central part of achieving climate stabilization, and reaching net zero emissions by 2050–2070 is necessary to remain on-track with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting warming to well below 2 °C."



- The importance of industry is apparent from this infographic from [Energy Innovation](#)

“**Technologies and Policies to Decarbonize Global Industry**” is a detailed and technical article which identifies and evaluates supply-side technologies such as energy efficiency, carbon capture, electrification, and zero-carbon hydrogen as well as promising technologies specific to each of the three top-emitting industries: cement, iron & steel, and chemicals & plastics. The paper also considers demand-side approaches including material-efficient design, waste reduction, substituting low-carbon for high-carbon materials, and circular economy interventions.

The discussion related to policy focuses on those which encourage innovative technology, as well as carbon pricing with border adjustments, and energy efficiency or emissions standards. It highlights the policies of China and India as well as low and middle-income countries, and concludes with a brief discussion of the need for a just transition, which closely resembles the ideas in [Low and zero emissions in the steel and cement industries: Barriers, technologies and policies](#) an Issue Paper written by Chris Bataille for the OECD Green Growth and Sustainable Development Forum in November 2019.

Regarding Just Transition, [the article](#) states:

“These principles will require policymakers to shape decarbonization policies to provide adequate timeframes for industrial transition and include workers and community representatives at all stages of the policy development and implementation process. A just transition will also require a better understanding of how social safety nets, such as unemployment insurance and government-supported training programs, should be utilized, where they fall short, and how they can be improved. The transition to green industry will be an iterative process, but it must be accelerated to address our growing list of social, economic, and environmental challenges.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [cement industry](#), [Decarbonization](#), [Just Transition](#), [Low-Carbon Transition](#), [Plastics Industry](#), [steel industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Communicating climate change in the world of Covid-19 – strategies from social scientists, and the role of journalism

Posted on **April 15, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

As stated in an editorial, “**The Guardian view on the climate and coronavirus: global warnings**” (April 12) , “Could the renewed shock of human vulnerability in the face of Covid-19 make way for an increased willingness to face other perils, climate chaos among them? Impossible to say at this stage, perhaps. But with the postponement of crucial UN biodiversity and climate conferences, it has never been more important to keep up the pressure. There is no exit strategy from our planet.”

What do the social scientists recommend?

Much attention has been focused on the pivot which climate activists must make to replace protests with virtual organizing – for example, in “**How To Be A Climate Activist During The Coronavirus Pandemic**” (HuffPost Mar. 20). But does the messaging also need to change? “**Communicating climate change during the coronavirus crisis – what the evidence says**” (April 14) offers advice in a blog based on extensive social science research into climate change communication, conducted by **Climate Outreach**,

“A few things are clear: a key starting point must be emphasising communal values of compassion and mutual support. It’s also critically important to challenge assumptions about what we think we know, and to ensure climate advocates don’t open themselves up to ‘ambulance chasing’ accusations.”

Although moments of life-changing shift (such as the “shock of human vulnerability” cited in The Guardian editorial) have proven make people more open to changing behaviours, Climate Outreach notes that after traumatic events, people also have a need to get back to normal. With a clear possibility that human society may be entering a period of months and years of disruption on many fronts – health, economy, and even food supply – the blog argues that two futures are possible: an increased emphasis on communal values and the public good, or a society accepting of authoritarian values which erect barriers against perceived threats. The conclusion: “This points ever more strongly to the importance that climate campaigners emphasise the communal values of compassion and mutual support in a time of crisis.”

Climate Outreach plans to publish a practical, evidence-based guide on how to communicate about climate change during the ongoing Covid-19 crisis by the end of May, using the model of **their previous guides**, such as their **#Talking Climate Handbook** (Dec. 2019).

A recent review of the research on behavioural adaptation to climate change also identifies the importance of collective behaviours over individual action – the original article, “**From incremental to transformative adaptation in individual responses to climate-exacerbated hazards**” , appears in *Nature Climate Change* (Feb. 2020); a brief summary appears **here**. The authors, from Ohio State University, found that that most academic studies have examined coping strategies of individuals or households in the face of isolated hazards such as floods or fires. Lead author Robyn Wilson is quoted **here**, saying “If we want to really adapt to climate change, we’re talking about transformational change that will truly allow society to be resilient in the face of these increasing hazards. We’re focused on the wrong things and solving the wrong problems.”

Climate change media amid the Covid-19 crisis



As he does regularly as part of the [Covering Climate Now](#) global initiative, author Mark Hertsgaard, executive director of CCN, compiles major climate change stories. On March 25, he wrote “[COVID-19 and the media’s climate coverage capabilities](#)”, which states: “the media’s snapping to attention on coronavirus throws its coverage of the climate crisis into sharp relief. The press has never treated the climate story with anywhere near this level of attention or urgency.” On April 8, he continued his critique in “[Silence of the climate watchdogs](#)” which states :

“The solution is not for newsrooms to stop covering the coronavirus story. It is to expand their definition of what qualifies as a coronavirus story to include profiteering from the pandemic, whether financially or politically. That’s exactly the kind of impropriety the press’s watchdog function is supposed to expose and inhibit, and there are plenty of dogs capable of fulfilling that function. It’s high time more of them start barking.”

The *Columbia Journalism Review* hosts the [Covering Climate Now](#) global initiative. Its [Spring issue](#) is titled [The Story of Our Time](#), written principally by and for journalists. It provides insights into the state of climate journalism, and also reflects their personal and professional experiences— for example, “[Good Grief](#)” by Emily Atkin, who recounts how her own frustrations in the mainstream media led her to start her own independent news outlet, [Heated](#) in 2019, with the byline “for those who are pissed off about climate change”.

The introduction to [The Story of Our Time](#) sums up the recurring themes throughout all the articles and reflects the militancy of a growing number of climate journalists:

“We have reached a turning point for journalism and the planet. Old ideas that had dampened our attention to climate change—that the subject was too polarizing or too complicated or a money-loser—have been proven wrong. Old forms of storytelling—fast, without helping readers draw crucial connections—are not what’s needed to confront the crisis we face. We owe it to our audience, and our conscience, to be more thoughtful. Climate change is the story of our time. Journalism will be judged by how it chronicles the devastating reality.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change communication](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [Covid 19, Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The toll of Australia’s Black Summer of bushfires

Posted on [April 14, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Australia’s Summer of Crisis](#) was published by the Climate Council of Australia in March, describing the economic and climate change impacts of the bushfires of 2019/20. Although the bushfires were widespread, the report focuses on the two most severely affected areas of the country: New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. It estimates that there was a 10-20 percent drop in international visitors, so that the tourism sector alone will lose at least \$4.5 billion. Bushfire-related insurance claims in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria totalled an estimated value of \$1.9 billion. The report also estimates the unprecedented climate impacts – between 650 million and 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide spewed into the atmosphere (Australia’s annual emissions are around 531 million tonnes). The report states that the hot dry conditions which fuelled the fires will only worsen, and calls urgently for an end to fossil fuel production and export, and a plan to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions to net zero.

Health impacts

“[Unprecedented smoke-related health burden associated with the 2019–20 bushfires in eastern Australia](#)”, published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* (March 12) estimated that bushfire smoke was responsible for more deaths than the fires, and extraordinary health impacts. The researchers estimate there were 417 excess deaths, 1124 hospitalisations for cardiovascular problems and 2027 for respiratory problems, and 1305 presentations to emergency departments with asthma. The article is summarized by [The Guardian here](#), which also reports that the authors have obtained funding for follow-up studies through the Centre for Air Pollution, Energy and Health Research (CAR), funded by

Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council . The [CAR website](#) offers fact sheets and research summaries about bushfire impacts.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [Australia](#), [climate change impacts](#), [Climate change policy](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New European and global alliances launch, calling for Just Recovery economic plans after Covid-19

Posted on [April 14, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In an [Open Letter](#) signed in the first week of April, the environment and climate change Ministers of eleven European Union countries call for the European Green New Deal to be central to the post-pandemic economic recovery plans of the EU. By April 14, that initiative was boosted by the launch of a larger Green Recovery Alliance, including over 70 Members of the European Parliament and civil society groups, including CEO's, business associations, NGO's, think tanks, and the [European Trade Union Confederation](#). In its 4-page [Green Recovery Call to Action](#), the Alliance acknowledges the urgency of the Covid-19 health crisis, and states:

*“After the crisis, the time will come to rebuild. This moment of recovery will be an opportunity to rethink our society and develop a new model of prosperity. This new model will have to answer to our needs and priorities. These massive investments must trigger a new European economic model: more resilient, more protective, more sovereign and more inclusive. All these requirements lie in an economy built around Green principles. Indeed, the transition to a climate-neutral economy, the protection of biodiversity and the transformation of agri-food systems have the potential to rapidly deliver jobs, growth and improve the way of life of all citizens worldwide, and to contribute to building more resilient societies..... **“Projects such as the European Green Deal, and other national zero carbon development plans have a huge potential to build back our economy and contribute to creating a new prosperity model. We therefore consider that we need to prepare Europe for the future, and design recovery plans, both at the local, national and at the EU level, enshrining the fight against climate change as the core of the economic strategy. The time has come to turn these plans into actions and investments that will change the life of citizens and contribute to the quick recovery of our economies and our societies.”** [emphasis by the WCR editor].*

This European initiative is consistent with a worldwide movement for a [Just Recovery from Covid-19](#), co-ordinated by 350.org. In the U.S., this is allied with the [People's Bailout movement](#), [described in a previous WCR post](#) , and sharing the same five principles. The [#Just Recovery Open Letter](#) states:

“ We, the undersigned organisations, call for a global response to COVID-19 to contribute to a just recovery. Responses at every level must uphold these five principles:

1. Put people's health first, no exceptions.
2. Provide economic relief directly to the people.
3. Help our workers and communities, not corporate executives.
4. Create resilience for future crises.
5. Build solidarity and community across borders – do not empower authoritarians.”

Both the European and Global movements are described in [“Pairing ‘Green Deal’ With ‘Just Recovery’ in EU, Groups Embrace Tackling COVID-19 and Climate Emergency in Tandem”](#) in *Common Dreams* (April 10). The newsletter *Euractiv* describes the European initiative in [‘Green recovery alliance’ launched in European Parliament](#) (April 14) .

Clean energy can drive Canada's economic recovery

Posted on [April 13, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The oil and gas industry is in an unprecedented crisis, as explained in an April 1 blog by the International Energy Agency: **"The global oil industry is experiencing a shock like no other in its history"** . Yet on March 31, in what *Common Dreams* calls **"a shameful new low"**, the Alberta government **announced** a \$1.5 Billion cash infusion to "kickstart" the Keystone XL Pipeline. Ian Hussey of the Parkland Institute reacted with **"Alberta's Keystone XL investment benefits oil companies more than Albertans"** (April 2). Bill McKibben reacted with outrage in **"In the Midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic, Construction Is Set to Resume on the Keystone Pipeline"** in *The New Yorker* . McKibben subsequently surveys the situation in Canada and the U.S. in **"Will the Coronavirus Kill the Oil Industry?"** in the *New Yorker* .

As the Canadian federal government continues to formulate its economic recovery plan Covid-19, loud calls are coming to invest in clean energy, not oil and gas

The International Energy Agency provides factual rationale for the push for a cleaner recovery, in **"Put clean energy at the heart of stimulus plans to counter the coronavirus crisis"**. On April 3, an **Open Letter from Canada's clean energy sector associations** was sent to the federal government, calling for a "Resilient Recovery", and emphasizing the job creation potential of the clean economy sector – (estimated pre-Pandemic as employing 559,400 Canadians by 2030) .

Also on April 3, a virtual rally of 56,000 people was organized by Stand.earth as part of a **Bail out People not Polluters campaign, summarized by the Energy Mix**. Quotes **published by Stand.earth** sum up the arguments:

"... Canadians will not accept a sweetheart deal for oil company execs and shareholders to protect Big Oil's bottom line, and prop up a sunset industry. We need every single public dollar available to save lives, support communities and rebuild a cleaner, more resilient future....Because that other crisis—climate change—hasn't gone anywhere. In this moment, when the global economy has been shuttered in humanity's collective battle against COVID-19, governments must seize the opportunity to change course when it starts back up again. To put people back to work building massive solar and wind farms, not pipelines. To invest in the jobs of the future, not the jobs of the past."

Earlier Canadian "No Bailout" voices are summarized in a **previous WCR article** , which highlights the Open Letters sent to the federal government by civil society groups and academics. A selection of more recent calls include: **"Morneau, provinces must apply climate lens to COVID-19 recovery efforts"** in *iPolitics* (April 9); **"Pandemic response should mobilize around low carbon solutions"** by Mitchell Beer in *Policy Options* (Mar. 26) ; **"Let's come out of COVID-19 with a new economy"** an Opinion piece by Merran Smith and Dan Woynillowicz in *The National Observer* (April 8) ; **"Green stimulus offers Canada a way forward for escaping the next recession"** (March 26) and **"Ottawa's bail-outs need to help airline and oil and gas sectors grow greener"** (April 8), both by Sustainable Prosperity.

Last word to Jim Stanford, in **"We're going to need a Marshall Plan to rebuild after Covid-19"** in *Policy Options* (April 2):

"... With the price of Western Canada Select oil falling to close to zero ... it is clear that fossil fuel developments will never lead Canadian growth again. Politicians and their "war rooms" can rage at this state of affairs, but they can't change it: they might as well pray for a revival in prices for beaver pelts or other bygone Canadian staple exports. However, the other side of this gloomy coin is the enormous investment and employment opportunity associated with building out renewable energy systems and networks (which are now the cheapest energy option anyway). This effort must be led by forceful, consistent government policy, including direct regulation and public investment (in addition to carbon pricing).

Another big job creator, already identified by Ottawa and Alberta, will be investment in remediation of former petroleum and mining sites.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Covid 19](#), [economic policy](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New climate change research network launches, saying climate won't wait for the pandemic to end

Posted on [April 9, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new network of university researchers launched on April 2: the [International Universities Climate Alliance \(IUCA\)](#). The network will showcase climate change research from 40 universities in 18 countries, with a wide range of disciplinary expertise, including engineering, economics, law, social science and planning, as well as climate science.

With a website tag line, “Collaborating for Climate Impact”, the IUCA states in its [official press release](#):

“Alliance members are to work together to identify the most effective ways to communicate research-based facts related to climate change to the public. Members will engage in work across climate change science, impact, mitigation strategies and adaptation.”

The network is spearheaded by the University of New South Wales, Sydney, and also includes the California Institute of Technology, Cornell University, the University of Edinburgh, King's College London, the Sorbonne, and from Australia, University of Melbourne and Monash University as well as the UNSW. From Canada, only [McGill University](#) in Montreal is included so far in the full list of member universities, [here](#). A deliberate strategy was to include universities from emerging economies in the group.

The decision to launch now, amidst the “information saturation” of Covid-19 was explained in a [press release from the University of New South Wales](#):

“This new platform is needed now more than ever as the world grapples with providing a coordinated approach to tackling climate change. ...Notwithstanding current urgencies around the COVID-19 pandemic, the alliance members decided not to delay the formation of the alliance due to the pressing and ongoing need to accelerate climate change mitigation and improve decision making.”

That theme is expanded in a related [press release](#) on April 1, titled simply: [Climate change mitigation can't wait for Covid-19 to play out](#).

An expanding role for experts

The experts in the new [International Universities Climate Alliance \(IUCA\)](#) may benefit from the important and highly visible role of scientific experts in the fight against the pandemic. Lesson #1 in Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood's blog, [6 lessons for climate action from Canada's COVID-19 response](#) is “Listen to scientists.” He argues: “At every stage of this pandemic, the public narrative and the associated policy response has largely been guided by epidemiologists and public health officials. ...Yet climate scientists are still sidelined in the public discourse and climate policy is still guided more by short-term political considerations than physical evidence. The climate crisis demands a more central role for climate science.”

Another recent comment in [“After the Coronavirus, Two Sharply Divergent Paths on Climate”](#) from Yale350 (April 7) states: “Some policy experts are optimistic that victory over the coronavirus will instill greater appreciation for what government, science, and business can do to tackle climate change. But others believe the economic damage caused by

the virus will set back climate efforts for years to come.” The article outlines the two approaches, with a general view that the politics of the U.S. may continue to conspire against informed fight against climate change, while the EU will continue to follow a more evidence-driven path.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia, climate change research, Covid 19, Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour’s role in pandemic response – now and in the future

Posted on [April 8, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

As the world reacts to the urgent and terrible demands of the global pandemic, the labour movement is also on crisis footing as it fights for health and income protection for workers in the short term. An [earlier WCR post](#) describes the [Covid-19 Resource Centre maintained by the Canadian Labour Congress](#), which compiles links and documents by Canadian unions – much of it focused on the immediate information needed by individual workers. Unions are also advocating at the national and provincial levels for improved income supports, employment insurance, guaranteed sick leave for the short term crisis, as well as for sustainable long term economic solutions. The



Workers’ Action Centre and the Fight for \$15 and Fairness in Ontario issued a [press release](#) on March 26, in response to the federal benefits announcement . The complete statement of demands appears in [Covid-19: Health Emergency Labour Protections: Urgent comprehensive action is needed to protect workers, communities](#) . Such lobbying and organizing has resulted in a number of emergency-related changes to legislated employment standards across Canada, as described by Michael Fitzgibbon in [“The Right to Refuse in a COVID-19 World”](#) in the Canadian Law of Work Forum (March 27) .

In the United States, the Labor Network for Sustainability provides information on rank and file reactions to Covid-19. On April 2, Jeremy Brecher’s Strike column, [“Strike for your Life”](#) summarizes how U.S. and Italian workers are protesting and walking out due to lack of workplace protections. Brecher’s column cites many U.S. examples, expanding on Steven Greenhouse’s article in the *New York Times*: [“Is Your Grocery Delivery Worth a Worker’s Life?”](#) (Mar. 30). Brecher also summarizes and cites [“The Italian workers fighting like hell to shut down their workplaces”](#) (Mar. 24) . Other overviews of U.S. union actions are: [“Walkouts Spread as Workers Seek Coronavirus Protections”](#) in Labor Notes (Mar. 26); [“The Strike Wave Is in Full Swing: Amazon, Whole Foods Workers Walk Off Job to Protest Unjust and Unsafe Labor Practices”](#) in *Common Dreams* (Mar. 30); and [“The New Labor Movement”](#) (Axios, April 1).

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has compiled [Pandemic News from Unions](#) around the world, including their own documents and those of international affiliates. The ITUC also published [12 governments show the world how to protect lives, jobs and incomes](#) (updated March 30), which ranks the policies of Argentina, Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Sweden and the UK on their pandemic policies related to paid sick leave, income support, wage support, mortgage, rent or loan relief, and free health care .

After the pandemic subsides

Larry Savage and Simon Black, professors at Brock University, are pessimistic that short term gains will survive a return to “business as usual” in Canada. In [“Coronavirus crisis poses risks and opportunities for unions”](#) in *The Conversation*, they reference Naomi Klein’s theory in *The Shock Doctrine* to argue: “Moving forward, unions are likely to find it incredibly difficult to negotiate gains for their members who will be expected to “share the pain” of an economic recession not of their

making” – even public sector workers such as health care workers. To avoid being branded as selfish, Savage and Black urge unions to: “become champions of converting new temporary income supports, social protections and employment standards into permanent measures designed to rebuild Canada’s tattered social safety net.... oppose bailouts of big corporations that don’t also bail out workers and give employees more say over how industries deemed “too big to fail” are run.... continue to lead the resistance to service cuts and demands to privatize health-care services..”

Other recent articles also emphasize the importance of protecting the voice of workers in the post-pandemic world. Thomas Kochan , Professor and Co-Director of the MIT Sloan Institute for Work and Employment Research has written that “By working together in these ways in this time of crisis, business and labor might just lay the groundwork for building a new social contract that fills the holes in the social safety net and forges relationships that will serve society well in the future.” His article, “**Workers left out of government and business response to the coronavirus**” appeared in *The Conversation* (U.S. edition) (March 20).

The National Labor Leadership Initiative at the Cornell University ILR School convened an online forum titled “Labor’s Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic “(Mar 31) . The purpose of the forum, and a continuing initiative, is to facilitate the long-term vision of the labour movement. The April [press release](#) quotes participant Erica Smiley, Executive Director of Jobs with Justice who states: “This is a moment for us to think about what the new normal is, because I frankly don’t want to get back to the old normal. It wasn’t working for most of us.” The press release also reflects the immediate impacts of the current crisis on a range of workers in the U.S.: “Seven TWU members who work in the NYC public transit system have died from the virus, while their co-workers still go to work every day to keep the system running, without adequate assurances that they will be kept healthy and safe. The IATSE members whose work powers the entertainment and festival scene including Austin’s South by Southwest, one of the first major cancellations of the pandemic, are now out of work indefinitely. Teachers and paraprofessionals have rushed to transition their curricula to online formats, even while coping with the emotional impact of missing their students and the school environment. Nurses are on the frontlines and tending to patients without adequate PPE.”

The Global Stage

The ILO’s Bureau for Workers’Activities (ACTRAV) published “**COVID-19: what role for workers’ organizations?**” arguing that **ILO Recommendation 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience (R205)** is an effective instrument for governments, employers and workers organizations to address the COVID-19 pandemic. “This recommendation was adopted with an overwhelming majority of all – governments, employers and workers. It is an international law instrument and Governments are expected to respect its guidance: Workers Organisations can request that it is taken into account.” The ILO maintains an ongoing collection of documents monitoring **Covid-19 and the World of Work** .

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation takes up the theme of a social contract: “As many governments scramble to pay for sick leave, provide income support or other measures, they have found themselves putting in place the building blocks of a social contract. Let’s keep these in place.” (in “**New Social Contract can rebuild our workplaces and economies after COVID-19**” in *The Medium*, (March 18)) . To flesh out that objective, the ITUC will convene virtual and in-person meetings on 24 June, on the theme, “Climate and Employment Proof our Future — a vision for a post-pandemic world”.

In the meantime, the ITUC and the International Organisation of Employers have issued a **Joint Statement on COVID-19** which issues an urgent call for coordinated policies, including :

Business continuity, income security and solidarity are key to prevent the spread and protect lives and livelihoods and build resilient economies and societies.

We stress in the strongest terms the important role that social dialogue and social partners play in the control of the virus at the workplace and beyond, but also to avoid massive job losses in the short and medium term. Joint responsibility is needed for dialogue to foster stability.

Canadian unions providing Covid-19 Resources for members

Posted on **March 31, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

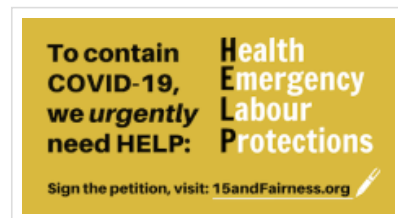
Although unions are not unaware of the long-term perspective of the Covid-19 pandemic – as for example, in “[New Social Contract can rebuild our workplaces and economies after COVID-19](#)” by Sharan Burrow of the ITUC – the main focus for Canadian unions seems to be to actively respond with policy advocacy and practical information



resources for their members. The Canadian Labour Congress has built a dedicated [Covid-19 Resource Centre](#) which includes policy positions and demands, as well as fact sheets useful for individuals – for example, regarding [legislated sick leave provisions](#) in each province, or [community information regarding domestic violence](#) resources.

The CLC has also compiled an exhaustive collection of links to the Covid-19 information of individual unions across Canada and the U.S., [here](#). Although there are differences among unions, most are compiling and updating resources and links which provide specific information for their members, especially regarding their health and safety rights and the financial supports available in the crisis. Some examples: [Amalgamated Transit Union](#); [Canadian Union of Postal Workers](#); [Public Service Alliance of Canada](#); [United Steelworkers](#); and [Unifor](#).

Other unions such as [NUPGE](#) or the [Vancouver District Labour Council](#) are focused on advocacy and demands for government action for front line workers. [Toronto and York Region Labour Council](#) and the [B.C. Federation of Labour](#) provide both. Check the complete listings at the CLC website for the wide range of information available, and also check the list of [advocacy and organizing resources at the Broadbent Institute](#), constantly updated by Dr. Jennifer Robson.



Another important resource for frontline workers: Ontario’s [Fight For \\$15& Fairness campaign](#) for Health Emergency Labour Protections (HELP). Their demands for emergency health leaves and reforms to EI requirements in the Covid-19 situation are outlined [here](#) and [here in French](#).

These demands are also endorsed by the [Decent Work and Health Network](#) in their [press release](#). Like [Fight For \\$15& Fairness](#), the DWHN is sponsoring a petition, as well as organizing a [Zoom-based webinar](#) for health workers in COVID-19, on April 1.

Green stimulus, worker health and safety ignored as U.S. authorizes \$2 Trillion in Coronavirus crisis

Posted on **March 30, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

On March 27, the U.S. Congress passed the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES)** – at \$2 trillion, the largest stimulus in U.S. history. For individual taxpayers, it offers a one-time \$1,200 payment, plus \$500 more for each child under age 17; it also expands unemployment insurance amounts and duration. Details of the provisions are summarized in **FAQ's from the New York Times**, and in **Forbes**. General reaction to what is clearly a compromise Bill appears in “**‘Far More to Do,’ Say Progressives After House Approves and Trump Signs Corporate-Friendly Coronavirus Relief Act**” (Mar. 28). Pramila Jayapal, Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), issued a **press release** which states that Democrats are already formulating policies for the next legislative package, and gives a point-form summary of the **CARES Act**, describing provisions related to Worker-Centered Industry Assistance, the airline industry, and transit industry:

“The bill requires businesses receiving federal assistance to maintain existing employment levels to the extent possible and prohibits stock buybacks or dividends for the length of any loan provided by the federal government plus one year and restricts any increases to executive compensation for two years. The bill also provides direct payroll payments to keep millions of airline workers on the job and receiving paychecks, while also prohibiting airline companies from stock buybacks and dividends for the entire life of a federal grant, plus one year.” Regarding Transit Agencies: “The bill provides \$25 billion to transit agencies, which have all seen a drastic drop in revenues as social distancing has been implemented. This funding is to be used to protect the jobs of the employees of the transit agencies, funding their paychecks during this public health emergency.”

Worker Health and Safety in the CARES Act

The **article in Common Dreams** quotes the president of the Economic Policy Institute, who states that the CARES Act “also egregiously fails to include explicit protections for worker safety during this epidemic in industries seeking federal relief.” On this issue, *Labor Notes* published a compilation of worker actions over health and safety concerns in “**Walkouts Spread as Workers Seek Coronavirus Protections**” (Mar. 26). Anxious and sick workers at food delivery service Instacart and at Amazon announced their plans to strike over health and safety on March 30, as described in “**Amazon and Instacart Workers Are Striking for COVID-19 Protections**” in *Slate*, and also in “**The Strike Wave Is in Full Swing: Amazon, Whole Foods Workers Walk Off Job to Protest Unjust and Unsafe Labor Practices**” (Mar. 30).

Other workers are also walking out on March 30, as described in *Vice*: “**General Electric Workers Launch Protest, Demand to Make Ventilators**”, demanding that their idle plants be converted to the socially-useful work of making ventilators.

A selection of notable readings about Covid-19, workers, and the climate crisis in the U.S.:

Jeremy Brecher, Research Director of Labor Network for Sustainability has written three articles so far in his **new column, Strike**. Brecher offers his own views and commentary, but also links to important reports and statements from unions, advocacy groups, and such U.S. press outlets as *Vox*, *Grist*, *Politico*, and the *Washington Post*, among others. The first Commentary, “**In Coronavirus Fight, Workers Are Forging an Emergency Green New Deal**” (Mar. 16) describes the impact and challenges of Covid 19 in workplaces, and the initiatives taken by many U.S. unions. Article #2, “**An Emergency Jobs Program for an Emergency Green New Deal**” (March 24) proposes what he calls a “Green Work Program” (GWP) for the U.S., based on the principles of a jobs guarantee: “A GWP will provide jobs for all who want them in their own communities performing socially useful work. It will be established by federal legislation, funded by the federal government, and run under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labor or another federal agency. It will be primarily administered by local and municipal governments, nonprofits, social enterprises, and cooperatives. In contrast to the WPA,

it is a permanent program, though its size can be expected to vary depending on economic conditions and social needs.” Brecher’s #3 commentary is [“Momentum Builds for Green New Deal Jobs”](#), which appeared on March 30, summarizing major policy proposals for a Just Recovery.

Naomi Klein updates her thoughts about disaster capitalism in a new [video](#) at *The Intercept*, explaining how governments, especially the Trump administration in the U.S., are exploiting the the coronavirus outbreak “to push for no-strings-attached corporate bailouts and regulatory rollbacks.” The most egregious example of this regulatory rollback came on March 26 in an EPA press release [“EPA Announces Enforcement Discretion Policy for COVID-19 Pandemic”](#), critiqued by *Inside Climate News* in [“Trump’s Move to Suspend Enforcement of Environmental Laws is a Lifeline to the Oil Industry”](#) (Mar. 27). *The Intercept’s Coronavirus coverage* emphasizes this aspect of the crisis.

David Roberts, [“A just and sustainable economic response to coronavirus, explained”](#) appeared in *Vox* (Mar. 25).

Meehan Crist in [“What the Coronavirus means for climate change”](#) an Opinion piece in the *New York Times* on March 27.

Bill McKibben now writes an [Opinion series for the New Yorker](#) magazine, emphasizing climate change connections. Recent articles include: [“If We’re Bailing out Corporations, they should bail out the planet”](#) (Mar. 20), and [“The Coronavirus and the Climate Movement”](#) (Mar. 18).

Progressives and climate activists: An [Open Letter to Congress for a Green Stimulus Plan](#) appeared in *Medium* on Mar. 22 (with approximately 1200 signatures by Mar. 24). Amongst the signatories are high-profile activists such as 350.org co-founder Bill McKibben; former EPA administrator Gina McCarthy; Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis, co-founders of The Leap, as well as prominent academics. It is aligned with the [5 Principles for Just COVID-19 Relief and Stimulus](#) proposed by environmental, labour, and other progressive groups, including the Climate Justice Alliance(CJA). In a March 24 press release, [“Seven Congressional Leaders Join 500+ Progressive Organizations To Demand People’s Bailout In Response To Coronavirus Crisis”](#), CJA announces that Senators Ed Markey and Tammy Duckworth, and Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Mark Pocan, Debbie Dingell, Pramila Jayapal, and Barbara Lee endorse joined their [People’s Bailout campaign](#), based on the 5 Principles.

Thomas Hanna and Carlos Sandos Skandier : [“We can’t let this economic crisis go to waste”](#) an Opinion Piece in *Open Democracy* (March 16), which argues ..”During this, or any future, economic crisis, public support and funding to stricken industries must be conditioned on public ownership and control within the overall perspective of a Green New Deal and a just transition for workers and communities affected by the required shifts to renewable energy and less carbon intensive modes of transportation and production. This means not simply injecting public money into banks, oil and gas companies, and airlines in order to stabilize and resurrect their existing business so they can continue financing, extracting, and burning fossil fuels at a pace that will blow our chances of keeping temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius by 2036.”

[“How to Make the Airline Bailout Work for Workers, Not Just CEOs”](#) from *Inequality.org* (March 17) endorses the proposals from Sara Nelson of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, including direct payroll subsidies for airline workers. The article in *Inequality* includes a table which shows how much the five biggest U.S. carriers spent on stock buybacks between 2010 and 2019 – including American Airlines, which spent \$12.5 billion on buybacks, to increase the value of executive stock-based pay. Sara Nelson makes her case in an interview in *In These Times* (Mar.19) : [“Our Airline Relief Bill Is a Template for Rescuing Workers Instead of Bailing Out Execs”](#). She concludes:

“This virus is a very clear metaphor for what we always say in the labor movement, which is “An injury to one is an injury to all.” It doesn’t matter whether you’re rich or poor, or where you come from. If a virus exists and we don’t do something about it, then we’re all at risk. “

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy, Covid 19, economic policy, Pandemic, United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada enacts Economic Stimulus Plan for COVID-19 amid calls for sustainable investment, not bail outs

Posted on **March 26, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With almost one million new employment insurance claims made so far during the COVID crisis and a **grim new forecast by TD Economics** just published, a special sitting of Parliament on March 25 passed a economic stimulus package for Canada. As described in **"Feds rejig benefits to get aid to workers affected by COVID-19"** in the *National Observer* (Mar. 26), the new measures will combine and augment the two **previously announced** benefit programs into one, the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit**. The core of the new benefit program will use General Revenues rather than the EI Fund, to provide "a \$2,000-a-month payment for up to four months to workers whose income drops to zero because of the pandemic, including if they have been furloughed by their employers but technically still have jobs." It is promised that the money will reach Canadians by mid-April, with an additional increase to the Child Care Benefit of \$300/month/child beginning in May. The Ministry of Finance summary is [here](#); the fine print is in the **Notice of Ways and Means Motion here**.

In response to the government's stimulus, David Macdonald has written **"Unemployment may hit 70-year high, but new EI replacement will help"**, which appears in *Behind the Numbers* from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (March 26). Macdonald identifies the four industries at the highest risk of immediate job losses from the pandemic: passenger airlines; arts, recreation, culture and sport; retail sector; and accommodation and food services (which alone employs 987,000 workers in normal times). He then analyses how the benefits announced on March 25 will impact the approximately 2 million most vulnerable occupations within those industries. The article also forecasts alarming unemployment scenarios across Canada, and specifically in Canada's cities, where service workers form a high percentage of the labour force. Some conclusions: unemployment in Calgary could rise from the already high 8.0% to a probable rate of 15.3%, excluding any further oil price shocks; Ottawa could rise from its February 2020 low 4.4% to 11.6% in the worst-case scenario; Toronto could see an increase from 5.4% to 12.4% in the worst case; Montreal from 5.2% to 13.4%, and Vancouver 4.7% to 13.8%.

Calls for Sustainable investments, not bail outs

In reacting to the March 25 emergency stimulus measures, Julia Levin of Environmental Defence Canada raises the biggest elephant in the room: concern that money will be used to bail out the troubled oil and gas industry.

Environmental Defence warns :

"We applaud all of the federal parties for working together to take this positive step to pass legislation which will help those struggling" "But hidden inside this new law were changes that will make it easier for Canada's export credit agency, Export Development Canada, to funnel billions more towards domestic oil and gas operations — without public scrutiny."

Others who have spoken out against short-term bail outs:

Civil society and labour unions: **"No New Money For Oil and Gas Companies—Give It To Workers—Say Large Collection of Groups Representing More Than One Million Canadians"**, an Open Letter to the federal government in advance of the March 25 announcement. It states: "Giving billions of dollars to failing oil and gas companies will not help workers and only prolongs our reliance on fossil fuels. Oil and gas companies are already heavily subsidized in Canada and the public cannot keep propping them up with tax breaks and direct support forever. Such measures benefit corporate bottom lines far more than they aid workers and communities facing public health and economic crises. "

265 Canadian Academics: As reproduced in the *National Observer*, **another open letter** to the Prime Minister from academics and advocacy groups (with a **list of the 265 signatories here**)

“A bailout for the oil and gas industry? Here’s why experts say it’s not a long-term solution” by Sharon Riley in *The Narwhal*, which notes that the oil and gas industry has called for a postponement of increases to the federal carbon tax and “a federal Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) modeled after the U.S. program developed in 2008 to purchase positions in distressed companies.” The experts who argue against it include Jeff Rubin (former chief economist with CIBC World Markets), Gord Laxer, (Professor Emeritus University of Alberta), Chris Severson-Baker (Pembina Institute), and Ian Hussey (Parkland Institute). In **“Bail out Workers, Not Fossil Fuels, Climate Advocates Tell Trudeau”** in *The Tyee* (March 20), Geoff Dembicki discusses the same issues.

“COVID-19 crisis is a tipping point. Will we invest in planetary health, or oil and gas?” (Mar. 24) by Dr. Courtney Howard, Board member of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

“Coronavirus and the economy: We need green stimulus not fossil fuel bailouts” by Kyla Tienhaara, Canada Research Chair in Economy and Environment at Queen’s University, published in *The Conversation* (Mar. 24). She argues that “Stimulus measures should either provide substantial environmental benefits such as greenhouse gas emissions reductions or re-orientate the economy to low-carbon activities, such as care work and the arts.... bailouts to the fossil fuel industry and airlines would be monumentally counterproductive.”

Tim Gray of Environmental Defence offers some specific alternatives in **“How Canada can build an environmentally sustainable future after the COVID-19 Crisis”** (March 23).

These same arguments are playing out internationally – Naomi Klein has released **a new video at *The Intercept***, explaining how the Trump administration and other governments across the globe are “exploiting” the coronavirus outbreak “to push for no-strings-attached corporate bailouts and regulatory rollbacks.” She urges working people worldwide to resist such efforts and demand real support from political leaders during the ongoing crisis.” In the U.S., the Climate Justice Alliance is part of that resistance, as described in ***Demand A People’s Bailout that Protects Workers while Ensuring Safe and Sustainable Energy***.

Posted in **Government Policy, Green Economy** | Tagged **economic policy, Oil and gas industry, pandemic response, unemployment** | [Leave a reply](#)

Can the fight against COVID-19 help the climate change fight?

Posted on **March 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the world reeling under the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, some are trying to make sense of our disrupted world, and find lessons and hope for the fight against climate change.

One thoughtful and useful article is **“Can COVID-19 create a turning point in the fight against climate change?”**, which appeared in *Medium* on March 13. Acknowledging that the pandemic is distracting attention and resources from the climate fight, author Kaveh Madani argues that “The COVID-19 crisis is teaching us some lessons and implementing some reforms that are essential for success in mitigating the climate crisis.” Specifically, economic and financial reforms; reduction of GHG emissions; the move to “virtual life”, including teleworking; reduction of aviation travel and consumerism; the importance of science; the interconnectedness of our global world, and conversely, the importance of individual action.

Another widely-cited article appeared in *Fast Company*, **“What would happen if the world reacted to climate change like it’s reacting to the coronavirus?”**. The article quotes May Boeve, executive director of 350.org, who finds hope in the fact that: “We’ve seen that governments can act, and people can change their behavior, in a very short amount of time... And that’s exactly what the climate movement has been asking governments and people to do for years in the face of a different kind of threat—the climate crisis.” The downside? The response to the climate threat has not been as swift and strong, which she attributes to the perception that it is a “somewhat distant problem, despite the growing number of

climate-related disasters that happen every year”, and because “in the climate crisis, powerful companies have a lot to lose if the world acts decisively, and with the virus, though many people are losing money, there’s no similarly massive opposition to trying to address the problem.”

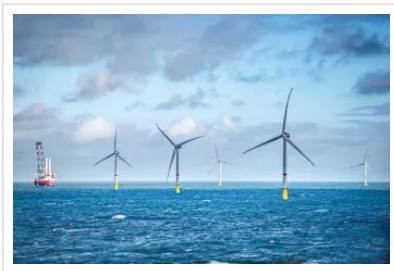
Two articles on March 15 in *The Energy Mix* explore how the Coronavirus has disrupted the oil and gas industry, and how that may help the climate fight. “**Coronavirus Triggers OPEC+ Breakup, Drives Deepest Oil Price Dive in 29 Years**” (March 15) summarizes the geopolitics and oil price collapse; “**Oil War and Covid-19 Create Risk, Opportunity for Clean Energy**” (March 15) summarizes the opinions of several market analysts who argue that “It doesn’t make sense to reduce your investment in renewables if the oil price crashes ...It’s more logical to reduce your investment in oil.” Amongst possible benefits: governments would reduce fossil fuel subsidies and redirect funding to health priorities, and investment redirected to clean energy would strengthen that sector.

Finally, Avi Lewis of The Leap wrote a *Globe and Mail* Opinion piece, “**In the midst of converging crises, the Green New Deal is the answer**” in which he argues: “In the midst of all these terrifying and converging disasters, this is perhaps the greatest opportunity – to shatter the shackles of austerity thinking and see the potential for government to do big things, like actually lead a democratic and inclusive response to the climate emergency at the speed and scale that science and justice require.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [International](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Scotland’s Just Transition Commission releases interim report and recommendations

Posted on **March 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On February 27, the **Scottish Just Transition Commission** released its *Interim Report*, emphasizing the urgency for the Scottish Government to begin planning for transition immediately, and offering some positive examples of initiatives underway. The Commission calls for a government commitment to develop a Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan—specifically, an “assessment of workforces most likely to be affected by the transition (including those indirectly affected through supply chains), and the most immediate and pressing skills requirements needed to support the net-zero transition”. The Commission’s interim recommendations also include: a call to “Place equity at the heart of the Climate Change Plan update”; ensure that there is transition support for the Agriculture sector; establish a Citizens Assembly on climate change, operating independently of the Scottish Government; promote Scotland’s approach to just transition at COP 26 meetings in Glasgow in 2020; expand on the success of energy efficiency initiatives with funding support; begin planning for low-carbon infrastructure, noting that future government infrastructure investment should avoid locking in emissions and inequality; place the climate emergency at the heart of spending decisions; and improve modelling and research to help understand the transition.

Perhaps most controversial is the final recommendation:

*“The oil and gas industry currently provides and supports a large number of high quality jobs meaning any transition for the sector and its supply chain in the decades ahead will need to be carefully managed. Strategies such as Roadmap 2035 from Oil and Gas UK have begun to set out **the role industry believe they can play** in a net-zero economy. ... To*

further support the deployment of CCUS and hydrogen, Government should consider supporting a programme of focussed research in collaboration with industry, with the aim of delivering a reduction in the costs of deploying these energy solutions in a way that secures a just transition for workers and stakeholders. “

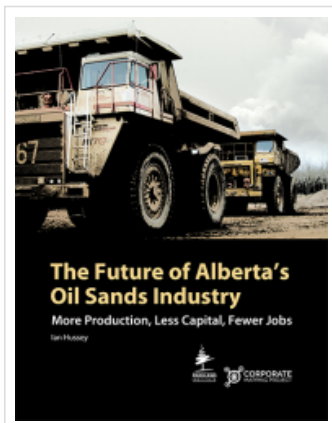
The **Scottish Just Transition Commission** was launched in September 2018, chaired by Professor Jim Skea, and including two unionists amongst its membership: Richard Hardy, the National Secretary for Scotland and Ireland at labour union **Prospect**, and Dave Moxham, Deputy General Secretary of the **Scottish Trade Union Congress**. The Commission has issued a Call for Evidence in 2020, with a final report and recommendations expected in 2021. In the meantime, the Commission states that 2020 will be used to “consider a range of cross-cutting themes such as finance, skills and technology innovation”, and have commissioned a report on international just transition experiences. The Interim Report also references several existing reports, including one commissioned by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust: ***The State of the Coalfields 2019: Economic and social conditions in the former coalfields of England, Scotland and Wales*** (July 2019), published by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheeld Hallam University, in Sheffield.

Reaction is summed up by Friends of the Earth Scotland in its favourable statement, “**Time to move beyond rhetoric on just transition, say Unions and environmentalists**”. Reaction from the Scottish Trade Unions Congress is [here](#); Prospect’s reaction is [here](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Just Transition](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Scotland](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fewer jobs will be needed in Alberta’s oil sands according to Parkland report

Posted on **March 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The latest of several reports by the **Parkland Institute** and Corporate Mapping Project was released on March 10: ***The Future of Alberta’s Oil Sands Industry : More Production, Less Capital, Fewer Jobs***. Author Ian Hussey argues that a managed decline of the industry is needed, and that it is now in its mature phase – with 53,119 jobs lost between 2014 through 2019. With this maturity comes fewer construction projects, and technological change is driving down operational employment. Although most people are aware of the adoption of driverless trucks, Hussey also discusses horizontal multi-well drilling pads; supervisory control and data acquisition, remote monitoring, and information technology and analytics; and replicated designs and modularization. In sum,

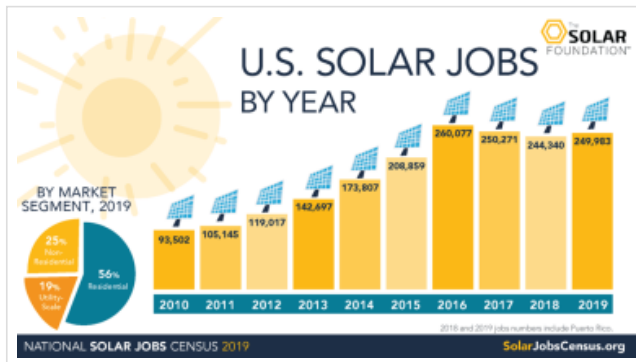
“Despite the growth in production, fewer and fewer employees are needed. In 2019, overall productivity per employee in Canada’s oil and gas industry was 47% higher than in 2011, and productivity in the oil sands was 72% higher in 2019 than 2011. This indicates that the jobs that have been lost in recent years are likely not coming back. Production is at an all-time high and has increased 23% since 2014, while jobs have declined by 23% since 2014.”

The report also profiles the “Big Five” oil and gas companies operating in Alberta: Suncor Energy, Canadian Natural Resources Limited (CNRL), Imperial Oil, Cenovus Energy, and Husky Energy – providing statistics on their production, reserves, profits and shareholder returns, and capital spending.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Solar industry rebounds to almost 250,000 workers in 2019

Posted on **March 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The 10th annual **National Solar Jobs Census** for the United States **was released** by the non-profit Solar Foundation in mid-February. It reports a resurgence in solar industry employment in 2019, following two years of job losses in 2017 and 2018. The report states that 249,983 U.S. workers spent the majority of their time in solar-related activities in 2019, and an additional 94,549 workers spent some portion of their time on solar-related work, for a total of 344,532 workers. The full Report is downloadable (with free registration) from [this link](#), with a [summary here](#). It provides state-by-state statistics re job totals and sectors within the solar industry, and profiles the solar industry in California (where the Title 24 mandate went into effect in 2019, requiring all new residential homes to be built with solar PV), and the South-east U.S. The report also forecasts future trends, and provides discussions of demographics and workforce development, reporting that a majority of employers have difficulty recruiting and hiring. (Through its Solar Training Network, the Solar Foundation published **Strategies for Solar Workforce Development: A Toolkit for the Solar Industry** in 2018).

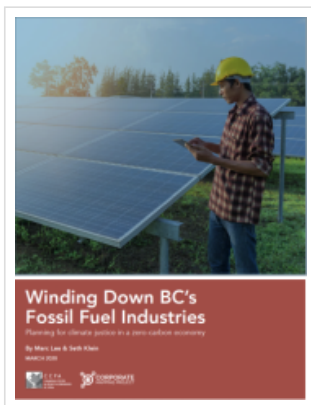
Some highlights from the 2019 National Solar Census:

- About the industry: Approximately 93% of U.S. solar establishments work in solar PV electricity generation. 16% of firms work on solar heating and cooling, (e.g. solar water heaters); 7% work on projects related to concentrating solar power (CSP).
- About the demographics: Diversity remains almost the same as in 2018: women represented 26% of the solar workforce, Latino or Hispanic workers represented 17%, Asian workers comprised 9%, and black or African American workers comprised 8%.
- About wages: for entry-level unlicensed (non-electrician) solar installers the median wage was \$16.00 (the U.S. national median wage for all occupations is \$18.58). The median wage for entry-level licensed (electrician) installers was \$20.00.
- Wages for production workers start at \$15.00 for entry-level employees, (national median wage for production workers is \$16.85). Wages reached \$36.50 for senior-level production employees.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Green Jobs](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Just Plan to wind down B.C.'s Fossil fuel industry by 2050

Posted on **March 11, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



Winding Down BC's Fossil Fuel Industries: Planning for climate justice in a zero-carbon economy was released on March 4 by the B.C. office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, as part of the Corporate Mapping Project. Authors Marc Lee and Seth Klein begin with an overview of the province's fossil fuel industries (including locations, production and reserves) noting that all fossils produce one-quarter of B.C.'s GHG emissions, (most of which is from Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)). Calling the government's current strategy of promoting LNG production through clean electricity "untenable", the report proposes a four-point phase-out plan for all fossils over the next 20 to 30 years, including: 1. Establish carbon budgets and fossil fuel production limits; 2. Invest in the domestic transition from fossil fuels and develop a green industrial strategy; 3. Ensure a just transition for workers and communities; 4. Reform the royalty regime for fossil fuel extraction.

To design a Just Transition plan, the authors cite as "helpful" the examples of the Alberta coal phase-out and the 2018 coal phase-out agreement in Spain, as well as the existing Columbia Basin Trust example of community transition. In the long time frame of 20 to 30 years, they see the retirement of many existing workers, so that attrition will accomplish much of the job shedding. Although they say that Just-transition strategies "must include efforts to maintain employment in areas where jobs are likely to be lost" – implying reinvestment in resource-based communities – they also recognize the built-in gender bias of such a strategy and advocate investment in public sector jobs – such as child care and seniors services.

To secure Just Transition funding

The report states:

"...BC should aim to invest 2 per cent of its GDP per year ... or about \$6 billion per year in 2019, an amount that would grow in line with the provincial economy. Assuring such levels of investment should give comfort to workers currently employed in the fossil fuel industry. Revenues from higher carbon taxes and royalty reforms (described below) would be an ideal source of funds, and/or governments could borrow (through green bonds) to undertake high levels of capital spending on decarbonization initiatives. In contrast, the 2019 BC Budget lists total operating and capital expenses for CleanBC over the next three years at, cumulatively, only \$679 million, less than one-tenth of a percent of BC's GDP."

Managing Income loss for transitioned workers:

The authors state: "On average, fossil fuel workers make 28 per cent more than workers in the rest of the economy, although this includes gasoline station workers who earn comparably low wages. Replacing more than \$5 billion of income over the course of the wind-down period is therefore a central challenge".... By assuming a 20 to 30 year time frame, they calculate a job substitution of 500 to 700 jobs per year, and state: " There is no reason to believe that such a transition should be a problem if the right policy supports are implemented and a proactive green investment strategy is pursued to create alternative employment options." Earlier in the report, the authors estimate that, assuming the province invests 2

per cent of its GDP annually (about \$6 billion in 2019) in green job creation, at least 42,000 direct and indirect jobs would be created in a range of opportunities.

The CCPA offers an 8-page [Executive Summary](#) of the report, and an [even briefer version](#), written by co-author Marc Lee, was published in the *Vancouver Sun* on March 8.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta's government continues to prop up oil and gas industry with new Blueprint for Jobs, penalties for protesters

Posted on **March 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As Teck Mines and other private sector [investors rush away from oil and gas](#) investment in Alberta and [the price of oil collapses](#), the Alberta Legislature resumed on February 24, with a [Budget](#) and a new economic plan: [A Blueprint for Jobs: Getting Alberta Back to Work](#). The Blueprint is built on five pillars: "Supporting businesses; Freeing job creators from senseless red tape; Building infrastructure; Developing skills; Selling Alberta to the world." Announced in a [March 2 press release](#) as the first step in the *Blueprint*: a \$100 million loan to the [Orphan Well Association](#), promising to generate up to 500 direct and indirect jobs by financing reclamation of abandoned mining sites. The press release also promises a future "suite" of announcements "covering the entire lifecycle of wells from start to finish". As *The Narwhal* reports in ["Alberta loans industry-funded association \\$100 million to 'increase the pace' of orphan well cleanup"](#) (March 2), this latest loan follows a 2017 loan of \$235 million, as the industry-levies which fund the Orphan Wells Association fail to keep pace with the environmental mess left behind by bankrupt mining companies.

The Alberta Federation of Labour released a statement in response to the [Alberta Budget](#), ["Kenney's Budget breaks promises, delivers opposite of what Albertans voted for last year"](#). The AFL charges that the budget will result in more than 1,400 job cuts, especially in education (244 jobs lost), agriculture (277 jobs lost), and community and social services (136 jobs lost). Further, "Today's budget increases the deficit by \$1 billion because of this government's short-sighted overreliance on resource revenues, while cutting billions in revenue from corporations." A similar sentiment appeared from an opposite corner: [an Opinion piece](#) in the mainstream *Toronto Globe and Mail* states: "The cost of Mr. Kenney's inaction on economic diversification will be high. Alberta has the advantage of being home to many skilled clean-tech and renewable-energy workers already, but the speed at which the world is innovating in that area means that a lagging Alberta will result in the emigration of some of our best and brightest entrepreneurs."

Updated:

The Alberta Federation of Labour released another [statement on March 16](#), condemning the Budget proposal as an "ideological budget that does not fit the times". Further, it is "no longer worth the paper it's written on. The revenue side of the budget is in tatters because oil is now trading nearly \$30 per barrel less than projected", and because of the Covid-19 crisis, the planned cuts to health care "will hurt, not help our province." The AFL is demanding that the Budget be scrapped, but the CBC reported on March 16, ["Alberta government plans to accelerate budget process, add \\$500M to health spending"](#), reporting that the government dramatically curtailed study and debate, and on March 17, CBC reported ["Alberta legislature approves \\$57-billion budget in race against COVID-19 spread"](#).

For those concerned about the erosion of the democratic process under the threat of the pandemic, this is a worrying sign.

And not the first worrisome sign in Alberta: the first order of business in the new Session was [Bill 1, The Critical Infrastructure Defence Act](#), introduced by Premier Kenney. As described in a *National Observer* article [here](#), the Bill proposes to discourage citizen protest by making it easier for police to intervene in blockades, and proposes individual

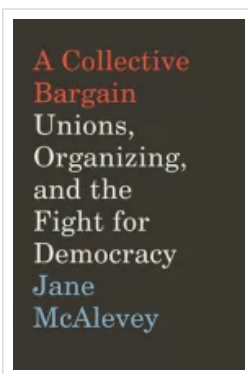
finer for protesters of up to \$10,000 for a first offence, and up to \$25,000 for each subsequent day a blockade or protest remained in place. The [Alberta Federation of Labour released a statement](#) on March 6 calling on the government to withdraw the Bill immediately, stating that the justification (ie protection of rail lines) is misleading, and “The legislation is clearly designed to stop or discourage all collective action that goes against the UCP agenda, including potential labour or worker action.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate Activism](#), [Financial Risk](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#), [orphan oil wells](#), [reclamation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Positive examples of climate action needed to bring unionists into the climate fight, says veteran activist

Posted on [March 10, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

“[The Climate Movement Doesn’t Know How to Talk with Union Members About Green Jobs](#)” appeared in *The Intercept* on March 9, transcribing an interview with Jane McAlevey, a veteran labour activist in the U.S. and now a senior policy fellow at the University of California Berkeley’s Labor Center. One interview question: “What do you think organizers should be doing right now to make sure a climate-friendly platform can win in a presidential race where Trump will argue that ending fossil fuel investment means lost jobs?” In response, McAlevey urges activists to allay workers’ fears about the future with examples of positive changes – citing as one of the best examples the “New York wind deal” when, “unions won a far-reaching climate agreement to shift half of New York State’s total energy needs to wind power by 2035. They did it by moving billions of subsidies away from fossil fuels and into a union jobs guarantee known as a project labor agreement.” (A [previous WCR post](#) summarizes the campaign which culminated in the New York [Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act](#) in the summer of 2019). Ultimately, McAlevey calls for “spade work” which educates workers about the climate crisis and reassures them by providing positive solutions. Citing the deeply integrated nature of the climate and economic crises, she concludes: “We have to build a movement that has enough power to win on any one of these issues that matter to us.... We’re relying on the people that already agree with us and trying to get them out in the streets. We can’t get there with these numbers.”



The Intercept interview is one of many since Jane McAlevey’s published her third book in January 2020. [A Collective Bargain: Unions, Organizing, and the Fight for Democracy](#) discusses the climate crisis, but is a much broader call to arms for the U.S. labour movement. A very informative review of the book by Sam Gindin appears in *The Jacobin*, [here](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and politics](#), [labour activism](#), [Labour and Greens](#), [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Australia Senate Committee Report shows a green economy is possible

Posted on **March 9, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



On 31 July 2019, the Australian Senate established a **Select Committee into the Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas**, with a mandate to inquire and report on new industries and employment opportunities that can be created in regions and rural areas. The terms of reference were broad and included “lessons learned from structural adjustments in the automotive, manufacturing and forestry industries and energy privatisation ; the importance of long-term planning ; measures to guide the transition into new industries and employment; and the role of vocational education providers, in enabling reskilling and retraining.”

Public consultations were conducted in seven locations and **174 submissions** were received from academics, policy experts, government representatives and unions, between July and September. The **Report of the Select Committee** was released in early December 2019, but because Senators were unable to set aside politics and arrive at consensus recommendations, the report consists mostly of excerpts from the submissions heard. There are 14 recommendations made by the Chair , and separate recommendations by Labor members and by Government Senators, who said: “The word ‘transition’ is a loaded term which necessarily involves preconceptions around the direction of the Australian economy. The issue surrounding the definition of ‘transition’ is one of the reasons why the committee could not reach agreement on recommendations.”

Nevertheless, the report and submissions are a valuable record of the current situation in Australia because they discuss examples of the technological innovations in current industry, and future job opportunities in renewable energy, biofuel, mining, lithium-ion battery manufacture, waste management, hydrogen energy export to Asia, and ecological services and natural infrastructure (including site rehabilitation and reef restoration).

Some excerpts:

“... the growth in renewable energy generation presents direct opportunities for increasing manufacturing activity: Installation and construction employs large numbers of people for short periods of time, but a globally competitive renewables manufacturing industry creates jobs for decades. The Victorian state government has only scratched the surface of the opportunity for Australia in this space. They have reopened the Ford plant in Geelong and allowed Danish multinational Vestas to start assembling wind turbines, but there is also Keppel Prince in Portland and Wilson Transformers in Wodonga, who have also been involved in the renewables supply chain, creating high skilled, meaningful manufacturing jobs.”

“... the GFG Alliance in Whyalla which is proposing to revitalise the steelworks and bring down the cost of production with a variety of innovative and technologically advanced initiatives. Depending on the final configuration, a portion of the energy used at the steelworks would be sourced from a 280 MW solar farm in the Whyalla region..... Sun Metals, a solar electricity generation farm, supplies the existing zinc refinery with about 30 per cent of its electricity needs. That refinery is expanding its zinc production and is looking to expand its portfolio of renewable generation assets to further reduce its exposure to volatile electricity grid prices. Similarly, the development and commercialisation of the EnPot technology for aluminium smelting has the potential to redefine and expand the role of aluminium smelting in Australia as an electricity grid stabiliser as well as a value-adding base metal producer.”

Regarding future skills and labour market concerns:

The Centre for Policy Futures characterized the role of industry skills councils as critical to ensure that training matches the available jobs. "... These councils must be part of the community consultation process; work with the public authority to identify what future employment opportunities might look like; and determine the future employment, reskilling and retaining opportunities that might be available."

Concerns about the skill differences between workers currently employed in coal mines and power-stations were highlighted by the Institute for Sustainable Futures: "The nature of the workforce in coalmining means that the transition there is going to be more challenging than it is in power generation. Power generation has a lot of trades, technicians and professionals. One in two coalminers is a truck driver or a machine operator—the second-lowest skill category. So it is going to be a lot more challenging than power generation, where you've got a relatively skilled workforce."... Regional Development Australia South West noted that: Average wages here in the mining sector are \$137,000. Average wages in tourism are \$49,000. You can't replace those mining jobs with tourism jobs."

Regarding Transition Planning :

Several submissions supported the creation of a National Transition Authority, with responsibility for planning and collaboration, but not replacing the need for local transition planning bodies.

The Next Economy (Submission #16 [here](#)) put forward a model for a national Transition Authority which would : 1. oversee funding and coordination of transition planning at both a national and regional level 2. coordinate with other authorities and government agencies to ensure that the scale, type and pace of the transition will enable us to meet international climate obligations to reduce emissions 3. coordinate an industry-wide, multi-employer redeployment scheme to provide retrenched workers with the opportunity to transfer to other power generators 4. ensure companies meet their responsibilities to workers in terms of redundancy payments and entitlements, retraining opportunities, and generating jobs through full decommissioning and rehabilitation of sites .

Sadly, these recommendations and examples hold little sway with the current government of Australia, as Prime Minister Morrison continues to support the development of new coal projects. The Senators' Comments in the Select Committee Report are a catalogue of government positions, summed up by this :

"In the view of the Government Senators, the majority report (approved by the Greens and the ALP Committee members) inadequately highlights the importance of jobs associated with coal mining and oil and gas production to the Australia's economy."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Green Economy](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Saskatchewan announces \$10 million aid for Estevan and Cornach coal transition

Posted on **March 6, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A February 28 [press release](#) from the government of Saskatchewan announced funding to support the communities of Estevan and Cornach – the province's principal coal-producing communities – as they transition after the federally-mandated phase-out of traditional coal-fired electricity generation by 2030. Estevan is scheduled to receive \$8 million and Cornach \$2 million in this provincial announcement – money that had **already been pledged in the government's Throne speech** in October 2019 .

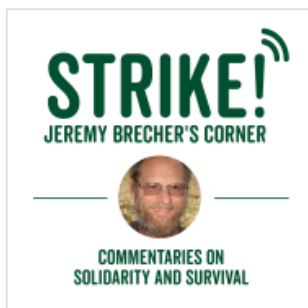
Climate Justice Saskatoon has studied and compiled research into the coal transition for these two communities as a project called [Future of Coal](#). A useful timeline highlights key developments in the phase-out process from 2017 to 2019 and a report, [Bridging the gap: Building bridges between urban environmental groups and coal-producing communities](#) (2018), reports on "in-depth conversations with coal and service industry workers, town administrators, union representatives, and farmers" in Cornach and Estevan.

The federal [Task Force on a Fair and Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities](#) visited the two communities – briefly noted in their *What we Heard* report and reported at length by the Estevan Mercury newspaper [here](#). The *Regina Leader Post* reported in detail on the anxiety and frustration of workers in “[‘Energy city’ feeling powerless as coal phase-out haunts Estevan](#)” (June 2019). Workers are members of [United Mine Workers Local 7606](#), and many are hoping that investment in carbon capture and storage (CCS) might prolong their working lives. A video explains their view of CSS [here](#) on the Local 7606 website.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [coal transition](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

SEIU cleaners stage the first union-authorized climate strike in the U.S.

Posted on [March 6, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



To launch his new column, *Strike: Jeremy Brecher's Corner* at the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) website, Jeremy Brecher began with the theme “The Future of Climate Strikes”. On February 29, he posted “[First U.S. Union-Authorized Climate Strike?](#)” (re-published in *Common Dreams* as “[Did we just witness the first union-authorized climate strike in the United States?](#)”). The article describes a one day strike on February 27 by members of [Service Employees International Union Local 26](#), employed by over a dozen different subcontractors to clean corporate buildings in Minneapolis. He states that it is, “as far as I have been able to discover, the very first—union sanctioned strike in the U.S. for climate protection demands.”

Brecher gives voice to many of the low-wage and immigrant workers who are the backbone of the strike, and traces their climate activism back to 2009, when Local 26 won contract language: to establish an Ad Hoc Committee of union and company representatives at each company, to “review the use of green chemicals”, to provide training to employees on the “use, mixing and storage” of cleaning chemicals, and that “The employer “shall make every effort to use only green, sustainable cleaning products where possible.” The SEIU Local 26 collective agreement for 2016-2019 is [here](#), with climate-related clause 18.13 on pages 39-40. Other examples of clauses related to toxic chemicals in Canadian collective agreements are available from the ACW Green Agreements database [here](#); clauses regarding green procurement are [here](#), and the full searchable database of 240 clauses is [here](#).



Although the main focus of [First U.S. Union-Authorized Climate Strike?](#) is on the climate-related demands, the strike is also important for its success in coalition-building and community support. Brecher characterizes it as exemplary of the

growing trend toward “Bargaining for the Common Good, ” as outlined in a September 2019 article in *The American Prospect* , “[How Workers Can Demand Climate Justice](#)” . An article by Steve Payne reported on the broader community justice issues in the strike in “[Twin Cities Janitors and Guards Feature Climate and Housing in Their Strike Demands](#)” in *Labor Notes* (Feb. 20) .

UPDATE:

Since Brecher’s article, the union has released [a press release](#) on March 14, announcing agreement with most employers and members’ approval of a contract which includes funding towards a Labor-Management Cooperation Fund for green education and training. Notably, given that these are the workers keeping airports and commercial buildings clean in the Covid-19 crisis, the agreement also provides for an increase for all full-time workers to six paid sick days by the second year of the contract.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [cleaners and janitors](#), [Climate Justice](#), [green bargaining](#), [green collective bargaining](#), [Green procurement](#), [Minneapolis](#), [Service Employees \(SEIU\)](#), [toxic chemicals](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Visions for green steel production in Canada and internationally

Posted on [March 6, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The [Canadian Steel Producers Association](#) released a “Climate Call to Action” for their industry on March 4 , with a goal to achieve net zero CO2 emissions by 2050. The [press release](#) calls that goal “the central plank” of their vision. More details are explained in a 19-page document, [Canada’s Steel Industry: A Sustainable Choice](#) , which states:

“Canada’s steel producers have the aspirational goal to achieve net-zero CO emissions by 2050. This means that we must significantly reduce net CO emissions including through removal or offsets. In order to achieve this aspirational goal, we need to work with stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, and government, to implement transformational changes and breakthrough technologies. This includes significant capital investments, public-private partnerships, and policies that support the industry during the transition.”

The Statement emphasizes technological breakthroughs and trade policy, and the words “workers”, “jobs” or “labour” do not appear anywhere. The most relevant section relates to operational efficiencies and manufacturing processes:

“We have also adopted process control technology and other innovative technologies, such as robotics, to improve our process reliability, production yields, and overall production efficiencies to reduce losses and the amount of energy used to produce each tonne of steel. However, there is limited room for further improvement based on existing technology. The adoption of new technologies to further advance and optimize steel manufacturing software control systems will continue to drive improvements in our sector.”

Internationally:

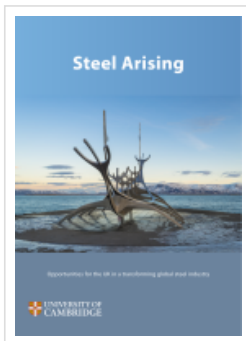
A useful and related report is [Low and zero emissions in the steel and cement industries: Barriers, technologies and policies](#) , an Issue Paper prepared for the November 2019 OECD Green Growth and Sustainable Development

Forum. The paper is meant for international audience, though its author, Chris Bataille, is a prominent researcher at Simon Fraser University as well as at the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) . He calls for an industry transition based on “well-designed policy packages and careful consultation with all parties involved and affected.” Specifically, regarding Just Transition, he states (p. 36) :

“To support change, we will need to make many modifications to existing institutions, and create new ones... A key element that is often overlooked is a transition plan for the management and labouring workforce, whose full support is required. This involves retraining for those already in the workforce, and redefinition of the curriculum in technical schools where electricians, pipefitters, heavy duty machinery specialists, etc. are trained. Oversight bodies are also required for the national transition plans, which have timetables of expected physical transitions against which they can measure progress and recommend policy adjustments and wholesale changes ... At present, the UK Climate Change Commission, which recommends five year carbon budgets and parliamentary advice as required, is the best practise example of a national oversight body. It has no statutory authority to change policy, as this is the prerogative of the British Parliament, but it can monitor progress and recommend changes.”

Notably, one of the “asks” of the Canadian Steel Producers Association **visioning document** is the creation of “ a Canadian steel climate council with key government departments to monitor and report on the progress of the sector’s climate strategy, to share practices, to engage with other stakeholders, and to evolve the plan as new information and insights emerge”. (“Stakeholders” don’t include workers.)

Worldsteel , the global industry association, released its own position paper in 2020: **Steel’s contribution to a low carbon future and climate resilient societies** , which emphasizes most of the same themes of technology, circular economy, energy efficiency, and a “level playing field” globally. Worldsteel also recently published the **Sustainable Steel: Indicators 2019 and the steel supply chain** .



And from the U.K., academics at the University of Cambridge released **Steel Arising: Opportunities for the UK in a transforming global steel industry** in April 2019. The report was commissioned by **GREENSTEEL Council** which “promotes sustainable production methods and a revitalisation of engineering and the economy” in the UK. **Steel Arising** calls for greening by “moving away from primary production towards recycled steel made with sustainable power.” The report states: “Not only will this create long-term green jobs, it will lead to world-leading exportable skills and technologies and allow us to transform the highly valuable scrap that we currently export at low value, but should be nurturing as a strategic asset. With today’s grid we can do this with less than half the emissions of making steel with iron ore and with more renewable power in future this could drop much further.”

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction, steel industry, Trade Policy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Addressing environmental racism through legislation and through activism

Posted on **March 2, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Bill C-230, ***An Act respecting the Development of a National Strategy to Redress Environmental Racism*** is a private members bill introduced to the federal House of Commons on Feb. 26 by Nova Scotia MP Lenore Zann, seconded by Elizabeth May of the Green Party. The Bill calls on the government to develop a national strategy which will address the disproportionate number of Indigenous or racialized people who live in environmentally hazardous areas. If passed, the Bill would require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change “to consult with representatives of provincial and municipal governments, of Indigenous communities and of other affected communities, as well as with any other affected persons and bodies.” Further, the strategy must:

- (a) examine the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk;
- (b) collect information and statistics relating to the location of environmental hazards;
- (c) collect information and statistics relating to negative health outcomes in communities that have been affected by environmental racism;
- (d) assess the administration and enforcement of environmental laws in each province; and
- (e) address environmental racism including in relation to
 - (i) possible amendments to federal laws, policies and programs,
 - (ii) the involvement of community groups in environmental policy-making,
 - (iii) compensation for individuals or communities,
 - (iv) ongoing funding for affected communities, and
 - (v) access of affected communities to clean air and water.

Member of Parliament Zann had previously introduced **Bill 111, The Environmental Racism Prevention Act** in 2015, when she was a member of the provincial legislature



of Nova Scotia . An **article in *Saltwire*** (Feb. 28) explains how Nova Scotia has become a centre for research and action on environmental racism – led by the research of Dr. Ingrid Waldron of Dalhousie University. Dr. Waldron’s book, ***There’s Something in the Water***, was published by Fernwood Press in 2018 and has been turned into a **documentary** co-directed by Halifax-born star Ellen Page. In 2017, the **East Coast Environmental Law Association** proposed an innovative **Nova Scotia Environmental Bill of Rights** which states that the people “have a right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment”, and recognizes that “there is a history of environmental racism in Nova Scotia that has disproportionately and negatively affected historically marginalized, vulnerable, and economically disadvantaged individuals, groups or communities, particularly Indigenous People and African Nova Scotians”.

Green is Not White

On the same day as Bill C-230 was introduced, Medium’s *Asparagus magazine* took up the issue of racism in the environmental movement. **“Too White to Solve the Climate Crisis?”** (Feb. 26) discusses the white elitism of the environmental movement, and offers the example of the **Green is Not White project**, which educates



trade unionists about environmental racism and advocates for the rights and inclusion of Black, Asian, and Indigenous workers in a zero-carbon economy. The Green is Not White project was begun in December 2016 by the Ontario branch of the **Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU)** , led by Chris Wilson of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, in collaboration with the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW). Its work engages community and labour activists in **workshops and participative research** , and has also been **highlighted in *Rabble.ca*** (Feb. 29) and in ***Our Times*** .

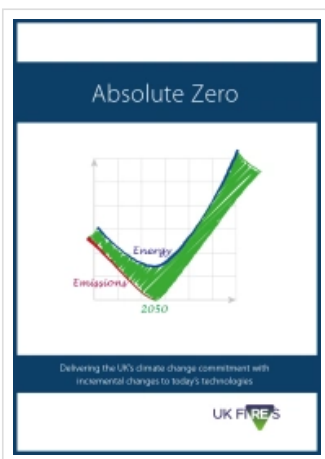
The Twitter account at #EnvRacismCBTUACW posts frequently, and the ACW website compiles previous articles, resources, videos, and handouts **here** – including descriptions of the workshops and free downloads of a **Workshop Guide** , a detailed (35-page) **Facilitator’s Notes** and a **Presentation** which concludes with this statement:

“If Canada’s racialized and indigenous communities are not engaged in the struggle, the transition to a green economy will not be just. There can be no change without a struggle.”

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Environmental Justice, environmental racism, First Nations** | **Leave a reply**

UK researchers call for absolute zero reduction policy, greening of the steel industry

Posted on **February 28, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



Absolute Zero , released by the University of Cambridge in November 2019, warns that the U.K. will not reach zero emissions by 2050 without significant changes to policies, industrial processes and individual lifestyle choices – including closing all airports in the UK by mid-century. (Perhaps the impact of this report can be seen in the **U.K. court ruling on February 27** that Heathrow airport’s third runway is a legal violation of the country’s climate change commitment under the Paris Agreement.) Although **Absolute Zero** was released in November 2019, it was **debated in the British House of**

Lords on February 6 , and was the subject of a [Research Briefing by the House of Lords Library](#) in support of that debate.

The prestige of the authors also may have contributed to the impact of its ideas. They are members of [UK Fires](#) (UK Future Industrial Resource Efficiency Strategy), a research collaboration between the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Nottingham, Bath and Imperial College London, and funded by the UK's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. They contend that the UK should aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to absolute zero, rather than the “net zero” target specified in the Climate Change Act 2008 , and by the U.K. Committee on Climate Change in its report, [Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming](#) (May 2019) and its [2019 Report to Parliament of the U.K. Committee on Climate Change](#) (July 2019) .

[Absolute Zero](#) also parts company with the Committee on Climate Change in its view that emerging technologies will not be scalable in time to meet emissions targets by 2050. It builds its analysis on “today's technologies”, striking an optimistic tone while calling for fundamental changes in individual behaviour, government policy, and industrial processes. Some excerpts

“We need to switch to using electricity as our only form of energy and if we continue today's impressive rates of growth in non-emitting generation, we'll only have to cut our use of energy to 60% of today's levels....”

“The two big challenges we face with an all electric future are flying and shipping. Although there are lots of new ideas about electric planes, they won't be operating at commercial scales within 30 years, so zero emissions means that for some period, we'll all stop using aeroplanes. Shipping is more challenging: although there are a few military ships run by nuclear reactors, we currently don't have any large electric merchant ships, but we depend strongly on shipping for imported food and goods....”

“Absolute Zero creates a driver for tremendous growth in industries related to electrification, from material supply, through generation and storage to end-use. The fossil fuel, cement, shipping and aviation industries face rapid contraction, while construction and many manufacturing sectors can continue at today's scales, with appropriate transformations.....”

“Committing to zero emissions creates tremendous opportunities: there will be huge growth in the use and conversion of electricity for travel, warmth and in industry; growth in new zero emissions diets; growth in materials production, manufacturing and construction compatible with zero emissions; growth in leisure and domestic travel; growth in businesses that help us to use energy efficiently and to conserve the value in materials.....”

“Protest is no longer enough – we must together discuss the way we want the solution to develop; the government needs to treat this as a delivery challenge – just like we did with the London Olympics, ontime and on-budget; the emitting businesses that must close cannot be allowed to delay action, but meanwhile the authors of this report are funded by the government to work across industry to support the transition to growth compatible with zero emissions.”



The [UK Fires](#) collaboration officially launched in October 2019. It is building on previous related research, including the April 2019 report [Steel Arising](#) which it highlights on the UK Fires website. [Steel Arising](#) envisions greening of the UK steelmaking industry by “moving away from primary production towards recycled steel made with sustainable power.” It states: “Not only will this create long-term green jobs, it will lead to world-leading exportable skills and technologies and

allow us to transform the highly valuable scrap that we currently export at low value, but should be nurturing as a strategic asset. With today's grid we can do this with less than half the emissions of making steel with iron ore and with more renewable power in future this could drop much further."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [air transportation industry](#), [Climate change policy](#), [electrification](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#), [greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets](#), [industrial strategy](#), [shipping industry](#), [steel industry](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Harvard scholars propose labour law reforms including the right to bargain over our shared environment

Posted on **February 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Clean Slate for Worker Power: Building a Just Economy and Democracy is a far-reaching analysis and set of recommendations for labour law reform, released in January 2020 by the [Harvard Law School Labor and Worklife Program](#). Its purpose is to offer "an intervention that promises to help stop the vicious, self-reinforcing cycle of economic and political inequality. By proposing a fundamental redesign of labor law, we aspire to enable working people to create the collective economic and political power necessary to build an equitable economy and politics." The report – the result of discussions with 70 academics, union leaders, workers, activists and others over a period of two years – offers detailed and specific recommendations for changes to labour laws in the U.S., starting with the fundamental premise that "Labor law reform must start with inclusion to ensure that all workers can build power and to address systemic racial and gender oppression." In its long list of recommendations comes basic freedoms such as the right to organize and protection from strikebreaking, as well as more innovative proposals for sectoral bargaining, worker representation on company boards, support for digital organizing and cyber-picketing – and of most interest to those working for environmental progress – this recommendation:

"Workers deserve a voice in the issues that are important to them and their communities....To ensure that workers can bargain over the corporate decisions that impact their lives, Clean Slate recommends that the new labor law: • Expand the range of collective bargaining subjects to include any subjects that are important to workers and over which employers have control, including decisions about the basic direction of the firm and employers' impact on communities and our shared environment."

More detail comes on page 69, where the report states:

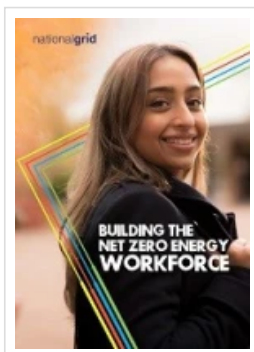
“Accordingly, and taking inspiration from the [Bargaining for the Common Good](#) movement, Clean Slate recommends that when an employer has influence beyond the workplace over subject matters that have major impacts on workers’ communities, such as pollution and housing, the bargaining obligation ought to extend beyond the terms and conditions of employment and encompass these “community impact” subjects. Moreover, when bargaining over community impact subjects, the workers’ organization involved in collective bargaining should have the right to bring community organizations—those with members and expertise in the relevant area—to the bargaining table. ... for example, the worker organization would be entitled to bring community environmental justice groups to bargain over pollution controls and abatement and to bring housing groups and tenants unions to bargain over affordable housing development.”

Clean Slate for Worker Power is a project of Harvard Law School’s Labor and Worklife Program, led by Professor Benjamin Sachs and Sharon Block, Executive Director, Labor and Worklife Program. The 15-page Executive Summary is [here](#) ; the 132-page full report is [here](#) . The report is summarized by noted labour journalist and author Steven Greenhouse in “[Overhaul US labor laws to boost workers’ power, new report urges](#)” in *The Guardian* (Jan. 23), and also in “[Clean slate for worker power’ promotes a fair and inclusive U.S. economy](#)” from the Washington Center for Equitable Growth (Jan. 29), which includes links to a range of academic articles related to the Clean Slate proposals. The authors are interviewed about the Clean Slate framework in a Harvard press release [here](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Justice](#), [green bargaining](#), [green collective bargaining](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [Pollution](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. energy workforce will need 400,000 workers to reach net-zero emissions by 2050

Posted on [February 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The U.K. has a target of net-zero emissions by 2050. A new report, [Building the Net Zero Workforce](#) , forecasts the likely employment and skills impacts of that goal for the energy industry, assuming that it will require a 50% increase in low carbon electricity generation; installation of low carbon heating systems in approximately 2.8 million homes; installation of 60,000 charging points to power 11 million electric vehicles (EVs); and development of carbon capture usage and storage technology as well as hydrogen networks – all by 2030.

To accomplish all this, the report projects that the energy industry will need to recruit for 400,000 jobs between 2020 and 2050 – 260,000 in new roles, and 140,000 to replace those who will be leaving in what is an anticipated retirement crunch. The report forecasts both time dimensions and regional needs, concluding that jobs will be available in all regions of the U.K. and for a diverse range of skills, “from scientists and engineers, to communications professionals and data specialists.” More specifically, “The roles included in this analysis are those involved in the operation, generation, transmission, distribution and retail of energy in the UK, as well as those in the supply chain related to building, upgrading, maintaining or operating infrastructure required to reach net zero.”

The report emphasizes the role of young people and a need to encourage women in STEM professions. In general, there is a need for training and re-training for the emerging technologies such as AI. The report notes, without details, that : “ By

investing in retention and retraining, and working collaboratively with government and unions, the sector can help ensure a fair energy transition, one in which workers of all ages and backgrounds and from every community in the UK can play their part.”

The report was written by an independent research company, Development Economics, under a commission by **National Grid**, a U.K. organization which owns and operates electricity transmission in parts of the U.K., and invests £7.5 million per year in training.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Labour Market Planning](#), [Retraining](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Sciences received 770% more funding than the social sciences for climate change research

Posted on **February 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new and innovative study measures the problem of underfunded social science research into climate change. **“Misallocation of climate research funding”** addresses an important issue, since the social sciences seek to understand human and societal attitudes, norms, incentives, and policies – without which understanding, scientific facts seem insufficient to motivate change. The authors analyzed a new dataset of research grants awarded in 37 countries, including Canada, from 1950 to 2021- a database which represents a cumulative budget of \$1.3 trillion U.S. Included in the category of social sciences research grants were those relevant to the world of work: economics, sociology, business and management, psychology, and law.

The researchers report that:

“Between 1990 and 2018, the natural and technical sciences received 770% more funding than the social sciences for research on issues related to climate change. Only 0.12% of all research funding was spent on the social science of climate mitigation.” Even the countries identified as spending the most on social science climate research in absolute terms—the UK, the USA, and Germany—spent between 500% and 1200% more on climate research in the natural and technical sciences than on social sciences.

The authors discuss the challenges and potential solutions to promote and improve social science research, including:

- Funding for climate mitigation needs to match the magnitude of the threat and the narrow window of opportunity for dealing with it.
- There is a need for better global coordination and oversight of funding for climate research....most obviously, this could reduce redundancy and serve as a mechanism for research teams to identify synergies and possible collaborators.
- More rigorous social science research is needed...the authors state **“Brandt et al.** noted that methods were often chosen based on familiarity or specialization of the researchers involved, rather than their suitability for a given research question.”
- Better alignment with emissions sources and trends... **“Some of the funding for climate change-related social science research follows the thematic logic of natural science funding, which does not necessarily fit the social sciences.”**
- Climate change is a global challenge, and therefore, the authors advocate the use of **“the problem, challenge, or mission-based approach”**. They use the example of one such project, the Global Challenges Research Fund in the United Kingdom, which asked **“How can sustainable development be achieved for all while addressing global climate change?”**. They urge putting research into the context of challenging, **“big picture”** questions, to promote **“focused but interdisciplinary social science work.”**

“Misallocation of climate research funding” is available online now as an Open Access article, and will appear in print in the April 2020 issue of *Energy Research and Social Science*. It describes the details of the database analysis and lists the funding agencies from 37 countries, which included all major member states of the OECD, as well as Brazil, China,

India, and Russia. The relatively few agencies listed from Canada are overwhelmingly science and health –related, with the notable exceptions of the Fonds de Recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC), the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research (ACFCR), and by far the largest, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC),



which funds the **Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW)** research project.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change research** | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Energy B.C. : reports reflect little progress in jobs and training; new Climate Solutions Council appointed

Posted on **February 14, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



At the showcase Global 2020 conference in Vancouver on February 10, the government of British Columbia **released** the **2019 CleanBC Climate Change Accountability Report**, titled **Building a Cleaner, Stronger B.C.**. The report is a comprehensive summary of the policies under the **Clean BC plan**, especially focused on energy efficiency in the built environment, waste management, and electrification of transportation. Amongst the statistical indicators reported: The carbon intensity of B.C.'s economy has gone down 19% over the last 10 years while jobs in the environmental and clean tech sectors have doubled. The report provides detailed emission forecasts and breakdowns by sector. Ironically, given the current Canada-wide protests in solidarity with the **Coastal GasLink dispute with the Wet'suwet'en people**, Section 7 highlights co-operative relations with Indigenous People. Section 4 reports on the oil and gas industry.

Jobs and job training under Clean BC:

The **2019 Accountability Report** briefly mentions the "**CleanBC Job Readiness Plan**", for which consultations were held for one month, in November 2019 (discussions archived [here](#)). It states: "Our job readiness plan will respond to feedback from stakeholders, assessments of labour market conditions and economic trends in a low-carbon economy—providing a framework for sector-specific actions and guiding investments in skills training. Consultations will continue into 2020." The named sectors of interest are: clean buildings and construction, energy efficiency, transportation, waste management, sustainable tourism, sustainability education, and urban planning.

Indicators to measure "affordability, rural development, the clean economy and clean jobs, reconciliation and gender equality" are promised for future reports. Until then, there are no statistical measures of the impact of the CleanBC policies on jobs, incomes, or workers. In Appendix A, which summarizes current initiatives and their GHG emissions reduction impact, the category of "Economic Transition" does not measure jobs or income. Another sector-specific chart in Appendix A includes the category: "Helping people get the skills they need", but it does not quantify how that would impact GHG emissions reduction, and consists of two entries: • "Develop programs like Energy Step Code training and certification, and Certified Retrofit Professional accreditation" • "Expand job training for electric and other zero-emission

vehicles.” Elsewhere in the text, two programs are briefly highlighted: the new EV Maintenance Training Program at B.C. Institute of Technology, and the Sustainable energy engineering program at Simon Fraser University’s Surrey campus. On page 64, the report highlights skills training programs for small business, citing the BC Tech Co-op Grant, (up to \$10,800 for hiring new coop students in clean tech).

Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council releases a final report and recommendations to end its mandate; New Climate Solutions Council appointed

The February 10 [government press release](#) also announced the appointment of a new Climate Solutions Council to act as an independent advisor, and to track progress on Clean BC Phase 2. The new Council replaces the Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council, which completed its 2-year mandate at the end of 2019 with the publication of a final report and recommendations, [here](#) . While attention now shifts to the new Council, the detailed recommendations of the original Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council merit consideration – although they reflect a primary concern with business, and particularly natural resources (worth noting here: the Council was co-chaired by the Senior VP, Sustainability & External Affairs of Teck Resources – the same company whose controversial Frontier oil sands mine project in Alberta is awaiting a federal cabinet decision in February 2020.) The voice of labour comes through most clearly in the Recommendations regarding the proposed Implementation Plan (p. 7), which calls for “ Stronger focus on just transition planning, including the Labour Readiness Plan: Government needs a stronger plan for labour readiness and adjustment. This would take the form of more funding and details regarding the assessment, timeline, output and desired outcomes, and the Ministry or Ministries responsible.” The Council also notes that “enduring support will necessitate ongoing engagement with Indigenous and nonIndigenous communities, industry, civil society, youth and young adults, organized labour, and utilities.”

The new **Climate Solutions Council** is Co-chaired by Merran Smith, executive director of Clean Energy Canada, and Colleen Giroux-Schmidt, vice-president of Corporate Relations, Innergex Renewable Energy Inc. Along with environmentalists, First Nations, and academics such as Marc Jaccard and Nancy Olewiler, the new Climate Solutions Council includes Labour representation by David Black, (President of MoveUP), and Danielle (DJ) Pohl , (President of the Fraser Valley Labour Council). Industry representatives include Tom Syer, (Head of Government Affairs , Teck Resources), Skye McConnell, (Manager of Policy and Advocacy, Shell Canada), and Kurt Niquidet, (Vice-President of the Council of Forest Industries). All members are listed and profiled [here](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Training](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Toronto Labour Council’s new Plan of Engagement for Unions shares sample climate change resolutions

Posted on **February 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council approved its 2020-2022 Strategic Plan in November of 2019, as announced in [a press release](#) in January, and in full [here](#) . Continuing the Labour Council’s longstanding leadership on climate justice, Plan item #3 is “Tackle climate change”, which states that the Labour Council will:

- Work to counter the efforts to sabotage climate action by polluters and conservative politicians, including their “carbon tax revolt” which is promoted by Conservative premiers and climate change deniers
- Establish a climate justice labour network
- Provide educational material to highlight the real cost of inaction by governments and businesses, and get young members engaged by using new, creative approaches
- Continue to work in coalition with key environmental organizations including youth and student-led groups
- Work with affiliates, local governments and school boards to adopt serious climate action policies
- Continue promoting the creation of Joint Labour-Management Environment Committees and ask affiliates to bargain for their establishment

- Help to popularize the key elements of a Green New Deal for All.



Putting these goals into action, the Labour Council hosted its **2nd Climate Justice Network Roundtable** on February 12. It also released a 3-page **Plan of Engagement for Unions** which includes the a sample climate change resolution for affiliate unions, and a sample resolution to take to convention. The sample resolution for affiliates is also published (page 17) in the Winter 2020 issue of the Labour Council's magazine, **Labour Action** .

The sample resolution asks affiliate unions to join the fight for climate justice through the following actions:

- Ask the employer to detail their plans to climate-proof the workplace;
- Bargain contract language on climate, and a union role in sustainability;
- Seek the establishment of Joint Workplace Environment Committees;
- Establish training programs for members to be actively involved in greening the workplace;
- Utilize an equity lens to ensure new job opportunities benefit all of our communities;
- Engage in campaigns for climate justice – including Just Transition legislation for workers and communities impacted by changes to a low-carbon economy;
- Support public services that deliver quality programs and good jobs while ensuring public control and operation.

Also in the Winter issue of **Labour Action** : a profile on page 16 of the many activities of the Labour Council's Labour Education Centre , which include a strong component of training programs for climate change literacy. In addition, the LEC has researched Just Transition experiences after closing of coal-fired electricity plants in Alberta, Australia and Ontario, and is publishing those results. Finally, LEC continues to support a Joint Labour Management Committee at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) that has made a number of recommendations to dramatically decrease the GHG emissions in the Board.

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council shares **climate justice resources** at a dedicated website, including social media shareables, links to articles and documents such as the pioneering 2016 **Greenprint** , and all the documents mentioned above.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change resolutions, labour union policies, Toronto and York Region Labour Council** | [Leave a reply](#)

Is the Just Transition fund in Europe's Green New Deal funded adequately?

Posted on **February 13, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Europe's landmark **Green New Deal** was unveiled on December 11 2019, but



criticisms abound over the structure, ambition, and particularly the funding. “**Question marks raised over scale of EU’s new climate fund**” in *Euractiv* (Jan. 14) discusses the Just Transition Mechanism funding, and “**Commission warns of Green Deal failure if Transition Fund not well financed**” (February 12) states that the European president warned Members of the European Parliament that “she would ‘not accept’ any result that does not guarantee at least 25% of the budget devoted to the fight against global warming and to proper funding of a just transition for regions and workers.”

A more general criticism comes in “**The EU’s green deal is a colossal exercise in greenwashing**”, an Opinion piece in *The Guardian* on February 7. Authors Yanis Varoufakis and David Adler compare the €1tn (over 10 years) allocated for the GND with an estimated €4.2tn spent to support the European financial sector after the 2008 recession. Furthermore, they state that the €1tn GND money “is mostly smoke and mirrors”...“composed of reshuffled money from existing EU funds and reheated promises to mobilise private-sector capital down the road.” As for the Just Transition mechanism itself, they state: “the deployment of just transition funding in the green deal is a pork-barrel payoff to rightwing governments that supported Von der Leyen’s election and who she fears might throw a spanner into her signature proposal.” (*Euractiv* helps to explain this in “**Poland, Germany get largest slices of Just Transition Fund**”).

Yanis Varoufakis and David Adler are part of the **Democracy in Europe Movement 2025**, a coalition of European scientists, activists and trade unionists. Their **Blueprint for Europe’s Just Transition** outlines a strategy for a radical, activist pan-European movement for a Green New Deal: “The climate movement today — whether it takes the form of student strikes, Extinction Rebellion, or the Gilet Jaunes — has articulated a shared enemy: climate and environmental breakdown. But it has yet to come together to articulate a set of shared demands.... It advocates “ channeling the energies of activists across the continent to clash with the institutions that sit at the Belgian capital — through strikes and sit-ins, occupations and demonstrations: the full arsenal of direct action and civil disobedience.”

The Blueprint is built around three major actions: 1. Green Public Works: (“an investment programme to kickstart Europe’s equitable green transition”); 2. an EU Environmental Union: (“a regulatory and legal framework to ensure that the European economy transitions quickly and fairly, without transferring carbon costs onto front-line communities”); and 3). an Environmental Justice Commission: (“an independent body to research and investigate new standards of ‘environmental justice’ across Europe and among the multinationals operating outside its borders”).

Further, with emphasis on the democratic, grass-roots activism demanded:

.... This Blueprint provides a general framework for Europe’s just transition, but it must be complemented by deliberation at the ground level to decide where the resources raised by the Green Public Works programme will be directed. No campaign, movement, union, NGO, or political party can devise a climate plan on its own; the People’s Assemblies for Environmental Justice offer a common process by which to develop it.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [EU](#), [European Union](#), [Green New Deal Europe](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to engage your union in the fight for a Green New Deal

Posted on **February 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **January 2020 issue** of the Labor Network for Sustainability newsletter refers to a recent article, “**A Green New Deal can win even among Building Trades Unions**”, which appeared in *The Jacobin* (Jan 30 2019). It is written by an IBEW

tradesman who led a successful effort to pass a Green New Deal resolution at the 60th Annual Texas AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention. The author describes how he was inspired by a resolution from the Alameda California Central Labor Council, and how he moved his own resolution from that model to the one which passed in Texas. He outlines a process of internal discussion and education which created a broader resolution, and one which had to compromise by replacing the highly emotive term “Green New Deal” with “Federal Environmental Policy”.

The article concludes:

“What does the labor-focused segment of the climate justice movement need to do next? First, we must repeatedly engage labor, from the local level on up to the national/international level, in as many places as we can — both through defined democratic processes like the one I experienced, as well in the rank-and-file space of our locals. The goal is not to simply push resolutions through, but to educate and build a base of support in the process....In order for the Green New Deal to move forward, it must become a standard demand from organized labor. The task for us now is to replicate this kind of effort at each and every one of our locals .”

The article is one of the latest written by unionists to instruct and inspire direct action. To cite a few: “[Calling All Union Members](#)”, in *The Trouble* (May 2019), which begins: “Teachers, construction workers, nurses, miners, frycooks—you have an indispensable role to play in the passage of the Green New Deal. Here are five concrete steps to take.” An earlier U.S. article by Nato Green “[Why Unions Must Bargain Over Climate Change](#)” appeared in *In these Times* (March 2019).

Labor Network for Sustainability maintains an ongoing compilation of [GND resolutions by U.S. unions](#), and has written numerous articles. The WCR has written previously about union actions for a Green New Deal in both the U.S. and Canada, [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Green New Deal](#), [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fossil fuel and LNG subsidies in B.C., and an alternate viewpoint on the issue

Posted on **February 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) maintains an ongoing initiative, the [Global Subsidies Initiative](#), to research fossil fuel subsidies worldwide. Their most recent publication relating to Canada is [Locked In and Losing Out: British Columbia's fossil fuel subsidies](#). The authors calculate that BC's fossil fuel subsidies reached \$830 million Cdn. in 2017–2018, with no end in sight. Despite B.C.'s clean energy image, the report documents the significant new support granted by the current B.C. government to encourage the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry. [Locked In and Losing Out](#) calls for the provincial government to create a plan to phase-out its own subsidies, and coordinate with the federal government in its current [G20 Peer Review of fossil fuel subsidies](#), launched in 2019 and administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada. In August 2019, the IISD also released its [Submission to Environment and Climate Change Canada's Consultation on Non-Tax Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), calling for Canada to re-affirm its long-standing G7 commitment to reform fossil fuel subsidies by 2025 and provide a detailed action plan to achieve the goal.



An alternate view

Sean Sweeney of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy takes an alternate view on fossil fuel subsidies in “**Weaponizing the numbers: The Hidden Agenda Behind Fossil-Fuel Subsidy Reform**” appearing in the January 2020 issue of *New Labor Forum*. As might be expected, Sweeney challenges the findings and assumptions of the International Monetary Fund (for example, in a **2019 working paper** by David Coady). He also takes issue with some progressive analysis – notably, he cites *Fossil Fuel to Clean Energy Subsidy Swaps: How to Pay for an Energy Revolution* (2019) and *Zombie Energy: Climate benefits of ending subsidies to fossil fuel production* (2017) – both published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). After a brief discussion of the main concepts, Sweeney concludes:

“For activists in the North, making fossil-fuel subsidies a key political target is a mistake. It buys into the IMF’s obsession with “getting energy prices right” which targets state ownership and regulation of prices. Such an approach may lead to a more judicious use of energy, but it would not address the mammoth challenges involved in transitioning away from fossil fuels, controlling and reducing unnecessary economic activity, or reducing emissions as expeditiously as possible.

The problem is fossil fuel dependency, not underpriced energy. Raising the price without alternative forms of low-carbon energy available for all will not produce the kind of emissions reductions the world needs. This does not mean that progressive unions and the left should support subsidies for fossil fuels—especially when the beneficiaries are large for-profit industrial users or billionaire Lamborghini owners cruising the strips in Riyadh or Shanghai. But there is a need to be aware of what the IMF and the subsidy reform organizations are proposing, and what these proposals might mean for workers and ordinary people, especially in the Global South.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Canada](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#), [LNG](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Transit Equity and Free Transit: addressing social justice, climate justice and workplace justice

Posted on **February 10, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Transit Equity Day in the United States was held on February 4 – a date chosen to honour Rosa Parks, whose refusal to yield her seat on a bus in 1955 was the catalyst in the U.S. struggle against the segregation of public transit. Now in 2020, Transit Equity Day’s main goal is “to promote environmentally-sustainable and affordable transit accessible to all, regardless of income, national origin, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, or ability,” and in all communities, rural or urban. In addition to social justice goals, it also promotes climate justice and workplace justice, calling for good, union jobs for transit workers and those who manufacture transit equipment, as well as a just transition for workers and communities in the transition to an electrified, non-polluting transit system. **Transit Equity Day is organized by the Labor Network for Sustainability**, in cooperation with environmental and labour groups already working to promote public transit – including the **Amalgamated Transit Union**, **Transport Workers of America**, **Connecticut Roundtable for Climate and Jobs**, Metropolitan Washington District AFL-CIO, and **Jobs to Move America**.

Transit Equity Day also supports the growing free public transit movement – described, with global case studies, in **Free Public Transit: And Why We Don’t Pay to Ride Elevators**, a book published in Canada by Black Rose books in 2017. Since then, advocates have focused mainly on the social justice arguments: for example in “**Free and Accessible Transit Now: Toward A Red-Green Vision for Toronto**” (*Canadian Dimension*, May 10 2018). This continues to be the focus in the July 2019 call for free transit **by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 2**, representing Toronto Transit Commission workers, and **endorsed by CUPE Ontario**. Also in a January 2020 **blog by the Amalgamated Transit Union in Canada**, which stated:

“...successful examples of fare free transit around the world demonstrate that this model of public transit service may not be radical or utopian. However, there are real concerns implementation of fare free transit.

ATU Canada advocates for fares to be affordable for all, and advocates for progress toward creating a fare-free transit. Incremental pricing actions (such as fare-freezes and reductions) are realistic in lieu of immediate fare-free transit subsidized by government. In our advocacy, we prioritize efforts to eliminate cost barriers to accessing jobs, education, health care, and other services, through the implementation of low-income passes. A gradual approach to fare reduction is sorely needed in many municipalities across Canada, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that transit is safe, reliable, and affordable for all.”

Free transit and climate change

The Ricochet published two articles which marry concern for social justice with the well-established environmental benefits of transit over cars: “**Advocates say decommodified housing and free transit needed to fight climate emergency**” (Oct.9) describes activism in Montreal, and “**Free public transit is key to any Green New Deal worthy of the name**” (Oct. 19) which is an overview of the growing activism Canada-wide. “**The case for free public transit in Toronto**” in *Now Magazine* (Dec. 2019) only begins to discuss the fraught transit politics in Toronto. In December 2019, members of the Free Transit Edmonton movement published an Opinion piece: “**Make transit free for the sake of our climate and community**” in the *Edmonton Journal*. For a recent U.S. summary, see “**Should Public Transit Be Free? More Cities Say, Why Not?**” in the *New York Times* (Jan. 14).

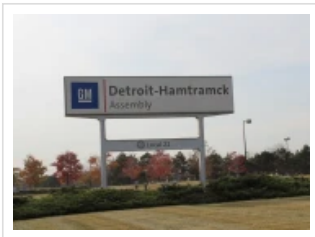
Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Environmental Justice, free transit, labour union policies, Transit Policy** | **Leave a reply**

Green Jobs Oshawa still fighting for GM plant conversion; EV investment goes to Detroit-Hamtramck plant

Posted on February 7, 2020 by [elizabethperry493](#)



An article by former CAW Research Director Sam Gindin appeared in The Socialist Project newsletter *The Bullet* on Feb. 3. “[Realizing ‘Just Transitions’: The Struggle for Plant Conversion at GM Oshawa](#)” describes the ongoing work of [Green Jobs Oshawa](#) to fight back against the closure of the GM Oshawa plant with a proposal to convert the plant to electric vehicle manufacture. Green Jobs Oshawa commissioned an economic study in 2019, [The Triple Bottom Line Feasibility Study](#) which estimated that the plant conversion could create 13,000 jobs with modest government investment and a worker ownership model. Gindin’s new article seeks to explain why the [Green Jobs Oshawa](#) campaign hasn’t succeeded yet, and suggests new thinking and new roles for workers, Unifor at the local and national level, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the government. (A related, good-news article, “[The man of wind, water and sun](#)” in *Corporate Knights* (Jan. 16) profiles Toronto lawyer Brian Iler and describes his efforts, along with the [Canadian Worker Co-op Federation](#) to retool GM Oshawa. Iler is described as “the creative legal mind behind a host of cutting-edge renewable energy projects, social ventures and co-ops that have challenged received wisdom.”)



In the meantime, on January 27, General Motors announced “[Detroit-Hamtramck to be GM’s First Assembly Plant 100 Percent Devoted to Electric Vehicles](#)”, promising creation of 2,200 jobs. Production of an all-electric pick-up truck will start as soon as late 2021, to be followed by an all-electric Cruise Origin self-driving shuttle, and an electric Hummer. Like Oshawa GM, the Detroit Hamtramck plant had been slated for closure, but the corporate press release states that GM will invest \$2.2 billion in the U.S. plant and an additional \$800 million in supplier tooling and other projects. Encouraged by favourable tax treatment by the state, GM has committed more than \$2.5 billion toward electric vehicle manufacturing in Michigan since Fall 2018 – recent news of GM’s corporate push to electric vehicles appears in *The Detroit Free Press* in “[GM bids to buy land for a new battery factory in Lordstown](#)” (Jan. 15); “[GM commits to \\$2.2 billion investment and 2,200 jobs at Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly](#)” (Jan. 27) and in the *New York Times*, “[G.M. Making Detroit Plant a Hub of Electric and A.V. Efforts](#)” (Jan. 27).

Canadians are trying to find a silver lining, as reported by the *Windsor Star* newspaper in “[GM’s first all-electric vehicle plant in Detroit will have Canadian spillover benefits](#)”. The article quotes the president of Canada’s Automobile Parts Manufacturing Association: “if GM meets the volume expectations of the vehicles in the Hamtramck re-launch, Southwestern Ontario suppliers may pull in up to 30 per cent of the content opportunities that will arise.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [General Motors](#), [GM Oshawa](#), [Just Transition](#), [plant closings](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Which Canadian companies rank as Sustainable or as Clean Tech innovators?

Posted on February 7, 2020 by elizabethperry493



Canadian magazine *Corporate Knights* recently published the 2020 edition of its annual **Global 100**, which ranks the 100 most sustainable corporations in the world. This [overview article](#) describes the environmental and social responsibility indicators which are considered in the rankings, including average CEO pay ratio, the number of women on their boards and female executives, linking executive compensation to targets related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and “the carbon-productivity measure” of revenue per tonne of CO2 emitted. The [ranked list](#) is topped by Orsted of Denmark (formerly DONG (Danish Oil and Natural Gas) – profiled [here](#)). The top-ranked Canadian corporation, at 10th position, is **Algonquin Power & Utilities Corp.**, which describes itself as: “a growing renewable energy and regulated utility company with assets across North America. The Corporation acquires and operates green and clean energy assets including hydroelectric, wind, thermal, and solar power facilities, as well as sustainable utility distribution businesses (water, electricity and natural gas) through its two operating subsidiaries: Liberty Power and Liberty Utilities.” The Global 100 issue also include general articles which focus on Canadian sectors: “[Hydro-Quebec plugs into China’s EV push](#)”; “[The EV Revolution will take batteries, but are they ethical](#)”; “[Financing our future with a green building bonanza](#)”, and “[The ultimate guide to responsible investing](#)”.

The **Global Cleantech 100** report, published in San Francisco, is an industry-based annual ranking of private companies judged “most likely to make significant market impact globally over the next five to ten years.” An Expert Panel of cleantech investors reviewed over a thousand possible private companies and selected 100, of which 12 are Canadian. Although U.S. companies dominate the list, the twelve Canadians which were judged to be global leaders are : **Axine** industrial waste-water technologies ; **Carbcrete** in Montreal (cement-free, carbon free concrete); **Carbon Engineering** in Calgary (Developer of technologies for the capture of carbon dioxide at industrial scale); **Carbon Cure** of Dartmouth N.S., (manufactures a technology for concrete producers that introduces recycled CO2 into fresh concrete); **Ecobee**, developer of Wifi smart thermostats for home and commercial applications; **Enbala** (provider of demand side energy management systems); **GaN Systems** of Ottawa (Developer of gallium nitride (GaN) semiconductors); **LiCycle** of Mississauga (developer of lithium ion battery recycling technology); **Minesense** of Vancouver (developer of sensor technology for mine operation) ; **OpusOne** of Richmond Hill Ontario (developer of optimization solutions for distributed electricity grid systems) ; **Semios** of Vancouver (Developer of precision crop management systems); and **Svante** of Burnaby B.C. (commercial scale carbon capture).

More innovative Canadian companies are profiled at the website of **Sustainable Development Technology Canada**, an arms-length agency overseen by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry . On January 15, the Minister announced government investment of \$46.3 million in 14 start-up cleantech companies. The list of companies is provided in the [press release](#).

Climate change and health: U.K. National Health Service launches new campaign for greener health care; more medical associations divest from fossil fuels

Posted on **February 6, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

England's National Health Service (NHS) is the country's largest employer with 1.3 million staff, and its operations are responsible for approximately 4-5% of England's carbon footprint. On January 25, the Chief executive officer of the NHS **announced** a new campaign to tackle the global climate change health emergency through a greener health care system. A **website for the new campaign**, "For a Greener NHS", focuses on a goal of a net zero national health service, with an Expert Panel to compile experiences and make recommendations in an interim report due in summer 2020, and a final report scheduled for Fall 2020. In the meantime, the Greener NHS campaign will encourage such initiatives as switching from coal or oil-fired boilers to renewable heat sources for buildings; switching to less polluting anaesthetic gases and better asthma inhalers in treatment; and introducing technological solutions to reduce the number of patient visits and travel miles.

Another part of the initiative is a grassroots campaign for front-line workers, supported by the **UK Health Alliance on Climate Change** – which includes representative bodies covering over 650,000 NHS staff, including the union UNISON . The NHS **press release** quotes UNISON: "Involving staff is crucial if the NHS is to help the UK meet its emissions targets in good time. They know more than anyone how the health service ticks and so are best placed to make practical green suggestions to get the NHS to where it needs to be." Examples of existing staff-oriented programs are described in case studies : reducing the use of **disposable plastic gloves**; an **electric bike courier system** for delivery of medical and laboratory samples; and a **sustainable travel initiative** to encourage staff use of transit, shuttle buses, bicycles and walking for journeys to work.

British medical associations and organizations are also acting at the societal level. In January, the prestigious British Medical Journal (BMJ) published an editorial: "**Investing in humanity: The BMJ's divestment campaign**", which calls on individuals and organizations to act immediately, stating: "Divestment offers health professionals and medical organisations, for the duty is both individual and collective, an opportunity to influence politicians and industry towards behaviours that are better for the planet and people's health." While urging divestment, the BMJ states: " we will not accept advertising or research funded by companies that produce fossil fuels. We will also explore how else our business might be dependent on fossil fuel companies and take steps to end any such reliance. The BMA has no direct holdings in tobacco or fossil fuel companies." (Note that The Guardian newspaper in the U.K. also announced in February 2020 that **it will ban any fossil fuel advertising.**) According to a **press release from the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change**, six constituent groups of the Alliance have announced an intention, or are already divesting, from fossil fuels: the British Medical Association, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the Faculty of Public Health, the Royal College of Emergency Medicine and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and in January 2020, the Royal College of Physicians . The **Canadian Medical Association** has also divested from fossil fuels.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Divestment](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [health care professionals](#), [Hospitals](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian doctors call for moratorium on fracking for gas

Posted on **January 30, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On January 29, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) **released** a report which documents the serious health and environmental dangers associated with fracked natural gas, calling for the phase-out of existing fracking operations and a moratorium on any new fracking projects. CAPE also calls for Just Transition plans to help workers and the communities which would be affected. Canada is the world's fourth largest producer of natural gas, and in 2018, 71% of that was "fracked gas", mostly produced in northeastern British Columbia. *The Narwhal* offers a good (though now dated) **explainer about fracking in Canada**, and offers **several in-depth articles**, including "**Potential health impacts of fracking in B.C. worry Dawson Creek physicians**" (April 2019). *The Narwhal* has also published recent articles by **Ben Parfitt** of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C., who has also written extensively about fracking and LNG in B.C. Most recently, **Peace River Frack-up** was released by CCPA-BC in January, calling for an immediate ban on fracking activity for operations close to BC Hydro's two existing Peace River dams and the Site C dam, because of the risk of dam failure from fracking-caused earthquakes.

The CAPE report, ***Fractures in the Bridge: Unconventional (Fracked) Natural Gas, Climate Change and Human Health*** documents the environmental and climate change impacts of fracking, with an over-riding concern about the significant health dangers, especially for communities and workers. The report notes: "Data from the US show that the risk of death among workers in this sector is two-and-a half-times higher than the risk for workers in construction and seven times higher than the risk for industrial workers as a whole." "**America's Radioactive Secret**" is a troubling article which appeared in *Rolling Stone* on January 21, summarizing a journalistic investigation of the unregulated trucking of fracking waste: "Oil-and-gas wells produce nearly a trillion gallons of toxic waste a year. An investigation shows how it could be making workers sick and contaminating communities across America."

Fractures in the Bridge provides a Canadian perspective on the overwhelming evidence from established studies which have reported "negative health outcomes including adverse birth outcomes, birth defects including congenital heart defects and neural tube defects, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, dermal effects, gastrointestinal symptoms, neurological effects, psychological impacts and respiratory illnesses." ***Fractures in the Bridge*** also provides a very complete bibliography as well as an appendix showing how fracking is regulated in each province in Canada.

An important related source of information, updated in 2019, is the ***Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction)***, published by the Concerned Health Professionals of New York (CHPNY) and Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BC LNG, British Columbia, Fracking, Fracking Moratorium, LNG, Occupational Health and Safety** | [Leave a reply](#)

Amazon employees lay their jobs on the line to protest how Big tech enables Big oil

Posted on **January 29, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Updated on February 18 re the announcement of the Bezos Earth Fund.

Amazon workers have risen up again, at the risk of their own jobs. "**Defying Company Policy, Over 300 Amazon Employees Speak Out**" in *Wired* (Jan.27) was one of many media articles about the most recent incident in the

employees' campaign for climate action. A new protest stems from Amazon's communication policy which threatened to fire employees who speak out to the public about climate change without company authorization. (A [Washington Post article](#) of January 2 summarizes all that). In response, as [detailed in Wired](#), 363 Amazon employees intentionally violated that company policy by signing their names to posts about their own opinions and experiences. The [posts were compiled by Medium](#) on January 26. The protest was organized by the activist group Amazon Employees for Climate Justice (AECJ) which posted [an explanation](#) on their Facebook page, stating that employees feel a "moral responsibility to speak up". It continues:

"The protest is the largest action by employees since Amazon began threatening to fire workers for speaking out about Amazon's role in the climate crisis. It signals that employees are convinced that the only right thing to do at this time is to keep speaking up. AECJ has continued to call on Amazon to commit to zero emissions by 2030, stop developing AWS products and services to accelerate oil and gas extraction, and end funding of climate-denying politicians, lobbyists, and think tanks."

UPDATE:

On February 17, Jeff Bezos, billionaire owner of Amazon, announced the creation of the Bezos Earth Fund, which will provide \$10 billion in grants to scientists and activists to fund their efforts to fight climate change. The announcement was made on Instagram and [reported by the Washington Post](#), which Bezos also owns. Amazon Employees for Climate Justice reacted with [this statement](#) :

This morning, Jeff Bezos announced he is donating \$10 billion to his new "Earth Fund." Following that news, Amazon Employees for Climate Justice issued the following statement:

"The international scientific community is very clear: burning the oil in wells that oil companies already have developed means we can't save our planet from climate catastrophe.

As history has taught us, true visionaries stand up against entrenched systems, often at great cost to themselves. We applaud Jeff Bezos' philanthropy, but one hand cannot give what the other is taking away. The people of Earth need to know: When is Amazon going to stop helping oil & gas companies ravage Earth with still more oil and gas wells? When is Amazon going to stop funding climate-denying think tanks like the Competitive Enterprise Institute and climate-delaying policy? When will Amazon take responsibility for the lungs of children near its warehouses by moving from diesel to all-electric trucking?

Why did Amazon threaten to fire employees who were sounding the alarm about Amazon's role in the climate crisis and our oil and gas business? What this shows is that employees speaking out works--we need more of that right now. Will Jeff Bezos show us true leadership or will he continue to be complicit in the acceleration of the climate crisis, while supposedly trying to help?"

Their statement shows that AECJ is not letting up on the link between Amazon and Big Oil, and also, not letting up. Follow them on Twitter at [@AMZNforClimate](#).

"Why did Amazon threaten to fire employees who were sounding the alarm about Amazon's role in the climate crisis and our oil and gas business? What this shows is that employees speaking out works--we need more of that right now."

Big Tech and Big Oil?

Although a general perception might be that Amazon need only reduce packaging or improve logistics to reduce transportation-related emissions, there is another big climate-related issue raised by Amazon Employees for Climate Justice. As noted briefly in [Vox](#) on January 3: ["Google and Amazon are now in the oil business"](#) (Jan. 3) explaining that "big tech companies are developing AI for oil companies, even as they publicly celebrate their sustainable initiatives."

A much more detailed explanation appears in ["Amazon's New Rationale For Working With Big Oil: Saving the Planet"](#) in [Motherboard](#) (Jan. 10) .

This is all happening in plain sight. Amazon itself describes its ["Digital Oilfields"](#) on its own website, and ["Cenovus joins Big Oil's push into Big Data with Amazon and IBM deals"](#) appeared in the [Financial Post](#) in November 2019, giving insight into how data-driven oil and gas is growing in Canada. And Suncor boasts in a November 2019 press

release from Calgary, [Suncor accelerates digital transformation journey through strategic alliance with Microsoft](#), quoting Microsoft's president: "Suncor is embarking on a journey to transform the energy industry. They are creating new business value for their customers, empowering and upskilling their workforce, and innovating for a sustainable future".

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Amazon](#), [Climate Activism](#), [employee initiatives](#), [Information Technology](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. cities are training young workers for clean energy jobs

Posted on **January 29, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The American Council for and Energy-Efficient Economy released their [2019 City Clean Energy Scorecard](#) in the summer of 2019, surveying and ranking clean energy policies amongst U.S. cities. Workforce development programs were included in the survey, and the report found that 37 out of 75 cities surveyed had clean energy workforce development programs, many in partnerships with utilities, non-profits, colleges, and others. The programs include clean energy and energy efficiency job training directed at traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as clean energy contracting programs promoting minority- or women-owned businesses.

In January 2020, the ACEEE released an update in a Topic Brief titled [Cities and Clean Energy Workforce Development](#). It offers an overview of best practices, along with brief case studies of Orlando, Florida and Chattanooga, Tennessee. An accompanying blog, "[How are US cities prepping workers for a clean energy future?](#)" summarizes other equity-driven initiatives – for example: the Work2Future program in San Jose California which trains young adults from disadvantaged populations in energy-efficient building construction, achieving an 82% job placement rate; and Birmingham, Alabama, which offers energy efficiency training opportunities to Minority Business Enterprise contracting partners.

The blog and Topic Brief update a larger 2018 ACEEE report, [Through the Local Government Lens: Developing the Energy Efficiency Workforce](#), available from [this link](#) (free, but registration required). Even more information is available from an ongoing ACEEE database, [Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Workforce Development](#), which lists cities by name and provides descriptions of their programs.



Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Clean Energy, energy efficiency, renewable energy, Skilled Workers, Training** | [Leave a reply](#)

Launch of Canadian Institute for Climate Choices promises “rigorous research and original analysis”

Posted on **January 28, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Canadian Institute for Climate Choices** was launched on January 21 – described in their own **press release** as an independent national institute with an aim “to establish a strong foundation for decision-making on climate change policies.” CBC commentator **Aaron Wherry** likens the new body to the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), disbanded by the Harper government in 2013.

Supported by \$20 million funding over 5 years from the federal government, the Institute promises to “Produce rigorous research, original analysis and evidence-based insight”. It will do this through engagement with experts, business and policy leaders, as well as Canadians – and by cultivating a national network of experts from a range of disciplines.

Those experts are currently organized into three **Expert Panels**, to write and conduct peer review of the promised three research reports per year. Members named so far include: Dale Beugin, Alain Bourque, Don Drummond, Stewart Elgie, Blair Feltmate, Kathryn Harrison, Sara Hastings-Simon, Glenn Hodgson, Mark Jaccard, Richard Lipsey, James Meadowcroft, Nancy Olewiler, and Nic Rivers.



The launch of the Institute was accompanied by a report, **Charting our Course**, which uses the extended metaphor of Canada as a ship navigating to safety on the stormy seas of climate change, and requiring “all hands on deck” to reach a safe destination. It is offered as a starting point for discussion, and includes a new analytical framework, visualized in the accompanying diagram (left).

Charting our Course makes four recommendations:

#1: Canadian governments should broaden objectives for climate policy – which acknowledges that all levels of government are involved, and their policy design needs “to go beyond the narrow lenses of mitigation, adaptation, and

clean growth”...” By linking objectives more directly to the welfare of Canadians, this approach can also build a broader coalition of support for action.”

#2: Canadian governments should embrace Canada’s role in global outcomes.

#3: Canadian governments should expand the scope, scale, and pace of climate policies. (“This means expanding the coverage of policies across regions, issues, and sectors, ramping up the magnitude of change, and tightening the timeframe for achieving results.”)

#4: Those analysing and developing policy options should seek out integrated solutions that drive multiple benefits.

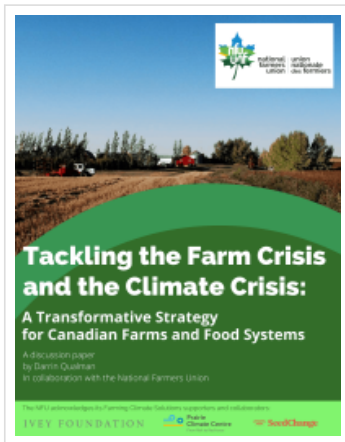
Although funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Institute will operate independently, overseen by an eleven-member Board of Directors – including former Privy Council Clerk Mel Cappe, former Ecofiscal Commission Chair Chris Ragan, Dave Collyer, former president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Bruce Lourie, now President of the Ivey Foundation, and Sybil Seitzinger, Executive Director, Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions. A separate Advisory Council includes Catherine Abreu, Executive Director of the Climate Action Network – Réseau action climat (CAN-Rac) Canada.

The Institute has already released **six blogs** to flesh out the general statements. More details also appear in articles **in the National Observer**, the **Toronto Star**, the **CBC**, and **The Energy Mix**.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

National Farmers Union recommends mixed farming systems to reduce GHG emissions

Posted on **January 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Agriculture generates about eight per cent of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions. In November 2019, the National Farmers Union of Canada released what they characterize as “one of the most comprehensive analyses of the linkages between agriculture and climate change written to date in Canada.” ***Tackling the Farm Crisis and the Climate Crisis: A Transformative Strategy for Canadian Farms and Food Systems*** “considers both the impacts of the climate crisis on agriculture and the realities of the vulnerable financial situation of farm families.” Consumer demand and expectation for cheap food works against small farmers and can drive them into bankruptcy – a concern which runs throughout the report (and is documented in a statistical appendix). A **CBC Edmonton article** emphasizes the fine line of profitability for farmers, and “**The fight against climate change down home on an Alberta farm**” at CBC Calgary summarizes the NFU recommendations, with a human face.

Tackling the Farm Crisis and the Climate Crisis states that “the farm crisis and the climate crisis share many of the same causes, and many of the same solutions. It concludes that the most impactful way to cut agriculture-related GHG emissions in half by 2050 would be to move away from the agribusiness model to “mixed-farming systems that utilize natural nutrient cycles, diverse animal and plant mixes and best-possible grazing methods to restore soils, raise carbon levels, protect water, enhance biodiversity and support sustainable livelihoods.” The report also considers specifics such as the optimal design of a carbon tax for farmers; use of biofuels and electrification; on-farm renewable power generation; and more efficient use of technology for farm production.

Agriculture’s role in climate change is a complex topic, and it should be noted that the National Farmers Union does not speak for all Canadian farmers – for example, their positions differ from those of the [Canadian Federation of Agriculture](#) and the [Ontario Federation of Agriculture](#). Recent publications to help understand the global issues and impacts include: the 2019 IPCC 6th Climate Assessment Report [Climate Change and Land](#) and [Creating a Sustainable Food Future](#), by the World Resources Institute (WRI) in partnership with the World Bank, UN Environment Programme, UN Development Programme, and France’s Agricultural Research for Development and National Institute for Agricultural Research.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Agriculture](#), [Farmers](#), [Sustainable Agriculture](#) | [1 Reply](#)

New Roadmap for German coal phase-out includes worker payments till 2043

Posted on [January 20, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

After intensive negotiations, on January 16 the German government, its coal mining states and several major utilities agreed on a roadmap for shutting down the country’s lignite-fired power plants, making Germany the first country in the world with an actual plan to end both nuclear and coal-fired power production. Most critics say that the roadmap deadline of 2038 is too slow, although it adheres to the deadline recommended by Germany’s [Coal Exit Commission](#) in 2019. Analysts also criticize an exception which allows a new coal-fired power plant – Datteln 4 – to come online in summer 2020. (**Activists pledge to oppose it**). A **summary of the agreement** is provided by *Clean Energy Wire*, as well as in **“Bye Bye Lignite: Understanding Germany’s Coal Phase-out”** in *Deutsche Welle* (Jan. 16), or **“How Hard Is It to Quit Coal? For Germany, 18 Years and \$44 Billion”** in the New York Times (Jan. 16). Reaction to the plan appears in **“Hambach Forest: Germany’s sluggish coal phaseout sparks anger”** in *Deutsche Welle* which states that, although the iconic Hambach forest will be saved, activists and local residents are “appalled” because surrounding villages will not. General reactions from German media appear in English in **“‘Historic compromise’ or ‘pact of unreason’? – media reactions to Germany’s coal exit deal”** (Jan. 17).

An estimated 20,000 people are employed in Germany’s lignite industry — of which 15,000 work in open-pit mines and 5,000 in lignite power plants. For them, adjustment payments (not yet quantified) will be provided until 2043, following the pattern of provisions for workers in the hard coal sector phase-out which ended in 2018. The coal workers’ union, Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau, Chemie, Energie (IG BCE), said the agreement would “set the benchmark” for a socially acceptable and climate-friendly transformation and would “lay the groundwork for linking social and climate justice.” The leader of the IG BCE stressed that the phase-out roadmap has to be complemented by a “phase-in roadmap” for renewables, which needs to be done urgently.

In addition to billions in compensation to the utility companies such as giant RWE, there are to be support payments for the affected states of Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia – a total of 14 billion euros until 2038 for direct investments in the regions, and another 26 billion euros provided by the federal government for “further measures” to strengthen local economies.

Labour working for a Green New Deal in Canada and the U.S.

Posted on **January 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Updated on January 20 to include Naomi Klein's new article, "Care and Repair: Left Politics in the Age of Climate Change" in *Dissent* (Winter 2020 issue).



In the January 2020 issue of *Our Times* magazine, "[Save this House: A Green New Deal for Canada, Now!](#)" provides an overview of Canadian labour's initiatives around a Green New Deal. It highlights the on-the-ground activism of two unionists: Tiffany Balducci, (CUPE member, president of the Durham Region Labour Council and in that role, part of the [Green Jobs Oshawa](#) coalition seeking to re-purpose the shuttered General Motors plant for socially beneficial manufacturing) and Patricia Chong, (member of the [Asian Canadian Labour Alliance](#) and co-facilitator of the "[Green is Not White](#)" [environmental workshops](#) which are co-sponsored by the ACW research project).

Asked to define and envision what the Green New Deal will look like, Chong states:

"If the climate crisis is defined as a problem where we need to move money from greenhouse-gas producing industries to non-GHG producing industry, then the answer is to move the money around. If the climate crisis is defined more broadly as a problem that also includes environmental racism, Indigenous genocide, and capitalism, then the solution is also going to be very different.When we talk about a Green economy, we do not want to replicate the inherent inequities we already have."

The article also names the unions which support a Green New Deal for Canada: "Unifor, Amalgamated Transit Union, British Columbia Teachers Federation, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and CUPE Ontario. The article concludes with a reference to the Private Member's Motion on a Green New Deal for Canada, introduced in the new 43rd session of Parliament by Peter Julian, the NDP Member of Parliament for New Westminster-Burnaby British Columbia. His [motion](#), introduced on December 5, defines a Green New Deal as a 10-year national mobilization to:

- reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions
- create millions of secure jobs
- invest in sustainable infrastructure and industry
- promote justice and equity for Indigenous peoples and all "frontline and vulnerable communities."

Specifically concerning GND jobs, it calls for:

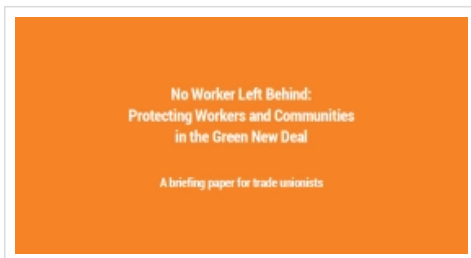
.....(vii) ensuring that the Green New Deal mobilization creates high-quality union jobs that pay prevailing wages, hires local workers, offers training and advancement opportunities, and guarantees wage and benefit parity for workers affected by the transition, (viii) guaranteeing a job with a family-sustaining wage, adequate family and medical leave, paid vacations, and retirement security to all Canadians, (ix) strengthening and protecting the right of all workers to organize, unionize, and collectively bargain free of coercion, intimidation, and harassment, (x) strengthening and enforcing labour, workplace health and safety, antidiscrimination, and wage and hour standards across all employers, industries, and sectors, (xi) enacting and enforcing trade rules, procurement standards, and border adjustments with strong labor and environmental protections to stop the transfer of jobs and pollution overseas, and to grow domestic

manufacturing in Canada.... More details are at the [Our Time website](#) ; Julian was one of the candidates endorsed by Our Time in Canada's 2019 federal election.



The youth-led organization Our Time exists to campaign for a Green New Deal. An overview of their approach appears in **“The future is in our hands— not theirs”** in the January/February issue of CCPA's *The Monitor* (pages 22- 23). Written by two Manitoba organizers from the Our Time campaign , it includes the youth-led actions of Canada's Fridays for Future climate strikers, and focuses on the Our Time campaign in the West. The authors conclude: “Our Time and the CCPA-Manitoba recognize the need to build stronger relationships with the Indigenous community and beyond. We know that any struggle for a Green New Deal must take direction from those who are most dispossessed by fossil capitalism and most exposed to climate change. We do not wish to reproduce in our organizing spaces the undemocratic relationships of exploitation that have gotten us to this point. We need to unlearn the oppressive practices we frequently deploy, often unconsciously, even when our hearts are in the right place.”

Green New Deal proposals in the U.S.:



In late December 2019, Labor Network for Sustainability released its latest paper regarding the Green New Deal: a briefing paper written by Jeremy Brecher , ***No Worker Left Behind: Protecting Workers and Communities in the Green New Deal*** . From the introduction: “This paper aims to identify policies that could be actionable by GNDs at national and state levels.... It focuses only on: “GND policies specifically designed to protect workers and communities whose jobs and livelihoods may be adversely affected by deliberate managed decline of fossil fuel burning and other GND policies.” The document does not endorse one plan over the other – the purpose is to identify and inform trade unionists so that they can make their own determinations.

No Worker Left Behind includes relevant excerpts from the following U.S. plans: • Colorado Just Transition law • Center for Biological Diversity Presidential Action Plan • Washington State Initiative 1631 • Senator Bernie Sanders “The Green New Deal – Sanders Details” • Governor Jay Inslee “Community Climate Justice Plan,” adopted by Sen. Elizabeth Warren after Inslee withdrew from the presidential race. • Vice-President Joe Biden “Plan for a Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice” • BlueGreen Alliance “Solidarity for Climate Action” • Sunrise Movement “Candidate Scorecard Framework” • Peter Knowlton “Jobs for Climate Justice Demands” • Sens. Bernie Sanders, Jeff Merkley, and Edward Markey “Clean Energy Worker Just Transition Act” • Political Economy Research Institute, “The Economics of Just Transition” • Institute for Energy and Environmental Research and Labor Network for Sustainability, “Beyond a Band-Aid”.

A broader discussion of the Green New Deal appears in **Naomi Klein's new article, “Care and Repair: Left Politics in the Age of Climate Change”** in *Dissent* (Winter 2020 issue). Although the article focuses on the U.S. Green New Deal in a historical and political context , Klein continues to cite her “favourite example” of the GND as the Canadian Union of Postal Workers initiative, ***Delivering Community Power*** , which she describes as “a bold plan to turn every post office in Canada into a hub for a just green transition.” She continues “....To make the case for a Green New Deal—which explicitly calls for this kind of democratic, decentralized leadership—every sector in the United States should be developing similar visionary plans for their workplaces right now.”

Klein also repeats themes from previous writing, including :

“A job guarantee, far from an opportunistic socialist addendum, is a critical part of achieving a rapid and just transition. It would immediately lower the intense pressure on workers to take the kinds of jobs that destabilize our planet, because all would be free to take the time needed to retrain and find work in one of the many sectors that will be dramatically expanding...This in turn will reduce the power of bad actors like the Laborers’ International Union of North America, who are determined to split the labor movement and sabotage the prospects for this historic effort.”

Finally, her concluding call to action:

“The Green New Deal will need to be subject to constant vigilance and pressure from experts who understand exactly what it will take to lower our emissions as rapidly as science demands, and from social movements that have decades of experience bearing the brunt of false climate solutions, whether nuclear power, the chimera of carbon capture and storage, or carbon offsets.”

“**Care and Repair: Left Politics in the Age of Climate Change**” is adapted from Klein’s



chapter in ***We Own the Future: Democratic Socialism—American Style***, a new anthology edited by Kate Aronoff, Michael Kazin, and Peter Dreier and released by the New Press in January 2020. Several other recent articles have appeared in *The Intercept* are available on her own website [here](#), and her book, ***On Fire: The Burning case for a Green New Deal*** was published in September 2019.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Green New Deal Canada](#), [labour union policies](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

One more time: can Canada meet its GHG emissions targets if oil and gas continues to expand?

Posted on **January 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian **government pledged to exceed 2030 emissions reduction targets and reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050** at COP25 in December 2019, and on January 13, the Minister of Finance **announced** pre-Budget consultations that will include **climate change as a “central focus”**. Encouraging as all this sounds, it contrasts with the government’s 2018 purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline (**recently critiqued** by B.C. economist Robyn Allan, and **pictured with new “pipe in the ground”** in December), and its mixed signals over whether Cabinet will approve the enormous Teck Frontier oil sands project in February – explained in a Narwhal Backgrounder: **“Why the proposed Frontier oilsands mine is a political hot potato”**. (Hint: because it has the potential to produce 260,000 barrels of bitumen every day until 2060).

Recent forecasts for expansion of oil and gas industry production are also at odds with Morneau’s “focus on climate change” :

Oil, Gas and the Climate: An Analysis of Oil and Gas Industry Plans for Expansion and Compatibility with Global Emission Limits, published by the Global Gas and Oil Network (December 2019) describes how “new oil and gas

development in Canada between now and 2050 could unlock an additional 25 GtCO₂, more than doubling cumulative emissions from the sector.” The report is summarized in a separate WCR post [here](#).

Canada’s Energy Future 2019: Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2040, released in December by Canada Energy Regulator (CER) (formerly the National Energy Board) states “Canada is making progress in transitioning to a low-carbon future” **but** :

“From 2018 to 2040, crude oil production grows by nearly 50%, to around seven million barrels per day.

Natural gas production increases by about 30%, to over 20 billion cubic feet per day over the next 20 years.

In 2005, wind and solar made up 0.2% of Canada’s total generation. Combined they now make up 5%, and that share grows to nearly 10% by 2040. Over the outlook period, installed capacity of wind nearly doubles, while solar more than doubles. This depends on many factors, including costs of wind and solar power continuing to fall. EF2019 assumes that the cost of wind power falls by 20% and solar by 40% from 2018 to 2040.”



The Pembina Institute responded with “**Why Canada’s Energy Future report leads us astray**” on January 9th, which states: “How does the government’s long-term decarbonization plan square with its projections for energy production? The simple answer is that it doesn’t. The report’s implication is that Canada will blow past our climate targets as our oil and gas sector effectively continues on a business-as-usual trajectory....The report has real implications for federal planning and decision-making and, perhaps most significantly, the overall vision of the energy sector in this country.” **Canada’s Energy Future 2019: Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2040** is available in [PDF format](#) and in an [interactive version](#).

Amid the distraction of the Christmas season, the government of Canada released **Canada’s GHG Emissions Projections to 2030**, as required by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and as part of **Canada’s 4th Biennial Report to the UNFCCC**. The December 20 [press release](#) from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change claims that Canada will achieve an “historic level of emissions reductions” ... projected to be 227 million tonnes (Mt) *below what was projected in 2015* [italics by WCR]. ” The summary provides details of anticipated reductions by sector in 3 scenarios: 2019 Reference Case (policies currently in place); a 2019 Additional Measures Case, which considers the Reference Case and those that have been announced but not yet fully implemented as of September 2019 (for example, the Clean Fuel Standard); and a Technology Case, an “exploratory scenario that includes more optimistic assumptions about clean technology adoption in a number of sectors.” A summary of the Emissions Projections document is [here](#); the full details are in the 4th Biennial Report to the UNFCCC, in English [here](#) and [here](#) in French .

And for an example of how Industry is framing their emissions vs. growth dilemma:

Cenovus Energy issued a [press release](#) on January 9 announcing “Bold Sustainability Targets” which “position us to thrive in the transition to a lower-carbon future”. The company states: “Cenovus is targeting to reduce its per-barrel GHG emissions by 30% by the end of 2030, using a 2019 baseline, and hold its absolute emissions flat by the end of 2030”, with a “long-term ambition is to reach net zero emissions by 2050.” This, despite a separate investor release which promises: “Total production increase of 7% compared with 2019 guidance, as Cenovus’s crude-by-rail program, coupled with the

Government of Alberta's Special Production Allowances, positions the company to move to unconstrained production levels."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [GHG emissions targets](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Students benchmark the climate change content of curriculum in Canadian medical schools

Posted on **January 15, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **Health and Environment Adaptive Response Task Force (HEART)** is a group within the 8,000 member **Canadian Federation of Medical Students**. Its core purpose is to advocate for improvements in the medical curriculum to include the crucial links between health and climate and environmental change. In January 2020, HEART released Canada's first-ever **National Report on Planetary Health Education**, meant to establish a benchmark on planetary health education in Canadian medical schools, and to provide schools with best practices and recommendations for improvements. Some of the practical examples cited: incorporating "the effects of air pollution with respiratory health teaching, discussing climate-related displacement within teaching on refugee and migrant health, and exploring the increasing burden of heat stress on health-care systems. Furthermore, case-based sessions can highlight the effects on specific individuals. Examples could include considering isolated older people at risk of heat stroke or of being in extreme weather events, or discussing the effects of flooding or poor water quality on Indigenous communities."

The HEART analysis identified the University of Alberta, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and Dalhousie University as leaders, "where environmental issues are covered at greater length through lectures, assignments and extracurricular opportunities." The report is based on survey responses from "nearly 50 students" and 10 faculty members representing all 17 Canadian medical schools, and includes brief best practice examples.

The students also published a Commentary in *Lancet Planetary Health* on January 7, "Training Canadian doctors for the health challenges of climate change", which announces their report and aligns themselves with the Fridays for Future youth movement. It also puts their advocacy within the context of global campaigns by medical students (for example, the **International Federation of Medical Students Associations**) and the **Call to Action on Climate Change and Health** in Summer 2019 by the Canadian health professionals' associations, led by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [climate change and youth](#), [Education and Training](#), [physicians](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Answering Mark Carney: What are the climate plans for Canada's banks and pension funds?

Posted on **January 15, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On December 18, the Bank of England was widely **reported** to have unveiled a new "stress test" for the financial risks of climate change. That stress test is a proposal contained in an official BoE Discussion Paper, **2021 biennial exploratory scenario (BES) on the financial risks from climate change**, open for stakeholder comments until March 2020. Mark Carney, outgoing Governor of the Bank of England, has led the BoE to a leadership position on this issue in the financial

community and will continue in his new role as **United Nations special envoy on climate action and climate finance** in 2020. In a December **BBC interview** reviewing his legacy, he warned the world yet again about stranded assets and asked: “A question for every company, every financial institution, every asset manager, pension fund or insurer: what’s your plan?”

What are the climate plans for Canada’s pension funds ?



In their June 2019 report, **Canada’s Pension Funds and Climate Risk: A Baseline For Engagement**, ShiftAction concludes: “Canadian pension funds are already investing in climate solutions, but at levels that are far too low relative to the potential for profitable growth, consistent with levels required to solve this challenge.” The report provides an overview, and importantly, offers tips on how to engage with and influence pension fund managers.

Since then.....

The sustainability performance of the **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB)** continues to be unimpressive, as documented in **Fossil Futures: The Canada Pension Plan’s failure to respect the 1.5-degree Celsius limit**, released in November



2019 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis-B.C. (CCPA-BC). According to the **CPPIB Annual Report for 2019**, (June 2019) the CPPIB is aiming for full adoption of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures recommendations by the end of fiscal 2021 (page 28).

Canada’s second largest pension fund, the **Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ)**, announced in November that CEO Michael Sabia will retire in February 2020 and move to the University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. The **press release** credits Sabia with leading the Caisse to a position of global leadership on climate change, beginning in 2017 with the launch of an investment strategy which aims to increase low-carbon assets and reduce the carbon intensity of investment holdings by 25%. In 2019, the Caisse announced that its portfolio would be carbon-neutral by 2050. **Ivanhoé Cambridge**, the real estate subsidiary of the Caisse de dépôt, has a **stated goal** to increase low-carbon investments by 50% by the year 2020 and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by the year 2025. In December 2019, Ivanhoé Cambridge **announced** that it had issued a \$300 million unsecured green bond to finance green initiatives – the first real estate corporation in Canada to do so. Shawn McCarthy reviewed Sabia’s legacy in “**Canada’s second largest pension fund gets deadly serious about climate crisis**”, in *Corporate Knights* in December.

AIMCo, the Alberta Investment Management Corporation is a Crown Corporation of the Government of Alberta, with management responsibility for the public sector pensions funds in Alberta, along with other investments. In November

2019, the Alberta government passed Bill 22, which unilaterally transfers pension assets from provincial worker plans to the control of AIMCo (see a CBC summary [here](#)). The Alberta Federation of Labour and the province's large unions protested in a joint statement, **“Union leaders tell UCP: ‘The money saved by Albertans for retirement belongs to them, not to you!’”** (Nov. 20) . The unions state: “we’re worried that what you’re attempting to do is use other people’s money to create a huge slush fund to finance an agenda that has not yet been articulated to the public – and which most people would not feel comfortable using their life savings to support.” And in December 2019, those worries seem to come true as AIMCo **announced** its participation in a consortium to buy a 65% equity interest in the controversial LNG Coastal GasLink Pipeline Project from TC Energy Corporation. **Rabble.ca reported** on the demonstrations at AIMCo’s Toronto offices regarding the Coastal Gas project in January .

On January 8, the *Toronto Star* published **“Toronto asks pension provider: How green are our investments?”** – revealing that the city has asked for more details from the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement fund (OMERS). OMERS, with assets of over \$100 billion, manages the pension savings of a variety of Ontario public employees, including City of Toronto and Toronto Police, Fire, and Paramedics. On January 8, OMERS **announced** the latest consolidation of Toronto pension plans with its consolidation of the Metropolitan Toronto Pension. Its Sustainable Investment Policy statement is [here](#) .

What are the climate plans for Canada’s private Banks?

The 10th annual edition of ***Banking on Climate Change: the Fossil Fuel Finance Report Card*** was released in October 2019 by Banktrac, Rainforest Alliance Network and others . It states that \$1.9 trillion has been invested in fossil fuels by the world’s private banks since the Paris Agreement, led by JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citi and Bank of America. Canadian banks also rank high in the world: RBC (5th), TD (8th), Scotiabank (9th), and Bank of Montreal (15th). Also in October, the World Resources Institute



published ***Unpacking Green Targets: A Framework for Interpreting Private Sector Banks’ Sustainable Finance Commitments*** , which includes Canadian banks in its global analysis and provides guidance on how to understand banks’ public documents. **“How Are Banks Doing on Sustainable Finance Commitments? Not Good Enough”** is the WRI blog which summarizes the findings.

Since then....

On September 14, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce **announced** the release of their first climate-related disclosure report aligned with the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures. ***Building a Sustainable Future*** highlights the CIBC’s governance, strategy, and risk management approach to climate related issues. It provides specific metrics and targets, especially for its own operational footprint, but also a commitment: “to a \$150 billion environmental and sustainable finance goal over 10 years (2018-2027).”

Scotiabank also **announced** climate-related changes in November, including “that it would “mobilize \$100 billion by 2025 to support the transition to a lower-carbon and more resilient economy”; ensure robust climate-related governance and reporting; enhance integration of climate risk assessments in lending, financing and investing activities; deploy innovative solutions to decarbonize operations; and establish a Climate Change Centre of Excellence “to provide our employees with the tools and knowledge to empower them to act in support of our climate commitments. This includes training and education, promoting internal collaboration, and knowledge and information sharing.” Their 4-page statement on climate

commitment is [here](#). Their [2018 Sustainable Business Report](#) (latest available) includes detailed metrics and description of the bank's own operations, including that they use an Internal Carbon Price of CAD\$15/tonne CO₂, to be reviewed every two years.

RBC, ranked Canada's worst fossil-fueling bank in the 2019 edition of [Banking on Climate Change](#), released a 1-page statement of their [Commitment to Sustainable Finance](#) (April 2019) and an undated [Climate Blueprint](#) with a target of \$100 billion in sustainable financing by 2025. However, in their new research report, [Navigating the 2020's: How Canada can thrive in a decade of change](#), the bank characterizes the coming decade as "Greener, Greyer, Smarter, Slower", but offers little hope of a change in direction. For example, the report states "Canada's natural gas exports can also play a role in reducing emissions intensity abroad. LNG shipments to emerging economies in Asia, where energy demand is growing much faster than in Canada, can help replace coal in electricity production, just as natural gas is doing here in Canada. ...As climate concerns mount, Canada's challenge will be to better sell ourselves as a responsible, cleaner energy producer."

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Banking Industry](#), [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Divestment](#), [financial institutions](#), [Financial Risk](#), [government workers](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [OMERS](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Financial giants targeted by new U.S. divestment campaign; Youth challenge the Davos elites to stop investing in the fossil fuel economy immediately

Posted on [January 14, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

OUR TOP TARGETS

JPMorgan Chase is the world's top banker of fossil fuels; the bank has provided \$198 billion in financing to fossil fuel companies since 2016.	BlackRock is the world's largest investor in fossil fuels and deforestation-linked commodities, and manages nearly \$7 trillion in assets worldwide.	Liberty Mutual is a top insurer of and investor in massive fossil fuel projects, like the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Launched at Jane Fonda's final #FireDrillFriday event in Washington D.C. on January 10, the [Stop the Money Pipeline](#), according to a [Sierra Club press release](#), will consolidate a number of existing divestment campaigns and target the worst climate offenders in each part of the financial sector. The first campaign round consists of three major targets: amongst banks: JP Morgan Chase; amongst insurance companies: Liberty Mutual; and amongst asset managers, BlackRock. Groups involved in Stop the Money Pipeline are: 350.org, Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Sierra Club, Greenpeace USA, Sunrise Project, Future Coalition, Divest Ed, Divest-Invest, Native Movement, Giniw Collective, Transition U.S., Oil Change International, 350 Seattle, EarthRights International, Union of Concerned Scientists, Majority Action, The YEARS Project, and Amazon Watch.

The [Stop the Money Pipeline website](#) has archived some of the arguments for their campaign – including Bill McKibben's September Commentary in the *New Yorker* "[Money Is the Oxygen on Which the Fire of Global Warming Burns](#)", and "[Why Big Banks Are Accused Of Funding The Climate Crisis](#)" in *HuffPost* in October 2019. The campaign launch has been described in "[Climate Movement Takes Aim at Wall Street, Because 'Money Is Only Language Fossil Fuel Industry Speaks'](#)" in *Common Dreams* (Jan. 9); , and in "[Want to do something about climate](#)

[change? Follow the money](#)” in the *New York Times* on Jan. 11. In that Opinion piece, Bill McKibben and Lennox Yearwood Jr. describe their arrest at a sit-in at the Chase Bank which was part of the campaign launch. *Democracy Now* also covered the events in [“Stop the Money Pipeline”: 150 Arrested at Protests Exposing Wall Street’s Link to Climate Crisis](#)” on January 13.

Are campaigns having any effect?

Perhaps it is just coincidence, but on January 9, BlackRock [announced](#) it is signing on to [Climate Action 100+](#), a global investor network formed in 2015 and which includes California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS), HSBC Global Asset Management, and Manulife Asset Management. BlackRock also announced a new investment strategy, summarized in [“BlackRock Will Put Climate Change at Center of Investment Strategy”](#) in the *New York Times* (Jan. 14). The NYT article emphasizes the company’s influence as the world’s largest investment fund with over \$7 trillion under management, and states that “this move ... could reshape how corporate America does business and put pressure on other large money managers to follow suit.” The new strategy is outlined in two Annual Letters from BlackRock’s CEO Larry Fink: [Sustainability as BlackRock’s New Standard for Investing](#), the letter to corporate clients states, “Our investment conviction is that sustainability-integrated portfolios can provide better risk-adjusted returns to investors”. The second letter, titled [A Fundamental Reshaping of Finance](#), acknowledges that protests have had an impact on their position: “Climate change has become a defining factor in companies’ long-term prospects. Last September, when millions of people took to the streets to demand action on climate change, many of them emphasized the significant and lasting impact that it will have on economic growth and prosperity – a risk that markets to date have been slower to reflect.” He continues: “... awareness is rapidly changing, and I believe we are on the edge of a fundamental reshaping of finance.... climate change is almost invariably the top issue that clients around the world raise with BlackRock. In the near future – and sooner than most anticipate – there will be a significant reallocation of capital.” However, this urgency seems somewhat at odds with another statement in the Letter to CEO’s: “... While the low-carbon transition is well underway, the technological and economic realities mean that the transition will take decades. Global economic development, particularly in emerging markets, will continue to rely on hydrocarbons for a number of years. As a result, the portfolios we manage will continue to hold exposures to the hydrocarbon economy as the transition advances.”

Other divestment developments:

Urgency is a key theme in a new public call by Greta Thunberg and other youth leaders. [“At Davos we will tell world leaders to abandon the fossil fuel economy”](#) – an Opinion piece carried by *The Guardian* on January 10, directed to the world’s economic elite scheduled to gather at the [World Economic Forum in Davos](#) at the end of January. The core message is urgent: “We call upon the world’s leaders to stop investing in the fossil fuel economy that is at the very heart of this planetary crisis. Instead, they should invest their money in existing sustainable technologies, research and in restoring nature.. ...Anything less than immediately ceasing these investments in the fossil fuel industry would be a betrayal of life itself. Today’s business as usual is turning into a crime against humanity. We demand that leaders play their part in putting an end to this madness. Our future is at stake, let that be their investment. [An article in Common Dreams](#) on January 10 highlights the youth campaign and notes that it aligns with Stop the Money Pipeline.

[C40 Cities](#) released a new toolkit on January 7: [Divesting from Fossil Fuels, Investing in Our Future: A Toolkit for Cities](#). The toolkit is directed at city officials, outlining steps required to divest their pension funds from fossil fuels. It includes eight successful case studies – from [Auckland](#), [Berlin](#), [Copenhagen](#), [London](#), [Melbourne](#), [New York City](#), [Oslo](#), and [Stockholm](#) – all of whom have divestment experience and none of whose city pension funds were negatively impacted by divestment. [C40 Cities](#) is a network of 94 municipalities with a population of over 700 million people, active in promoting climate change action at the municipal level.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and youth](#), [Divestment](#), [financial institutions](#), [Financial Risk](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Municipal Government](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Australian bushfire disaster: what does it mean for firefighters and workers?

Posted on [January 13, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

There are many themes amid the story of the horrifying Australian bushfires of 2019/20: destruction of habitat and homes, the reality of climate change, and the resilience and self-sacrifice of Australians, exemplified in their **unique tradition of community volunteer firefighters**, or “firies”. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) recognized their contribution in **a statement** which includes: “Workers in the emergency services and volunteers in their own communities are on the front lines of defending people, their homes and community infrastructure. We thank them profusely for their efforts and their courage. They are working heroes.”



“**Australia’s Volunteer Firefighters Find It Hard to Pause, Even for Christmas**” in the *New York Times* (Dec. 24 2019) describes the self-sacrifice displayed by these volunteers, but it also questions how sustainable such a system can be in such a long-running and widespread disaster. Exhaustion is one constraint; financial necessity to earn money is another. Only under public pressure did the government finally **announce compensation** for the volunteers in December. The *Sydney Morning Herald* offers a detailed “**Explainer: How the Bushfire Compensation Scheme works**” (Jan. 12), which notes that some union leaders “have called for amendments to the Fair Work Act to ensure workers have the right to paid emergency services leave as part of the National Employment Standards.” This idea is taken up in “**Unions and employers join forces to demand increased bushfire relief for workers and firies**”, also in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Jan. 12), which highlights the “fine print” limitations for firefighters’ :

“The federal government and some state governments have said they will provide eligible volunteer firefighters with up to \$300 per day capped at a total of \$6000 as compensation for time off work to fight bushfires, but firies can only claim from day 11 and the hours spent on patrol must align with their normal working hours...This means if a volunteer firefighter normally works from 9am to 5pm, but is out fighting blazes from midday to midnight, they can only claim five hours’ pay.”

Occupational health and safety concerns:

The Australian Council of Trade Unions issued a December call for change in “**Laws must adapt to keep workers safe in changing climate**”, focussed on the occupational health and safety issues of extreme heat and smoke for all workers. Their call for change was accompanied by two Fact Sheets: **Smoke Haze – Bushfires and Air Quality** and **Working in Heat**. Another important occupational health issue, the emotional and psychological toll of such disasters, is described in “**Black Saturday firefighters want you to listen to them, not call them ‘heroes’**” from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Jan. 3).

On January 7, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) released **this statement and call for government action** :

“No workers should ever be required to work in dangerous environments. Smoke levels are well beyond the hazardous range in huge areas of the country. Any workers, especially those who work outside, who have concerns about their safety should contact their union.

Workers should be aware that the NES provides for unpaid leave for the full period of time that workers are engaged in volunteer firefighting or other emergency service work. Union negotiated Enterprise Bargaining Agreements will also often provide additional paid leave provisions.

In some circumstances, workers will also be able to access personal leave if they are unable to return to work due to being evacuated or having nowhere to live, for instance if they or a family member have suffered mental or physical

injury as a result of the fires.

Under no circumstances can a worker or their employer already dealing with this devastating crisis face the added insult of being left without an income or a bill they cannot pay for a service they have not used or received.

To make sure this happens, the Federal Government's response needs to make it clear that everyone impacted by this crisis is entitled to support and assistance and should not be left worse off. This should include ensuring that there is comprehensive relief from debt repayments, mortgages and utility bills while families get back on their feet.

Any worker who faces issues with their bank, other lending institutions or who is fired from their job due to the fallout from these fires should immediately contact their union."

The ACTU has established a [Bushfire Relief Fund here](#) , where donations can be made to support union members who may need more than the government support, and another campaign, [here](#), for Australians to volunteer their skills and time in the rebuilding effort. The National Construction Division of the CFMEU also announced their own \$100,000 donation to the bushfire recovery effort in [a press release](#) .



A few other recommended articles about the Australian Bushfires : from *The Guardian*, "[We are seeing the very worst of our scientific predictions come to pass in these bushfires](#)" (Jan. 3); "[Australia's fires have pumped out more emissions than 100 nations combined](#)" (MIT Technology Review, Jan. 10) ; "[Terror, hope, anger, kindness: the complexity of life as we face the new normal](#)" (Jan. 11, *The Guardian*); "[In Australia, the air poses a threat; people are rushing to hospitals in cities choked by smoke](#)" (*Washington Post*, Jan. 12); "[Australia's bushfires offer heated view into longstanding misinformation on climate change](#)" (*National Observer*, Jan. 7); "[Bushfire emergency leads thousands to protest against PM and climate change policies](#)" (Australian Broadcasting Corp.,Jan. 10) , and the latest political development: "[Scott Morrison to take proposal for bushfire royal commission to Cabinet](#) " reported on January 12 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, also reported as "[Australia's Leader Calls for Inquiry Into Government Response to Fires](#)" in the *New York Times* (Jan. 12).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [firefighters](#), [forest fires](#), [labour union policies](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Unifor's campaign to defend Northern Pulp mill jobs in Nova Scotia

Posted on **January 10, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A January 8 general news release, "[Nova Scotian forestry workers already struggling as Northern Pulp prepares to close](#)" summarizes the union's position in a quote from Atlantic Region Director Linda MacNeil: "We all agreed Boat Harbour had to close. That closure did not have to come at the cost of thousands of rural jobs – there was a solution for the mill to coexist, but there was no political will from McNeil to make it happen Our members and other forestry workers are not the ones responsible for any wrong-doing here. ... They deserve better than to be blamed and sacrificed due to the government's lack of leadership, consultation or clear regulatory expectations."

The context:

The "years of controversy" over the Northern Pulp mill is summarized in a [Backgrounder in the Halifax Chronicle Herald](#) on December 10 2019, published just before the government of Nova Scotia announced that it would enforce a 2015 law which would require the mill to stop pumping effluent in Boat Harbour. [Paper Excellence Canada](#), the owner of the Northern Pulp mill, stated almost immediately that it would close the mill, but apparently the years of controversy are not over yet. As reported on January 9 in "[NS effluent dumping mill to move ahead with environmental process](#)" in the *National Observer*, Paper Excellence has issued a new statement: "Our team is currently focused on supporting our employees, developing plans for a safe and environmentally responsible hibernation, and working with the government of Nova Scotia and stakeholders to determine next steps."

Unifor's role in the controversy:

Unifor represents approximately 230 workers at the mill and has been actively engaged in advocating to protect its members' jobs by allowing the mill owners, Excellence Paper, to improve the environmental performance of the mill by building a new effluent treatment plant. Unifor's [Save Northern Pulp Jobs](#) campaign includes "[Why Mill Jobs Matter](#)" as a summary; in early 2019, the union commissioned [a detailed economic impact study](#) by consultants Gardner Pinfold which makes the case for the "keystone" importance of the mill in the region, profiling major businesses from the supply chain of 1,379 companies associated with the mill operation, and estimating that the mill accounts for approximately 2,679 full-time equivalent jobs, earning approximately \$128 million annually. (Note that Gardner Pinfold completed [an earlier economic impact study](#) for the industry group, Forest Nova Scotia, in 2016).

An ongoing series of [Updates](#) chronicle how Unifor has participated in the provincial environmental assessment process and in direct advocacy for their membership. The [January 3 update](#) reports to members on interactions with government, stating: "the best course of action for a viable and continued forest industry in the province is with Northern Pulp continuing to operate. We reiterated that the \$50 million should be used to assist all workers in the industry through a temporary shutdown of the mill to facilitate the construction of Northern Pulp's new effluent treatment facility (ETF)... We also suggested the idea of a third-party expert who could serve as intermediary between government regulators and the company to establish a firm and fair process and timelines for the necessary approvals to take place for construction of the ETF."

The update also states: "Premier McNeil announced a \$50 million transition fund for forestry workers that was of particular interest during the meeting, especially since the fund was never mentioned to the union, or anyone else, prior to his December 20 decision."

Work and Climate Change Report has summarized the \$50 million [Forestry Transition Fund here](#).

Further documentation: The March 2019 submission of Unifor Atlantic Region to the provincial Environmental Assessment process is [here](#), included in a compilation of all submissions; comments by Unifor's National Office to the environmental assessment process in October 2019 appears [here](#) (around page 14).

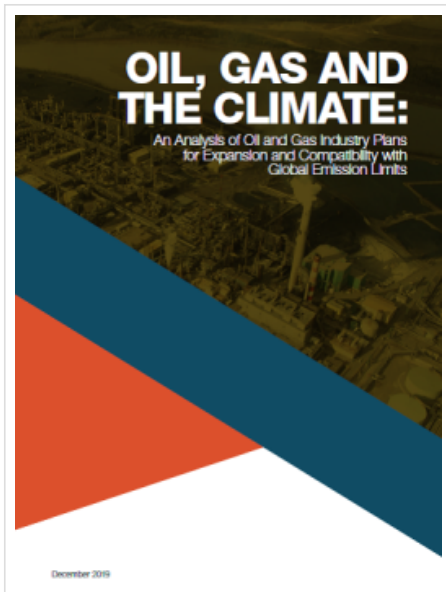


Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Environmental Justice](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [labour and the environment](#), [labour union policies](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Phase-out, not expansion of fossil fuels – some recommendations for Canada

Posted on **January 8, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Oil, Gas and the Climate: An Analysis of Oil and Gas Industry Plans for Expansion and Compatibility with Global Emission Limits was published by the Global Gas and



Oil Network (GGON) in December 2019. The report analyzes the expansion plans of the oil and gas industry in relation to the global Paris climate goal of a 1.5C warming limit, and concludes that “if the world uses all the oil and gas from the fields and mines already in production, it will push us beyond 1.5°C of warming. This is true even if global coal use were phased out overnight, and if cement emissions were drastically reduced.” This report is the latest to sound this alarm: for example, Oil Change International, part of the GGON , began to publish such warnings in 2016 with *The Sky’s Limit: Why the Paris Climate Goals Require a Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production* , followed by *Drilling towards Disaster* in 2019.

Oil, Gas and the Climate states that from now until 2024, oil and gas companies are set to invest a further \$1.4 trillion U.S. in new oil and gas extraction projects – with 85% of that expansion in North America, and with the impact of the U.S. alone putting a 2 degree warming target out of reach. Further, it states that over 90% of U.S. expansion would be shale production dependent on fracking. It highlights that the Permian Basin (west Texas and southeastern New Mexico) would account for 39% of new U.S. oil and gas production by 2050. “It holds the greatest risk for new oil and gas development in the United States and in the world.”

Projected Canadian investment is a distant second to that of the U.S., but even so, the report states that “new oil and gas development in Canada between now and 2050 could unlock an additional 25 GtCO₂, more than doubling cumulative emissions from the sector.” The report highlights the approved Exxon Aspen Oil Sands project and the pending Teck Frontier Mine, but warns “...Shale gas extraction, particularly the Montney Shale Basin in British Columbia, is a major focus of the industry...From 2020 to 2050, new gas projects could be responsible for as much CO₂ as new oil projects.” (For a recent overview of the extent of Canada’s LNG infrastructure, see ***The New Gas Boom***, published by Global Energy Monitor in June 2019).

“A better future is possible”, and here’s how to get there:

Despite the grim projections, ***Oil, Gas and the Climate*** argues that “a better future is possible” and calls for “the launch of a well-planned phase-out of oil and gas production that addresses the needs of workers and communities impacted by fossil fuel developments.” The report recognizes the impact of recent civil society actions such as Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion, and calls on governments and investors to catch up with such leadership.

Based on the findings of the report, **Environmental Defence makes the following recommendations** to support Canada’s phase-out:

Clear new federal rules under our environmental assessment law that review possible expansions of oil and gas projects against our commitment to climate goals. If we cannot credibly demonstrate how investing in a fossil fuel project is consistent with a 1.5C warmed world then the project should not be permitted to go ahead.

Institutional investors should apply a similar screen that will guide their decisions regarding whether to provide financing for new projects.

The federal government must invest in research and development of new energy technologies like geothermal electricity that have huge employment and energy production opportunities in places like Alberta and northern British Columbia. At a minimum, the government should make available an amount equivalent to the billions in subsidies that have been given to the fossil fuel industry through tax breaks or direct investment in pipeline infrastructure (e.g. Trans-Mountain) – subsidies that should be phased out rapidly. Success will create skills-linked jobs and massive supply of electrical energy for export to a North America that must replace the energy of fossil fuels.

Domestic demand for fossil fuels must be rapidly driven down through improved efficiency (e.g. buildings, appliances, manufacturing), electrifying transportation and home heating and increased renewables generation and storage.

The ***Oil, Gas and the Climate*** report is a project of the **Global Gas and Oil Network**, supported by Oil Change International; 350.org; Center for Biological Diversity; Center for International Environmental Law; CAN-Rac Canada; Earthworks; Environmental Defence Canada; Fundacin Ambiente y Recursos Naturales:FARN; Global Witness; Greenpeace; Friends of the Earth Netherlands (Milieudefensie); Naturvernforbundet; Observatorio Petrolero Sur; Overseas Development Institute; Platform; Sierra Club; Stand.Earth.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Budget, Energy policy, fossil fuel industry, Oil and gas industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadians favour a shift away from oil and gas, 68% support federal help for worker transition

Posted on January 7, 2020 by elizabethperry493



An online survey was conducted by Abacus Data in mid- December 2019 to gauge opinion about an energy transition and compare attitudes in Alberta with those in the rest of Canada. The summary was posted to the [Abacus website](#) on January 3 and to Clean Energy Canada, which commissioned the survey, [here](#) . Based on responses from a random sample of 1,848 adults, a majority of Canadians and Albertans recognize that energy transition is a global issue and a necessary development, although in Alberta, only 49% see it as beneficial for the province in the long-term.

Further insights:

72% across Canada, and 60% in Alberta would prefer to see Alberta's economy shift over time because "global demand will change and Alberta will be left behind if the province is more dependent on oil."

40% of Albertans want their Premier to "reject the idea of an energy shift and promote growth in Alberta's oil sector." (Nationally, only 32% support promoting Alberta's oil sector).

57% of Albertans said an energy transition should be done more slowly or not at all, and 45% see it as intended to punish Alberta's workers.

Nationally, 68% of respondents support federal government help for Alberta's workers seeking new opportunities. In Alberta, only 49% support such federal help for transitioning workers, while 51% want the federal government to help grow the province's oil sector.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [attitudes to climate change](#), [Energy policy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [public opinion polls](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Energy Centre: promoting the message that "Canadian oil and natural gas can make this country and the world better"

Posted on January 7, 2020 by elizabethperry493



On December 11, the Alberta government of Jason Kenney launched its “rapid-response war room” – deceptively called the Canadian Energy Centre – using \$30 million to argue for the benefits of the oil and gas industry and attack any criticism as “misinformation”. By January 6, in [an article in the *Edmonton Journal*](#), the provincial NDP party reviews the agency’s performance to date and calls for it to be shut down. Chris Turner also describes the inept launch of the CEC in an [Opinion piece in the *National Observer*](#), calling it a “\$30 million bonfire”, and the criticism reaches its peak in [“The Silly, Scary Truth about Alberta’s New Ministry of Truth”](#) by Andrew Nikofoeruk in *The Tyee* (Jan. 1) .

Despite the ridicule and criticism it has earned, the publicly-funded Canadian Energy Centre continues to post supportive, good news stories about Teck’s Frontier oil sands mine, the Trans Mountain pipeline, Enbridge Line 3, Coastal GasLink, and more – using its [Twitter account](#) with almost 5,000 followers, [Facebook](#), and its [web site](#) . Readers should be aware that in an unguarded moment in an [interview with Global News](#), CEO Tom Olsen explained: “*We are not about attacking, we are about disproving true facts.*”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and Gas Lobby](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

\$50 million Forestry Transition Fund to retrain and support workers following closure of Nova Scotia’s polluting Northern Pulp plant – Updated

Posted on **January 6, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

This blog has been updated on January 10 to reflect the company announcement that a new environmental assessment process may yet keep the mill alive. It also expands on Unifor’s position in supporting the mill and the opposition by environmental groups and First Nations.

After years of controversy, Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil **announced** on December 20 that the province will enforce a January 31 2020 deadline for B.C.-owned Northern Pulp plant to stop pumping effluent in Boat Harbour, near Pictou Landing First Nation. The deadline had been set by legislation in 2015, and will not be extended, despite the company’s threat to shut down the mill. Acknowledging the job loss and economic hardship which will result from the decision, the Premier’s announcement included a \$50-million transition fund for forestry sector workers and businesses “to support displaced workers across the province, small contractors and all those whose livelihoods will be affected. The transition fund will be used for retraining and education, and for emergency funding to help those in immediate need.” On January 3, the Premier’s Office **announced** the composition of the Forestry Transition Team. A previous announcement had designated the provincial deputy minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade as the team lead; members announced on January 3 include more government representatives as well as industry management – noticeably absent, any worker representation.

After the first meeting of the Forestry Transition Team, [CBC reports](#) that the government has fired an industry member. The Premier **has announced** \$7 million to assist silviculture and forest road building operations in the central and western regions of the province . The [January 10 article](#) in the *National Observer* also states that the Premier is working to ensure the stability and accessibility of the mill’s pension plan .

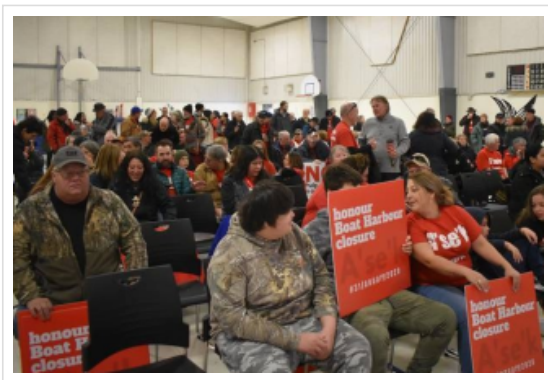
Company enters new environmental assessment process which may yet keep the mill alive

On January 10, [an article in the National Observer](#) reported on a statement by [Paper Excellence Canada](#), the owner of the Northern Pulp mill: ... “Our team is currently focused on supporting our employees, developing plans for a safe and environmentally responsible hibernation, and working with the government of Nova Scotia and stakeholders to determine next steps.” Plant closure has been at least temporarily averted as the company has informed the government that it will continue the environmental assessment process for its proposed effluent treatment plant. In response, the Nova Scotia Environment Ministry [released draft Terms of Reference](#) for that assessment on January 8, giving the public and government reviewers 30 days to comment on the draft. Following a period for company response, the terms of reference will be provided by early April, and the company will be given another two years to complete the environmental assessment report. The government webpage dedicated to the environmental assessment is [here](#), providing the new draft terms of reference, how to make a submission, and an archive of past documentation in this long-running project.

Opposing viewpoints in a long controversy

The *Halifax Chronicle Herald* has published many articles describing the long history and competing interests in this dispute, for example in [a Timeline of the dispute](#); [“Nova Scotia sticks to Boat Harbour deadline; Northern Pulp confirms shutdown”](#); and [“Northern Pulp mill will close without extension to Boat Harbour Act, company says”](#) (Dec. 19).

Unifor, which represents 230 workers at Northern Pulp in Local 444, has maintained an ongoing [Save Northern Pulp Jobs campaign](#), described in WCR’s separate [blog post](#). After the government’s December 20 announcement, the union issued a press release, [“Premier McNeil throws away 2,700 rural jobs in Nova Scotia”](#). Another press release on [January 3](#) is more detailed, reporting to members on subsequent interactions with government, and stating: “the best course of action for a viable and continued forest industry in the province is with Northern Pulp continuing to operate. We reiterated that the \$50 million should be used to assist all workers in the industry through a temporary shutdown of the mill to facilitate the construction of Northern Pulp’s new effluent treatment facility (ETF)... We also suggested the idea of a third-party expert who could serve as intermediary between government regulators and the company to establish a firm and fair process and timelines for the necessary approvals to take place for construction of the ETF.”



In contrast to Unifor’s support for the company’s proposal for an alternate effluent treatment plant, which was rejected in a provincial environmental assessment on December 17, it had been [widely opposed](#) – by the Pictou Landing First Nation, as well as [fishermen’s associations](#) from all three Maritime provinces, tourism operators, cottagers, boaters and others whose livelihoods would be affected by the proposed dumping of treated effluent into the Northumberland Strait.

Environmental advocacy and First Nations groups also oppose the mill. [“Northern Pulp decision validates rights, First Nations lawyer says”](#) summarizes the position of the Pictou Landing First Nations and praises the Premier’s courage in “righting an injustice spanning five decades.” And while acknowledging the hardship ahead for forestry workers, the [Ecology Action Centre of Nova Scotia calls](#) the decision “courageous” and “forward-thinking”, saying: “For the [first time in Nova Scotia’s history](#), a government has said no to a pulp mill’s coercive demands in defence of environmental protection, Indigenous rights and human health. It is a watershed moment — a turn away from the old ways of allowing mass extraction and the pollution of the air, land and water. This decision could mark the start of a new, cleaner future and a livable planet for our descendants.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Boat Harbour](#), [Environmental Protection](#), [First Nations](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Water pollution](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Historic European Green New Deal includes funding for a Just Transition Mechanism

Posted on **December 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



New European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented the **European Green Deal** on December 11 ([here on YouTube](#)), calling it “Europe’s man on the moon moment”. The 10 key points are outlined [here](#), with the flagship commitment that the EU will aim to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, a goal that will be enshrined in a ‘Climate Law’ to be presented in March 2020. To achieve net-zero, EU’s ambitions must rise to a 50-55% cut in greenhouse gas emissions, replacing the current 40% objective.

In “**Europe’s Green New Deal**”, Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University writes for Project Syndicate that it “is the first comprehensive plan to achieve sustainable development in any major world region. As such, it becomes a global benchmark – a “how-to” guide for planning the transformation to a prosperous, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable economy.” [Clean Energy Wire compiles reaction](#) from German politicians, NGO’s and think tanks: reactions are mixed – like Sachs, most commend the symbolic and political achievement of the EU statement, while tempering their enthusiasm with concerns for implementation details. [An article in The Guardian](#) also summarizes the deal with some sense of the opposition and difficulties ahead.

The [Euractiv summary](#) quotes EU Commissioner von der Leyen on the proposal for a Just Transition Mechanism: “We have the ambition to mobilise €100 billion precisely targeted to the most vulnerable regions and sectors” and describes the initiative as having three “legs”: 1. A just transition fund that will mobilise resources from the EU’s regional policy budget; 2. An “InvestEU” programme, with money coming from the European Investment Bank (EIB); and 3. EIB funding coming from the EU bank’s own capital. The EU Commission website provides [Details of the Just Transition Mechanism](#) for download.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [EU](#), [Green New Deal Europe](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Redefining green jobs to include healthcare and educational workers in the Green New Deal

Posted on **December 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A thoughtful new contribution to the “green jobs” debate comes in *Re-defining Green Jobs for a Sustainable Economy*, released by The Century Foundation, in cooperation with Data for Progress, on December 2. Co-author Greg Carlock is currently Senior Fellow and Research Director for Climate at Data for Progress, and was one of the authors of the original visioning document *A Green New Deal*, published in 2018 and leading to the current U.S. movement launched by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. **Data for Progress** continues to monitor public opinion and publish important contributions to the Green New Deal debate – in November, exploring the issue of a Green New Deal for Public Housing.

Re-defining Green Jobs for a Sustainable Economy outlines an interesting history of the “green jobs” definition and measurement in the U.S., but the main purpose of the report is to propose an expanded definition and framework of green jobs which would encompass the principles of equity and sustainability. Ultimately, the report recommends how an expanded definition can be integrated into U.S. public policy.

Perhaps most importantly, *Re-defining Green Jobs for a Sustainable Economy* focuses in detail on demonstrating why health care and educational workers should be considered as part of the green workforce, stating that including them in the green workforce definition “would go a long way toward gender and racial equity, and toward ensuring all workers green, family-sustaining jobs.”

An expanded definition of a green job, from the report:

“A green job should refer to any position that is part of the sustainability workforce: a job that contributes to preserving or enhancing the well-being, culture, and governance of both current and future generations, as well as regenerating the natural resources and ecosystems upon which they rely. And in order for green jobs themselves to be sustainable, they need to be good, living-wage jobs.... These green job occupations stand in contrast to work—even decent-paying work—in industries that result in the depletion or degradation of ecological systems and the social, cultural, and political institutions that support them.”

Posted in **Government Policy, United States** | Tagged **Education, Green Jobs, Green New Deal, health care professionals, teachers** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian government commits to a Just Transition Act, but COP25 deemed a failure



The 25th gathering of the UN Conference of the Parties (COP25) took place from December 2 to 15 in Madrid, and despite **official UN press releases** and statements (curated by IIDS [here](#)), a general feeling of frustration was present almost immediately. Early on, Greta Thunberg labelled the meetings “clever accounting and creative PR” in [her speech to delegates](#). Demonstrations and discontent by youth, Indigenous, and other civil society activists on December 11 are [described by Common Dreams](#); [an article in The Guardian newspaper](#) describes the “unfortunate security incident” on December 11 when civil society demonstrators were expelled by COP security guards. The article quotes #FridaysForFuture member Angela Valenzuela, who stated that the rough treatment was typical of the treatment of women, Indigenous people, and workers in a COP process dominated by government officials and corporate



vested interests. “The doors closed in our faces were a very powerful metaphor for what is happening here and what has happened for the last 25 years”. Reinforcing this theme, Common Dreams highlights new research by Corporate Accountability, [The Big Polluters Bankrolling COP25](#), which names the corporations sponsoring and lobbying COP25 and concludes: “Enough is enough — we cannot let corporations use the climate talks as a marketing campaign to greenwash without accountability.”

In the end, after the longest sessions in COP’s long history, the final result achieved nothing regarding the main purpose: international carbon markets and greater ambition for national emissions reductions targets. The Canadian [government official press release](#) casts a positive light on the results, and general reaction and summary appears in *The Guardian* in [“The UN climate talks are over for another year – was anything achieved?”](#). [Good COP Bad COP](#) by Kate Aronoff and David Adler was published by Data for Progress on December 11, with a detailed summary of the proceedings from a U.S. point of view. *Inside Climate News* explains the carbon markets discussion in [UN Climate Talks Stymied by Carbon Markets’ ‘Ghost from the Past’](#).

Canadian headlines reflect strong disappointment:

Even mainstream Toronto *Globe and Mail* states: [“Madrid climate talks end in near failure as crucial decisions are bumped into 2020”](#) (Dec. 15). In *The National Observer* Chris Hatch and Barry Saxifrage ask [“Global climate summit. COP or Cop-out?”](#) on Dec. 12, followed by [“UN climate negotiations end in ‘demoralizing, enraging’ failure”](#) on Dec. 15. In *The Energy Mix*: [“U.S. Declared ‘Climate Criminal’ as ‘Stalemated’ COP 25 Limpers to a Close”](#) (Dec. 13) and [“Disgraceful COP 25 Shows Big Emitters ‘Betraying People Across the World’ in The Energy Mix](#) (Dec. 16).

Climate Action Network Canada compiled statements from some of its member organizations on December 15 under this headline: [“COP25 derailed as polluters prioritized over people and planet”](#). Among the statements:

from **Catherine Abreu, Executive Director of Climate Action Network Canada** : On every issue of significance, COP25 has delivered a mediocre or non -outcome that betrays the millions of people around the world calling for real climate action. While Canadian negotiators were largely constructive on the ground, Canada has a lot of work to do at home to address the gap between its climate goals and its ongoing commitment to expand the fossil fuel industry, which got a lot of international attention here in Madrid. Minister Wilkinson must increase Canada's climate finance contributions and deliver on his government's election promise to bring a new, more ambitious Paris pledge to COP26 in 2020."

Dale Marshall, National Climate Program Manager, Environmental Defence Canada

"It wasn't just that the COP25 outcome was a disaster. It was also demoralizing and enraging to see countries erase human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, not only in the text but in reality, and erode the environmental integrity of the Paris Agreement. It will be up to people in Canada and around the world to continue to mobilize and push governments to take real climate action."

Denis Bolduc, secretary general of the FTQ (Quebec Federation of Workers)

"We see once again the lack of ambition of States to respond to the climate emergency. The Quebec Federation of Workers (FTQ) demands that the voices of billions of people be heard. We demand a robust framework in which the Just Transition can take place. Workers and their communities must be at the heart of the solutions. Only a social dialogue where everyone has an equal voice will allow us to get out of this crisis. Although the states failed to answer the call, the FTQ joins all the groups of civil society to implement a real energy transition. What we want is a Just Transition and there will be no Just Transition without the workers."

Julee Sanderson, 1st National Vice-President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers

"... Stuck in the past and unwilling to act on ambitions, governments that have aligned themselves with industry and capital have shown once again how simple it is to sidestep responsibility. In the face of all humanity and on a global stage it appears marching orders have come from the petroleum industry lobbyists rather than the millions watching from around the globe. Governments have managed to commit only to infinite growth and colonialism models. It is evident the message of civil society, its workers, its youth, its scientists, human rights groups, and Indigenous land, water, and air protectors have been inconvenient afterthoughts. Civil society must redouble its efforts on the front lines. There can be no ambition without human rights and a sustainable just transition for everyone."

Labour achieves public promise of a Just Transition Act from Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change



The [Canadian Labour Congress Twitter feed](#) has been active in posting – especially December 11 events regarding the Workshop on Just Transition. Sharing the stage with CLC's Tara Peel, Canada's New Minister of Environment and Climate Change publicly committed to the election promise of federal legislation: a Just Transition Act at that event.

CLC Twitter feed also highlights the [Powering Past Coal Just Transition Task Force](#), launched in July 2019 with these [Terms of Reference](#). This is an international group, unrelated to the Government of Canada's Just Transition Task Force which has already reported. Members include academics, including Linda Clarke, (ProBE, University of Westminster and Co-Director, ACW) and Lori Thortakson (University of Alberta) as well as unionists, including Hassan Yussuff, (president of the Canadian Labour Congress), Samantha Smith (ITUC Just Transition Centre), Bill Adams (Trades Union Congress), Suzanne Jeffreys (One Million Climate Jobs/Campaign against Climate Change).

During COP25, the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) released a new series of three Backgrounders with the theme: [We must all be part of the solution on climate change](#). The series consists of: [Governments must take Action](#); [The Public Sector will be Part of the Solution](#), and [The National Union will be Part of the Solution](#), the union's commitment for its own action, as presented at the 2019 Triennial NUPGE Convention in June 2019.



Internationally, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) maintained a [COP25 blog](#). Going into the meetings, the ITUC [Topline Demands for COP25](#) were published as a Frontline Briefing. They consist of "1. Greater ambition for Just Transition, with greater ambition in the new government climate plans, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that are due in 2020; 2. Governments must sign on to the "[Climate Action and Jobs Initiative](#)" launched at the September 2019 Climate Action Summit in New York in September 2019; 3. Commit to financing for the most vulnerable: governments must live up to their promise to mobilise US \$100 billion annually by 2020."

From the ITUC [Frontline Briefing](#):

"Our message for all country leaders: we have just 10 years. Talking is no longer enough – ambition and Just Transition plans are urgent to secure the trust of people in every nation. • Stop the delaying measures, increase ambition in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) • Start implementing the social dialogue vital for agreements that deliver Just Transition for all. • Legislate for climate action including procurement rules. • Green New Deals must mean a new social contract in every country with labour rights, climate ambition and Just Transition at the core."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [COP25](#), [International cooperation](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [Just Transition](#), [Just Transition Act](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Philippines Human Rights Commission delivers landmark decision, holding the Carbon Majors accountable for climate damages – Updated

Posted on [December 12, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Human Rights Commission of the Philippines has concluded its three-year investigation of a complaint led by Greenpeace South-East Asia, and has found that the collective contribution to global heating by 47 coal, cement, and oil and gas companies has violated Filipinos' basic human rights to life, water, food, sanitation, adequate housing and self-determination. Although the full decision is not yet available – but promised by the end of 2019 – the announcement made by one of the Commissioners at the COP25 meetings stated that it would be up to individual countries to pass strong

legislation and establish legal liability in their own courts, but that “there was clear scope under existing civil law in the Philippines to take action.”

The Director of Greenpeace Philippines is quoted in the [Greenpeace press release](#):

“The findings are a landmark victory for communities around the world who are at the frontlines of the climate emergency. This is the first ever finding of corporate responsibility for human rights harms resulting from the climate crisis. The outcome goes beyond the Philippines and can reach every single human being alive or yet to be born. However, this is only the beginning. We believe the findings provide very strong basis not just for future legal actions against big polluters, but also for citizens and communities to confront inaction by companies and governments in the streets and in the hallways of power.”

Greenpeace maintains [an archive of documents](#) related to this long-running investigation, including corporate responses and expert opinions. *Climate Liability News* has published a number of articles, including [“Carbon Majors Can Be Held Liable for Human Rights Violations, Philippines Commission Rules”](#) and [“Philippines Climate Case Could Find Fossil Fuel Companies Violate Human Rights”](#) (2017), which provides more background to the case.

Update: On December 18, *The Tyee* published [“Oilsands Firms ‘Morally Responsible’ for Deaths and Destruction from Climate Disasters”](#), an interview by Geoff Demicki with Greenpeace’s Naderev Yeb Saño, which “explains what a Philippines human rights investigation means for the fossil fuel industry in Canada.”



Related: An authoritative chronicling of the human rights dimension in UNFCCC decisions and the Paris Agreement appears in [Rights in a Changing Climate](#) by the Centre for International Environmental Law, published on December 5. It includes examples of Just Transition and decent work. The CIEL also operates a Working Group on Climate Rights, with a dedicated website [here](#).

Updates on climate litigation:

[“Fossil Fuels on Trial: Where the Major Climate Change Lawsuits Stand Today”](#) was published by *Inside Climate News* on November 29, providing a good sum-up of the year, but too early to reflect the landmark Philippines decision, nor the December 10 decision in the suit by the New York Attorney General against Exxon. The surprising victory for Exxon is described in [“Judge Clears Exxon in Investor Fraud Case Over Climate Risk Disclosure”](#) in *Inside Climate News*, as well as in a [New York Times article](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Change Liability](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Human Rights](#), [natural disasters](#), [Philippines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Newly-elected government in Canada outlines its climate priorities; faces first major test in the

Frontier mine decision

Posted on **December 11, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Canada's minority government is back in session after the October 2019 election, launched by the ***Speech from the Throne*** on December 5. The Throne Speech traditionally is used to outline government priorities, and signals that Justin Trudeau and his Liberal party will try to stay in power by balancing the demands of the oil and gas proponents in Alberta against the environmental concerns of the rest of the country. The *Toronto Star* parsed the speech in "**What does it mean? The Throne Speech Interpreted**".

On the issue of climate change, here are the actual words of the Throne Speech:

"In this election, Parliamentarians received a mandate from the people of Canada which Ministers will carry out. It is a mandate to fight climate change, strengthen the middle class, walk the road of reconciliation, keep Canadians safe and healthy, and position Canada for success in an uncertain world."... A clear majority of Canadians voted for ambitious climate action now. And that is what the Government will deliver. It will continue to protect the environment and preserve Canada's natural legacy. And it will do so in a way that grows the economy and makes life more affordable.

The Government will set a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This goal is ambitious, but necessary – for both environmental protection and economic growth.

The Government will continue to lead in ensuring a price on pollution everywhere in this country, working with partners to further reduce emissions.

The Government will also:

help to make energy efficient homes more affordable, and introduce measures to build clean, efficient, and affordable communities;

make it easier for people to choose zero-emission vehicles;

work to make clean, affordable power available in every Canadian community;

work with businesses to make Canada the best place to start and grow a clean technology company; and

provide help for people displaced by climate-related disasters.

The Government will also act to preserve Canada's natural legacy, protecting 25 percent of Canada's land and 25 percent of Canada's oceans by 2025. Further, it will continue efforts to reduce plastic pollution, and use nature-based solutions to fight climate change – including planting two billion trees to clean the air and make our communities greener.

And while the Government takes strong action to fight climate change, it will also work just as hard to get Canadian resources to new markets, and offer unwavering support to the hardworking women and men in Canada's natural

resources sectors, many of whom have faced tough times recently.”

Reaction from environmentalists and Opposition party leaders appeared in the *National Observer*, in “[Liberals commit to carbon-pollution target of net-zero by 2050](#)” (Dec. 5); and in “[Throne speech climate commitments dwarfed by spending on Trans Mountain](#)” by the Dogwood Institute .

The Canadian Labour Congress [reacted](#) with this generally supportive statement: “We need bold targets to fight climate change, we owe that to our children “We also owe the next generation good jobs and commitments to minimize the impact on workers. Today’s commitments move us towards a greener economy.” In advance of the Throne Speech, [the Green Economy Network](#), a union network of which the CLC is one member, had made a harder-hitting statement: “The GEN is demanding that the Prime Minister make climate job creation a priority through investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and green buildings, public transit and higher speed rail transit.”

Also in advance of the Throne Speech, a group led by the Smart Prosperity Initiative [delivered an Open Letter](#) outlining detailed demands for clean economy initiatives. The twenty-six signatories include leaders from business, environmental advocacy groups, and the United Steelworkers and BlueGreen Canada.

One of the first major tests for the minority government, should it last that long, will be the decision required by the end of February on whether to approve the application by Teck Resources for the massive Frontier oil sands project – a \$20-billion, 260,000-barrel-per-day open-pit petroleum-mining project near Fort McKay in northern Alberta. The [Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency website](#) provides official documentation, including the July 2019 [Joint Review Panel Report](#) , which includes discussion of the economic and employment impacts of the project (beginning page 883). Critiques of the Joint Review Panel approval were published in July by *The Narwhal* [here](#) and the Pembina Institute [here](#) .

And now, as Parliament reconvenes and the COP25 meetings are underway, the Frontier mine is becoming the litmus test of Canada’s climate change policy, as laid out in “[Trudeau will fuel the fires of our climate crisis if he approves Canada’s mega mine](#)”, an Opinion piece by Tzeporah Berman which appeared in *The Guardian* on December 10. Also on December 10, Greta Thunberg and fourteen other young people released an Open Letter to government leaders of Canada and Norway, calling on them to block any new oil and gas projects and quickly phase out existing ones. The *National Observer* explains in “[Greta Thunberg and other youth call on Trudeau to ditch fossil fuels](#)” (Dec.9) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change policies](#), [Frontier Mine](#), [Green Economy](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to communicate “Just Transition” to union members and communities

Posted on [December 10, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Climate Outreach](#), a U.K.-based organization of social scientists and communication specialists, has published new research, summarized in the handbook for a general audience, [How to Have Conversations about Climate Change](#), released on December 5. An earlier handbook released in September was aimed at NGO’s, policymakers and academics who seek to communicate better about Just Transition. [Broadening engagement with Just Transition: Opportunities and Challenges](#) is an 18-page handbook with practical recommendations for the language and imagery which reaches people across the political and economic spectrum – with very specific attention to union members. It is based from experience since 2010, including 55 workshops in Alberta in 2017 (7 of which were with oil workers), and interviews with UK union leaders about just transition in 2019. The full reports concerning the Alberta Narratives project is [here](#).

Recommendations from [Broadening engagement with Just Transition](#) include:

....The idea of just transition prompts negative reactions amongst some union representatives, who see it as a conversation about job losses, with little realistic chance of recompense.

.... In previous testing, the imagery and language of 'justice' has not resonated well across the political spectrum with centre-right audiences, suggesting that 'just transition' may prompt the same response. The subtly different framing of 'fairness' may work better with people who hold these values. Fairness is about doing right by everyone involved; justice, by contrast, may imply wrongdoing in the past that must be atoned for.

...People's sense of identity is often closely bound up with the work they do. Extractive industries like coal mining are often, for example, closely associated with pride and a strong sense of place. Demonstrating gratitude and respect for the contribution of fossil fuels can create a strong basis for mutual discussion in the future – with renewables and natural resources as an extension of that pride.

....When people feel criticised and devalued, they are much less likely to engage. Approaching a conversation without a sense of blame is an important part of a productive dialogue.

....Many communities are turned off by the imagery and stereotypes associated with environmentalism, and will speak more openly with trusted members of their own community. In successful communications, trust between all parties is essential.

A good Canadian example of some of these principles recently appeared on the CBC website in the form of an OpEd by Rylan Higgins, now a professor at St. Mary's University in Halifax, but formerly an oil worker. He writes about his experiences in the oil fields in **"It's pretty brutal, pretty unforgiving': Why the West should move beyond an oilpatch economy"** (Nov. 15), and argues that the fossil industry has "long been one based on inequality, bootstrap individualism, and high-octane opportunism." Importantly, he urges those working to transition Canada into the green economy "to consider the workers and families in the industry as we do so." He adds that "the next economic arrangement should put workers [to whom he "tips his hard hat"], families, and the environment first—and investors and corporate bigwigs last."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change in the Media](#), [communicating climate change](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Australian companies are moving to renewable energy to meet employee expectations for climate action

Posted on **December 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



REenergising Australian business: the corporate race to 100% renewable energy was released by Greenpeace Australia Pacific on December 4.

Drawing on public information as well as 34 responses to a survey sent to 80 “big-brand” companies, the report presents analysis of the corporate move to renewable energy, covering seven major industry sectors, as well as case studies of individual companies. Of the 80 companies profiled: 30% have committed to move to 100% renewable energy ; 26% have signed a corporate power purchase agreement , and 65% have invested in rooftop or onsite solar.

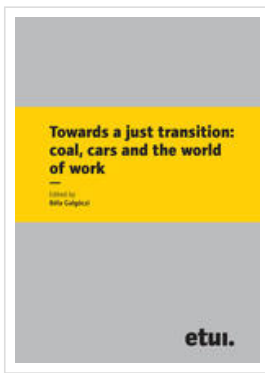
Regarding job creation: The report estimates the impact if companies moved to 100% renewable energy to power their operations: for 3 of Australia’s largest companies (Woolworths, Coles and Telstra) it would create 4194 construction job-years and 232 ongoing jobs ; the 10 largest companies in the property and construction sector would create more than 1000 construction job-years, and the 14 largest telecommunications, IT, and technology companies would create around 2000 construction job-years.

What is driving the corporate move to renewables? “The UComms polling found 67% of Australians would prefer to work for a company that uses renewable energy, rather than one that doesn’t, while 100% of companies surveyed by Greenpeace reported that a key reason for shifting to renewable energy is employee expectation. In 2019, the Edelman Trust Barometer found 67% of employees “expect that prospective employers will join them in taking action on societal issues” and 76% say “CEOs should take the lead on change rather than waiting for government to impose it.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [employee attitudes](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just transition for the Coal and Car Industries – a period of “revolutionary” change in Europe

Posted on **December 6, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Towards a just transition: Coal, cars and the world of work is a new and unique report edited by Béla Galgóczi, senior researcher at the European Trade Union Institute, a member of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) research project, and the author of several previous reports on Just Transition, including ***Phasing out Coal – A Just Transition approach*** (2019) and ***Greening Industries and Creating Jobs*** (2012).

In his introduction, he states:

“‘Just transition’ has become the main concept and strategy tool for managing the transformation towards a net zero-carbon economy in a way that is both balanced and fair, but it is also clear that this concept is developing in a too broad and general, and often even over-stretched, manner. In order to discuss it meaningfully, we need to turn to specific case studies. Coal-based energy generation on the one hand and the automobile industry on the other do not only represent two sectors that are responsible for a large part of total GHG emissions, they also illustrate what is really meant by the different contexts of just transition.”

The report chapters, available individually for download [here](#), are written by European experts, and will provide English-speaking readers with access to some of the research written in the European languages.

Part 1 updates the well-researched decarbonization of the coal industry, in Poland, Germany, France and Italy.

Part 2 breaks newer ground, as it “delivers an account of the revolutionary change taking place in the automobile industry, proceeding from a European overview (chapter 6) to insights both from France (chapter 7) and from Germany, the latter with its central eastern European supply chains (chapter 8). Chapter 9 then gives the view of IG Metall, a trade union which has a key role in managing change in the automobile industry in an active and forward-looking way.” Regarding the automobile industry, the introduction states: “With digitalisation and decarbonisation, the industry faces unprecedented challenges in the near future that will re-write its entire business model, redefine work and redraw its value chains. Managing this change requires innovative approaches from the main actors and new forms of relationships between the actors.” Germany’s social partnership bargaining structure is the framework for the innovative initiatives described at the EU, federal, regional and plant level.

The report is summarized by Mr. Galgóczi in **“Why should just transition be an integral part of the European Green Deal?”**, which appeared in Social Europe on December 4.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Automobiles](#), [Coal Industry](#), [coal transition](#), [European Union](#), [IG Metall](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Psychologists pledge to expand their role in combating climate change

Posted on **December 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Joining professionals from many other disciplines who are directing their skills and knowledge to the climate crisis, the leader of the Canadian Psychological Association, along with those from more than 40 other countries, signed a proclamation which pledges to use their expertise to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts – not only at the individual level to help people cope with the mental health aspects such as eco-anxiety, but also at the societal level, as a proactive force to encourage communication, research, and to spark behaviour change and action.

Excerpts from the *Proclamation on Collaboration*, reproduced at the website of the Canadian Psychological Association, and signed at the *International Summit on Psychology and Global Health* in Lisbon on November 14 – 16, 2019.

WHEREAS climate crisis has a disproportionate impact on already vulnerable groups with fewer resources, including low-income individuals or those who live in rural areas, people of color, women, children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities;

WHEREAS research shows that climate change-related events can result in major acute and chronic adverse mental health outcomes, including stress, trauma, and shock; post-traumatic stress disorder and other forms of anxiety; depression; and substance use disorder, which have been a secondary consideration in climate change communication and action;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that our psychology organizations will advocate for and support international and cross-disciplinary collaboration to mitigate and facilitate adaptation to climate crisis.

We will inform our respective members and the public about climate crisis, emphasizing scientific research and consensus on its causes and short- and long-term harms, and the need for immediate personal and societal action;

We will encourage our members and other mental health leaders to be vocal advocates concerning the necessary preparatory and responsive adaptations to climate crisis and to invest more in research and practice in this area;

We will advocate for Universities and other entities could include formation on societal challenges and, particularly, climate crisis for psychologists and other mental health professionals;

We will increase the availability of services and supportive interventions to help minimize harm to mental health and well-being, especially among vulnerable populations, and increase community resilience;

We will advocate for the rights of those most susceptible to the negative health, and mainly, mental health impacts of climate crisis, for example, by encouraging policymakers to fully fund programs to aid those who suffer harm from severe climate crisis-related events;

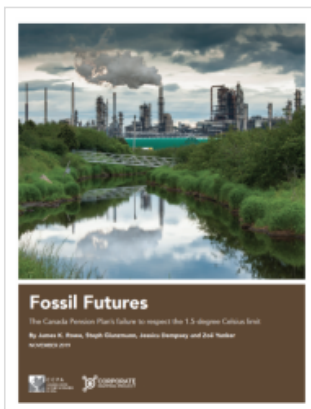
We will support the development of a public awareness campaign to encourage individuals and communities to adopt behaviors to help prepare for and recover from gradual climate change and acute climate crisis events;

We will encourage governmental, educational, health, and corporate leaders to use more psychological science in policy designs as well as to adopt norms, values, and policy to promote sustainable preventive and corrective behaviors in individuals, groups and communities”.

Moral failure and financial risk at the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board

Posted on **December 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Mark Carney will leave his role as Governor of the Bank of England in January 2020 and return to live in Canada as he takes up his **new job as the United Nations' special envoy on climate action and climate finance**. According to the **BBC**, "Mr Carney will be tasked with mobilising private finance to take climate action and help transition to a net-zero carbon economy for the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting in Glasgow in November 2020. This will include building new frameworks for financial reporting and risk management, as well as making climate change a key priority in private financial decision making."



Required reading on the topic: ***Fossil Futures: The Canada Pension Plan's failure to respect the 1.5-degree Celsius limit***, released on November 19 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis-B.C. (CCPA-BC). The report reveals new evidence in the long-standing criticism of the management of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), which manages the fund on which all Canadians rely when they retire. *Fossil Futures'* major finding is that the CPPIB is failing to consider the Paris agreement target of 1.5 degrees C., stating: "Within its public equities portfolio, it has over \$4 billion invested in the top 200 publicly traded fossil fuel reserve holders (oil, gas and coal). To stay within 1.5 degrees, these companies can extract only 71.4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide, yet the companies the CPPIB is invested in have 281 billion tonnes in reserve, meaning they have almost four times the carbon reserves that can be sold and ultimately burned to stay within 1.5 degrees. Since reserves are factored into current company valuations, this means the CPPIB has invested billions of dollars in companies whose financial worth depends on overshooting their carbon budget." This aspect of the report was highlighted in [an article in *The Narwhal*](#) .

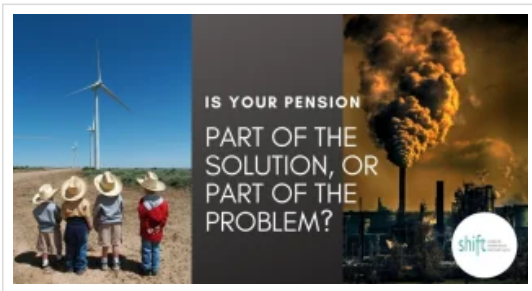
Fossil Futures also considers why the CPPIB has lagged the rest of the world in climate responsibility, stating that "the board of directors and staff are entangled with the oil and gas industry. For example, one of the CPPIB's managing directors of energy and resources sits on the board of nine oil and gas companies." And as for its traditional position that it has not divested from fossil fuel companies so that it can influence their direction on environmental issues, *Fossil Futures* concludes: "The CPPIB's attempts to draw on proxy voting as a central tool to address climate in its portfolio appears ineffective at best, but at worst may misinform beneficiaries expecting a more stringent and meaningful climate strategy."

Fossil Futures makes recommendations for both the CPPIB and the Canadian government:

- **The CPPIB should:** 1. Carry out a portfolio-wide risk analysis in the context of the climate emergency and disclose all findings to pension members. 2. Divest and reinvest. The surest way to address the financial and ethical risks associated with investment in the fossil fuel industry is to start the process of divestment. This means freezing any new fossil fuel investment, developing a plan to first remove highrisk companies from portfolios such as coal, oil

sands and fracked gas producers, and finally, moving toward sector-wide divestment and reinvestment of capital into renewable energy sources. 3. Advocate for strong climate policy. Scientific and economic experts predict that climate change beyond 1.5 degrees will result in widespread political, social and economic decline, with the attendant impacts on pension returns. While pension plans are incapable of preventing such changes on their own, managers of these plans can become strong advocates for climate policy that is in alignment with their intergenerational fiduciary duty.

- **The Canadian government should:** 1. Require full public disclosure of climate risk—including disclosure of all fossil fuel holdings—for all pension funds. California recently passed a law requiring that its major public pensions disclose climate risk. The Canadian government should do the same with the CPPIB. 2. Provide regulatory clarity to ensure that executing fiduciary duty means avoiding short-term economic gains that imperil long-term climatic security for Canadians and the global community. 3. Revise the CPPIB's "investment-only" mandate so that social and ecological values are better represented in investment decisions. It is unclear that securing retirement income by investing in tobacco companies, weapons manufacturers, private prisons and the fossil fuel companies responsible for the climate emergency is aligned with the interests of current or future beneficiaries.



Action item: Tides Canada campaign has launched a new campaign, called **Shift your Pension**, for individuals who are concerned about their pensions – both the financial health and the impact on the climate crisis. It allows you to send your own message to the CPPIB as well as provincially-managed public sector pension funds.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Mark Carney](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

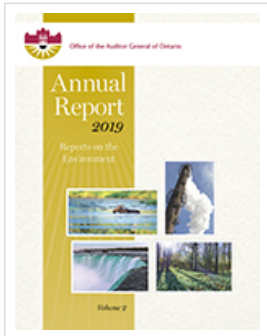
Ontario updates: Advisory Panel on Climate Change appointed; Auditor General pans climate policies; Ontario youth launch new lawsuit

Posted on **December 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Post updated November 6:

In a November 28 press release, Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the **appointment of an Ontario Advisory Panel on Climate Change**. The press release quotes the new Chair, Paul Kovacs who states: "The knowledge exists to prevent losses from flooding, wildfire and other climate extremes.... "Members of the advisory panel on climate change look forward to working with the Government of Ontario to champion climate resilience. Working together, we can break the alarming trend of rising severe weather damage to homes, businesses and public infrastructure. Action on climate resilience is a critical element of a comprehensive strategy on climate change."

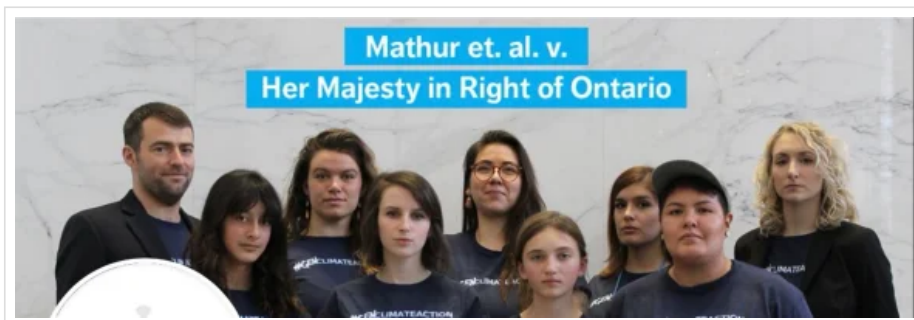
Members of the Advisory Panel come from a variety of sectors including non-profits, agriculture, insurance, and reflect the Panel's focus on adaptation and conservation concerns. Neither green advocacy groups nor workers are represented. The brief bios of panelists are [here](#) : Chair Paul Kovacs is founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction at Western University; Vice-Chair Lynette Mader is the Manager of Provincial Operations for Ontario for Ducks Unlimited Canada and an expert on species-at-risk. The other eight Panel members include Blair Feltmate , head of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo and Chair of the Government of Canada Expert Panel on Climate Adaptation and Resilience Results.



The Advisory Panel was announced on the one-year anniversary of the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. On December 4, that policy initiative was reviewed when the provincial Auditor General tabled her annual report in the Legislature, including [Volume 2: Reports on the Environment](#) . In 183 pages and three chapters, the report provides an overview of 1. environmental issues in Ontario; 2. Operation of the Environmental Bill of Rights, and 3. Climate Change: Ontario's plan to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The report details the government's performance and finds that it has double-counted emissions reductions in some cases, over-estimated potential impacts of its own policies, and is nowhere near able to meet its own 2030 emissions reductions targets. The *National Observer* summarizes the report in "[Ontario Auditor General slams Doug Ford's climate policies](#)" and an analysis at the TVO website tells a similar story in "[Ontario's Auditor General gives the Tories' climate plan a failing grade](#)". This latest report follows on the previous highly-critical report of the outgoing Environmental Commissioner, [A Healthy, Happy, Prosperous Ontario: Why we need more energy conservation](#) (March 2019), and the [Failure to Launch](#) report in October 2019 by Environmental Defence.

Youth launch lawsuit against Ontario government

All of these negative findings won't help the government as they prepare to defend themselves against a new [climate change lawsuit by Ontario youth](#) who claim that the Ford government's softening of emissions reductions targets "will lead to widespread illness and death," and thus has violated their charter rights under Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Seven applicants from communities across Ontario, ranging in age from 12 to 24, are represented by lawyers from Ecojustice and Stockwoods LLP . Details are in the Ecojustice [Case Background](#); an overview of the action appears in the *National Observer* in "[These Ontario kids are taking climate protest from streets to courthouse](#)" (Nov. 26).



Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

66 recommendations from Special Advisor in investigation of Ontario's 2019 record-setting floods

Posted on **December 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Disastrous and **record-setting flooding** occurred across the province of Ontario between April and July 2019, with 23 municipalities declaring states of emergencies. In July 2019, the government appointed **Doug McNeil**, an experienced public servant from Manitoba, as Special Advisor on Flooding, with a mandate to consider the flood management and land use systems in Ontario. His report was submitted to the government on October 31 and made public on November 28 – the press release is [here](#).



The 157-page **Report of an Independent review of the 2019 flood events in Ontario** describes in detail the complex administrative and regulatory system which governs the province's flood management, and concludes that "the government and its partners were effective at reducing and mitigating flood risks.... the flooding was caused by a combination of weather conditions and found no human error or negligence in the operation of "water control structures" (translation: dams).

Reaction to the report includes "**Doug Ford government ducks fiscal responsibility for severe flooding**" in the *National Observer* (November 28) – which points out: "The first Ford budget had slashed by 50 per cent the flood management funds given to conservation authorities by his ministry to protect Ontario's watersheds and canceled tree-planting efforts that limit flood damage." A Toronto *Globe and Mail* article focuses on the home-owners perspective in their overview "**Ontario homes at risk of flooding should be made public: report**". The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority reacted positively– their [press release](#) notes that many of their recommendations and comments about urban flooding were incorporated in the Special Advisor's recommendations. It is notable that the **Chair of the TRCA was appointed** on the same day as a member of Ontario's new Advisory Panel on Climate Change.

The Special Advisor makes sixty-six recommendations for improved action and coordination by the provincial ministries and conservation authorities, and calls for sustained funding for budgets related to flood management.

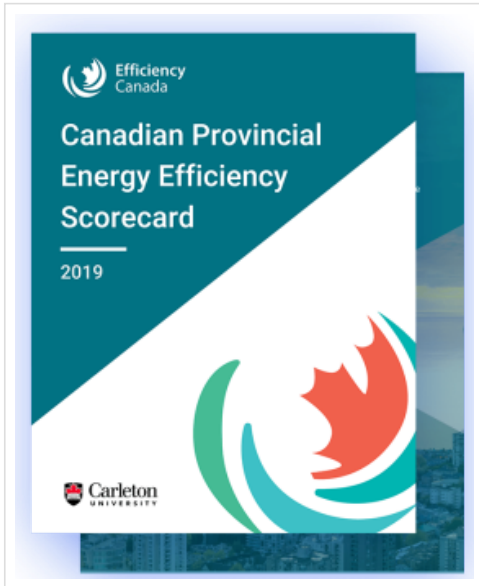
Recommendations include:

- #3: "That the following be incorporated into the Provincial Policy Statement: • The reference to "impacts of a changing climate" throughout the Provincial Policy Statement helps to bring it to everyone's attention and should be included in the Preamble as well."
- #15: That the Province consider adopting legislation that will require flood risk properties to be identified in some way that is publicly accessible, at the very least on the property title, to ensure that prospective buyers are aware.
- #16 That municipalities consider utilizing local improvement charges to help finance and install (or upgrade) shoreline protection works, and if necessary, that the Province provide municipalities with enhanced authority to do so.
- #52: That the Province continue the dialogue with the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the federal government on the steps needed to make flood insurance more available to more Ontarians.
- #66: That the Province maintain, at a minimum, the current level of funding in departmental budgets and programs related to everything flood (i.e. existing approval processes and associated policies and technical requirements, floodplain mapping, maintenance of flood infrastructure, satellite imagery, etc.).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [disaster management](#), [Flooding](#), [natural disasters](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Building Step Code credited with the province's top rank in Canada for energy efficiency

Posted on November 27, 2019 by elizabethperry493



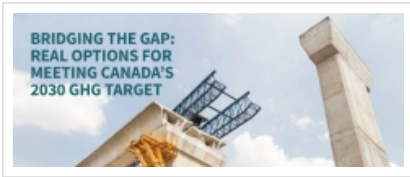
With a view to encouraging cooperation amongst provinces, **Efficiency Canada** launched Canada's first-ever **Provincial Energy Efficiency Scorecard** on November 19, accompanied by an interactive **database** which is promised to be updated regularly. The full Scorecard report is a free download from [this link](#) (registration required). Provinces were scored out of 100 for their energy efficiency programs, enabling policies, building, transportation, and industry, between January 2018 and June 2019. British Columbia ranks #1 (56 points), followed by Quebec (48), Ontario (47) and Nova Scotia (45). Saskatchewan was last with only 18 out of 100 possible points. But beyond the gross numbers and overview comparisons, the report, at 190 pages, provides a wealth of detail and policy information provided about best practices and achievements in each jurisdiction – especially about electrification, electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, and building policies and codes.

Two of the study co-authors, Brendan Haley and James Gaede, have written "**Canadians can unite behind energy efficiency**" published in *Policy Options*, providing context and highlights.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Step Code](#), [British Columbia](#), [Building Codes](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Final report from Canada's Ecofiscal Commission recommends stringent carbon pricing to reach 2030 GHG goals

Posted on November 27, 2019 by elizabethperry493



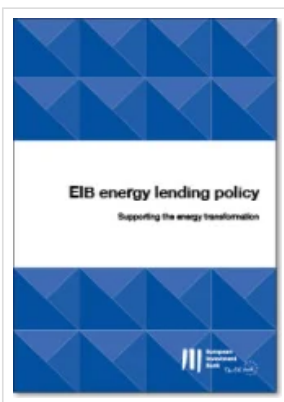
On November 27, the Ecofiscal Commission announced that their latest research report, ***Bridging the Gap: Real Options for Meeting Canada's 2030 GHG Target*** will be their last. This final report brings to an end five years of research and publication which has centred largely on the cost effectiveness and optimal design of carbon pricing for Canada. ***Bridging the Gap*** recommends that "If governments wish to meet their climate goals at least cost, they should rely on increasingly stringent carbon pricing" – steadily increasing the carbon price by around \$20/tonne every year from 2023 until 2030. The next best option is increasingly stringent, well-designed, flexible regulations, including for example, the Clean Fuel Standard. The report argues that "It's tempting to think that alternatives to carbon pricing will cost us less. But their costs are hidden and actually cost us more. Our modelling shows that carbon pricing will grow Canadian incomes on average by \$3,300 more in 2030 relative to a policy approach that relies on a mix of subsidies and industry-only regulations...No matter what policy tool—or combination of tools—we use to achieve Canada's 2030 target, policies will have to be significantly more stringent than they are today. The regulatory approaches we model, for example, require halving the emissions intensity of industrial production by 2030."

The report provides new forecast results using Navius Research's GTECH General Equilibrium economic model, to cost and evaluate three options for climate policy which would allow Canada to meet its 2030 GHG target: #1: Carbon pricing with revenues recycled toward percapita dividends and output-based pricing for EITE sectors; #2: A range of regulations and subsidies applied across the entire economy; #3: A range of regulations and subsidies, excluding those that would result in direct costs for households. Although the authors acknowledge that impacts will be felt on jobs, especially in emissions intensive industries, employment impacts are not estimated or discussed.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [climate change policies](#), [Ecofiscal Commission](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

European Investment Bank stops fossil funding; Bank of Canada acknowledges the dangers of stranded assets

Posted on **November 25, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The long-awaited decision came on November 13, when the European Investment Bank (EIB) issued **a press release** announcing that " We will stop financing fossil fuels and we will launch the most ambitious climate investment strategy of any public financial institution anywhere." Also, ".....The EIB will work closely with the European Commission to support

investment by a Just Transition Fund. The EIB will be able to finance up to 75% of the eligible project cost for new energy investment in these countries. These projects will also benefit from both advisory and financial support from the EIB.” *The Guardian* summarizes the policy [here](#) ; details are in the full document, [EIB Energy Lending Policy: Supporting the energy transformation](#).

The decision ends a long and contentious review process which received more than 149 written submissions and petitions signed by more than 30,000 people. National members of the EU negotiated and compromised – the German government had been expected to abstain from the vote but ended by supporting the measure. A [press release from WWF-Europe](#) is generally supportive, stating “All public and private banks must urgently follow suit” – while pointing out that the decision postpones the end of financing for gas projects until 2021, and allows for further financing for any gas infrastructure that could potentially transport so-called “green gas”. A [summary in Clean Energy Wire](#) quotes Claudia Kemfert, climate economist at the German Institute for Economic Research, who calls the EIB decision “a game changer”, and says, “Even if there’s still a backdoor for fossil gas included, this is an important and necessary step in the right direction.”

Bank of Canada acknowledges climate change risks to the economy

On November 19, the Bank of Canada published its most complete statement to date about the transitions and risks which climate change will bring, in [Researching the Economic Effects of Climate Change](#) , a report prepared by Miguel Molico, senior research director at the bank’s Financial Stability Department. On November 21, the Governor of the Bank of Canada followed up on this [by raising the issue of climate change and the risk of stranded assets](#) during an address to the Ontario Securities Commission . The *National Observer* summarizes the development in [“Bank of Canada warns of stranded assets and an abrupt transition to clean economy”](#) (Nov. 23).

Also in Canada, on November 19, the [Institute for Sustainable Finance](#) was launched Housed at the Smith School of Business at Queen’s University, Kingston Ontario : “ The Institute for Sustainable Finance (ISF) is the first-ever cross-cutting and collaborative hub in Canada that fuses academia, the private sector, and government with the singular focus of increasing Canada’s sustainable finance capacity.” A more formal statement comes in the Institute’s launch report: [Green Finance: New Directions in Sustainable Finance Research & Policy](#) which states: “the Institute will span a continuum of expertise from across varying disciplines, including finance, economics, environmental studies, political science and others, in order to foster innovative research, education, external collaborations and partnerships. The Institute’s mandate is threefold:

- Generate innovative and relevant research on sustainable finance and effectively communicate this research to all pertinent stakeholders.
- Serve as a platform for collaboration between government, academia and industry.
- Provide educational opportunities and develop capacity in the field of sustainable finance.”

The [Green Finance report](#) summarizes the discussions by financial experts at a conference by the same name, held on June 14-15, 2019, following the release of the Report of the government’s [Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance – Mobilizing Finance for Sustainable Growth](#). To help readers who are not financial experts, the Institute website offers useful “primers” to explain some fundamental concepts in sustainable finance, including [Climate-Related Financial Disclosures, Divestment, and Transition Bonds](#). Not to be confused with Just Transition funding, the primer explains that “Transition Bonds” are corporate financing tools, and the companies who issue them must use the proceeds to fund a business transition towards a reduced environmental impact or reduction in carbon emissions. (The example given is that a coal-mining company could issue a transition bond to finance efforts to capture and store carbon.)



As one of its first actions, the ISF established the [Canadian Sustainable Finance Network \(CSFN\)](#) an independent formal research and educational network for academia, industry and government to bring together a talented network of

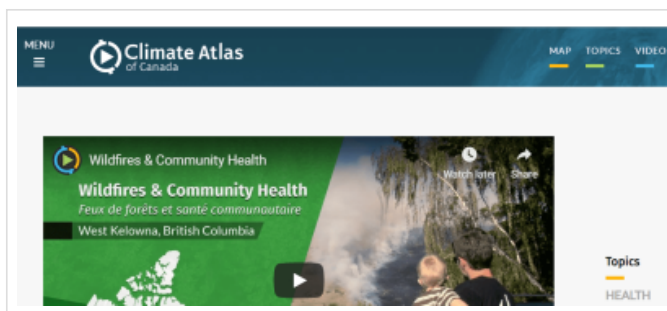
university faculty members and relevant members from industry, government and civil society. A list of members, [here](#), includes multiple faculty from twelve Canadian universities, one from Yale in the U.S., and other individual academics from universities which are not institutional members (including UBC, HEC Montreal, and Memorial University).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Bank of Canada](#), [climate change activism](#), [financial institutions](#), [Financial Risk](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Green Finance](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change and health in Canada

Posted on **November 20, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Prairie Climate Centre at the University of Winnipeg maintains the Climate Atlas of Canada, and on November 20 launched a new section of their website devoted to [climate change and health in Canada](#). So far, the webpages provide a general overview of the issues of air quality, diseases, extreme heat, and mental health – supporte

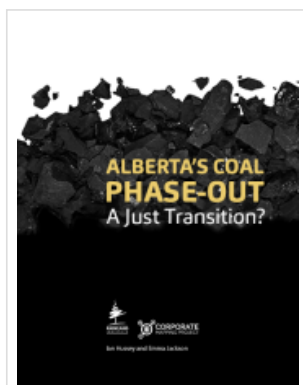


d by more detailed articles – for example, [Climate Change, Air Quality, and Public Health](#); [Wildfire Smoke and Health](#); and a new [4-minutes video about wildfires](#), with impactful images which highlight the links between wildfires and mental health, especially relating to first responders and medical providers. The Prairie Climate Centre also published the [Heat Waves and Health](#) report, released in August 2019, and now part of the new section.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [climate change and mental health](#), [first responders](#), [health care professionals](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta coal phase-out experience as a blueprint for just transition

Posted on **November 20, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On November 20, the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta released a new report: [Alberta's Coal Phase-out: A Just Transition?](#) . Acknowledging that there is no single approach to just transition, co-authors Ian Hussey and Emma Jackson consider some common values and approaches expressed in the just transition literature: support for re-employment or alternative employment, income and benefit support, pension bridging and early retirement assistance, and retraining and educational programs for workers. The [press release](#) quotes Ian Hussey: "While far from perfect, the Alberta transition programs provide a blueprint that will become increasingly important in the coming decades as the world makes the shift away from fossil fuels."

The report evaluates the real-world experience of the coal phase-out in Alberta, which began in 2012 under the federal Conservative Harper government, and accelerated after 2015 under the provincial policies of the New Democratic Party. It describes in detail the events and context of the provincial transition policies, and uses case studies of three companies – TransAlta, ATCO, and Capital Power- as well as a community case study of Parkland County. The report concludes with an analytic discussion, evaluating the government's transition programs for workers and for coal communities. The full report is [here](#) ; an Executive Summary is [here](#) .

The report is a joint publication of the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta, and the Corporate Mapping Project, a joint initiative led by the University of Victoria, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives BC and Saskatchewan Offices, and the Parkland Institute.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [coal phase-out](#), [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

2019 Lancet Countdown emphasizes climate impacts on children's health

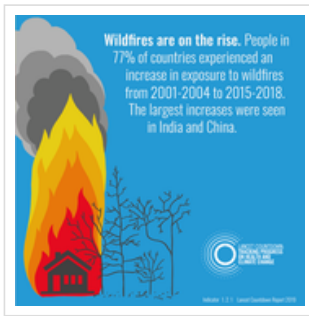
Posted on **November 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Since 2016, the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* has published an annual report, [Countdown on Health and Climate Change](#) . The 2018 Countdown report focused on work-related health impacts of climate change, especially heat effects, as summarized in the [WCR here](#) . The [2019 edition](#) just released in early November focuses on the impacts of climate change on the health of children, with this key message: it is possible to limit the global average temperature rise to well below 2°C, a situation which "would transform the health of a child born today for the better, throughout their lives. Placing health at the centre of the coming transition will yield enormous dividends for the public and the economy, with cleaner air, safer cities, and healthier diets."

In addition to the global report, the Lancet also publishes country-specific Policy Briefing reports. The [Policy Briefing for Canada](#) (in French [here](#)) is written in cooperation with the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Public Health Association. The four highlighted results for Canada are:

1. "Exposure to wildfires is increasing in Canada, with more than half of the 448,444 Canadians evacuated due to wildfires between 1980 and 2017 displaced in the last decade;



2. The percentage of fossil fuels powering transport in Canada remains high, though electricity and biofuels are gaining ground. Fine particulate air pollution generated by transportation killed 1063 Canadians in 2015, resulting in a loss of economic welfare for Canadians valued at approximately \$8 billion dollars;
3. Canada has the third-highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions from healthcare in the world, with healthcare accounting for approximately 4% of the country's total emissions;
4. The health of Canadians is at risk due to multiple and varied risks of climate change..... An ongoing, coordinated, consistent and pan-Canadian effort to track, report, and create healthy change is required.”

For each of the four problems, broad policy recommendations are made.

Some of the other countries for which Policy Briefs are available: [Australia](#) ; [European Union](#) ; the [United Kingdom](#) ; and the [United States](#) . Each one reflects the unique challenges of the country concerned. The full menu of all Country Briefs is [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [climate change and youth](#), [health care professionals](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green New Deal for Public Housing Act provides concrete proposals and benefits

Posted on **November 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On November 14, Bernie Sanders and Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez led a press conference to announce the introduction of the **Green New Deal for Public Housing Act** in the United States Senate, under Sanders' sponsorship. The Bill would eliminate carbon emissions from federal housing, invest approximately \$180 billion over ten years in retrofitting and repairs, and create nearly 250,000 decent-paying union jobs per year, according to the many summaries which appeared: for example, [in Common Dreams](#) . Bernie Sanders' press release is [here](#), linking to the legislation, summaries, and a list of the 50 organizational supporters. Co-sponsors named are Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

As stated in a [press release](#), progressive think tank Data for Progress “conducted policy and public opinion research to support this pathbreaking progressive legislation, which advances housing, racial, economic, environmental and climate justice together.” **The Green New Deal for Public Housing Act can stand up to Scrutiny** reports the results of the political polling done by Data for Progress. A related article, **“Why Bernie Sanders and AOC are targeting public**

[housing in the first Green New Deal bill](#)” in Vox contends “By starting with housing, the legislators appear to be trying to make inroads with a broad political base and avoid some of the more contentious aspects of the Green New Deal, like the transition away from fossil fuels. That issue in particular has [divided labor unions](#) because it would lead to the end of mining and drilling jobs.”

Data for Progress also conducted economic research which “shows that a ten-year mobilization of up to \$172 billion would retrofit over 1 million public housing units, vastly improving the living conditions of nearly 2 million residents, and creating over 240,000 jobs per year across the United States. These green retrofits would cut 5.6 million tons of annual carbon emissions—the equivalent of taking 1.2 million cars off the road. Retrofits and jobs would benefit communities on the frontlines of climate change, poverty and pollution and the country as a whole. Our analysis shows the legislation would create 32,552 jobs per year in New York City alone. A large portion of the jobs nationally—up to 87,000 a year—will be high-quality construction jobs on site at public housing developments.” [A Green New Deal for New York Housing Authority \(NYHCA\) Communities](#) report is now available, and a National report is forthcoming- until then, data is available [here](#) .

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Alexandria Ocasio Cortez](#), [Bernie Sanders](#), [Construction Industry](#), [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green New Deal](#), [housing policy](#), [New York City](#), [public housing](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International conference highlights union initiatives for public ownership and democratic control of energy

Posted on [November 18, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



An international conference, “[The Green New Deal, Net-Zero Carbon, and the Crucial Role of Public Ownership](#)”, brought together more than 150 trade unionists, activists and policy allies in New York City on September 28, 2019. In November, a 50-page summary of the conference was released by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), with summaries of presentations (including many links to related documents), as well as links to video of some sessions.

TUED Coordinator Sean Sweeney [described](#) the context of the conference: “The world is completely off-track to avoid catastrophic climate change, and we can’t wait any longer. Fortunately, unions and their allies around the world increasingly recognize that only comprehensive public ownership and democratic control of energy gives us a chance to achieve the scale of change needed in the time available.” Speakers from the U.K., South Africa, South Korea, Zimbabwe, the U.S., among others, addressed the key themes through their own experiences, including: “Privatization of State-Owned Electricity Utilities Has Failed, But Alternatives Exist”; “Defending and Reclaiming Public Energy Requires Building Union Power”; “The Transition Must Take into Account the Development Needs of the Global South”. As for next steps, Peter Knowlton, outgoing President of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), proposed a specific mobilization for 2020: “to bring millions of workers into the streets for Earth Day on April 22, 2020. But we need to have a continuous series of actions, ... A week of activity between the “bookends” of Earth Day and May Day could be a wonderful opportunity to bring the labor and environmental movements together in a way we haven’t seen before.”

The conference was organized by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), with support from Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (New York Office) and the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Labor and Urban Studies, in partnership with unions – from Canada, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE). Local **32BJ SEIU** hosted a two-day retreat in advance of the full gathering.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Union of Public Employees \(CUPE\)](#), [energy democracy](#), [Green New Deal](#), [international labour activities](#), [National Union of Public and General Employees \(NUPGE\)](#), [privatization](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Calls for improvements to Ontario's failed climate policies

Posted on **November 13, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Environmental Defence released a one-year progress report on the climate change policies of the Ontario government in early October. **Failure to Launch** reviews each of the promises/actions proposed by the Conservative government of Doug Ford under its much-criticized “**Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan**”, which lowered Ontario’s target for GHG emissions reductions from 37 to 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and cancelled renewable energy programs. Environmental Defence finds that the government has not even made sufficient progress in its first year to meet the diminished GHG reduction goals, and makes specific recommendations for accelerated action. A summary appears in the Environmental Defence [blog](#). Then, on November 7, thirty environmental advocacy groups, including Environmental Defence, posted an [Open Letter](#) to the members of Ontario’s provincial parliament on November 7, with specific demands which would take serious action on climate change. This coincides with the recall of the legislature after an historic 4-month recess.

The government led the new session with its **2019 Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review** under a new banner: “A Plan to Build Ontario Together”. Although analysts note many “about face” policy changes to some programs, the climate/environmental file hasn’t benefitted, as described in [an article](#) in the *National Observer*. It notes that there was no mention in the budget of the previously announced Ontario Carbon Trust, a fund of \$400 million over four years to support the private sector in developing clean technologies.

Ontario to pursue carbon tax case, and dragging its feet on action

According to [analysis of the Economic Outlook from TVO](#): “Anyone looking for signs of reasonableness from the Tories on carbon pricing will be disappointed: despite the recent federal-election results, the fall economic statement reiterates

that the government will keep fighting the federal carbon tax in court. The Supreme Court of Canada is expected to hear the case in March 2020.”

On October 31, this [press release](#) proposes to expand fines for environmental regulations, reinvesting that revenue “to support projects that provide local solutions to environmental issues”. Environmentalists **were not impressed**.



The White Pines wind farm decommissioning began in October, with the government following through on its 2018 decision to cancel the almost-completed project, despite **an estimated cost to taxpayers of \$100 million in costs** and penalties.

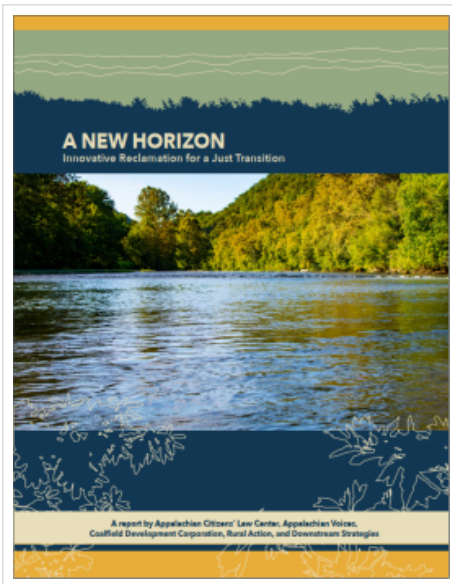
The local press of Prince Edward County reported on October 31 “**Sadness for green energy supporters as dismantling begins on turbine project**”. The *National Observer* published a related article concerning the costs of cuts to clean energy programs, including White Pines: “**Doug Ford ‘throwing away’ millions to kill Ontario clean energy programs**” (Nov. 19). The article cites a cost to the taxpayer of \$230 million from killing more than 750 renewable-energy projects.

A [government press release](#) on November 7 announced a “Multi-Sector Impact Assessment Will Help Communities Identify Climate Change Risks and Strengthen Resilience”. Apparently there’s no urgency: the private sector contract for this assessment will be tendered in 2020 for 2 years, producing a final report in 2022.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Success stories from Appalachian coal mining communities

Posted on **November 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A new report was released on October 31 by the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition, a group which seeks to spur coal mine reclamation projects throughout Central Appalachia. ***A New Horizon: Innovative Reclamation for a Just Transition*** profiles 19 projects in Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia, including data centres, a YMCA Wellness Centre, as well as many ecotourism projects. Although much is specific to the U.S. funding opportunities, the case studies offer instructive descriptions of the challenges and obstacles faced by the communities, and also attempt to quantify the economic impacts of each project.

The **press release** describes the progressive approach used to create a “new horizon”: “In the past, efforts to reuse old mine sites too often resulted in sparse, lasting economic activity. Surface mined areas near population centers became shopping centers, hospitals and other standard uses, but more remote sites were either completely abandoned, converted to low-productivity cattle grazing lands, or developed into speculatively built industrial parks or golf courses at great taxpayer expense. Those “if you build it, they will come” projects now largely sit empty. To break from this unsuccessful approach to coal site reclamation, the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition established six guiding principles to identify optimal repurposing projects, including ensuring they are appropriate to the place in which they are occurring, that they include non-traditional stakeholders in decision-making, and are environmentally sustainable and financially viable long-term.”

The report was published as part of the launch of a new website, **ReclaimingAppalachia.org**, by the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition, which consists of organizations in four states — Appalachian Voices in Virginia, Appalachian Citizens' Law Center in Kentucky, Coalfield Development Corporation in West Virginia, and Rural Action in Ohio — and a regional technical expert, Downstream Strategies, based in West Virginia. The website as a whole is intended as an information and education resource , providing best practices and information about potential U.S. funding sources.

Posted in **[United States](#)** | Tagged **[coal transition](#)**, **[Just Transition](#)**, **[land reclamation](#)**, **[mining industry](#)**, **[United States](#)** | **[Leave a reply](#)**

Australian unions support offshore wind development as a means for Just Transition

Posted on **November 11, 2019** by **[elizabethperry493](#)**

Putting the ‘Justice’ in ‘Just Transition’: Tackling inequality in the new renewable economy is a report released on November 7, co-written by the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, the Electrical Trades Union, the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council and the Victorian Trades Hall Council . This is the latest development in a **[union campaign to](#)**

promote Australia's offshore wind industry , focusing on the Star of the South project, Australia's first proposed offshore wind farm. The report calls



for government policies to support the emerging industry and to make the Star of the South “ the best possible example of a just transition” by diversifying the job opportunities for workers and communities currently reliant on coal, oil and gas.

Specifically, the new report recommends:

- the Commonwealth establish an energy transition authority to work with states and regions, develop a stand-alone Offshore Renewables Act, and create an agency responsible for facilitating the development of offshore renewable energy in Commonwealth waters;
- the development of offshore and onshore renewable energy master plans that incorporate assessments of supply chains, procurement and infrastructure;
- ensuring renewable energy financing, targets, contracts, licensing and approvals require the maximising of local jobs, including planning for direct redeployment of workers from fossil fuel industries;
- the Victorian Government establish a just transition group to ensure a well-planned energy transition with the best possible social outcomes by formally consulting with relevant stakeholders including trade unions, employers and communities;
- maximising the social benefit of the Star of the South project by requiring local design, manufacturing, and construction;
- funding of appropriate training and retraining through local TAFEs, along with minimum apprentice ratios; and
- maximising the number of jobs available by ensuring good rosters and reasonable hours of work.

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) represents seafarers supplying the offshore oil and gas industry, as well as workers in Newcastle's coal terminals, and port and tug workers in coal export ports in New South Wales and Queensland. The MUA is part of the **Offshore Alliance** ,which works to organise workers and improve conditions in the offshore oil and gas industry. The MUA position on renewable energy and a discussion of the Just Transition campaign are available [here](#) ; the MUA maintains a [petition here](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Offshore Wind](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank commissions studies of climate change risks to the economy, impacts on labour productivity

Posted on **November 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In “**Scared Central Banks Face Up to Threats From Climate Change**” (Sept. 23) , Bloomberg News reported that “Most major central banks — with the exception of the U.S. Federal Reserve — are joining forces to promote sustainable growth, after realizing that climate change threatens economic output and could even sow the seeds of a financial crisis.” Now it appears that even the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank, or at least one of its components, the San Francisco Fed., is catching up to the rest of the world. **Climate Change and the Federal Reserve** drew attention when it was published by the San Francisco Fed in March 2019, and a special climate change-themed **issue of the newsletter, Community Development and Innovation Review** was published by the San Francisco Fed in October , highlighting independent economic analysis

it had commissioned. The *New York Times* summarizes that research in [“Bank Regulators Present a Dire Warning of Financial Risks From Climate Change”](#).

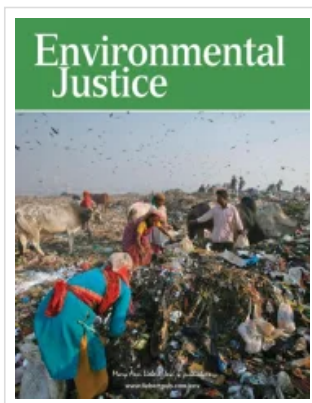
The economic research was also highlighted in a conference on November 8. Host Mary Daly, President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, introduced the event with a speech entitled, [“Why Climate Change Matters to Us”](#). Two highlighted conference papers: [“Climate change: Macroeconomic impact and implications for monetary policy”](#) presented by Sandra Batten from the Bank of England, which explains why central banks care about climate change, and includes the warning that “for each degree the temperature rises above a daily average temperature of 59°F, productivity declines by 1.7%”. In [“Long-Term Macroeconomic Effects of Climate Change: A Cross-Country Analysis”](#), six academics from the U.S., U.K. and Taiwan modelled the links between historical levels of temperature and precipitation and changes in labour productivity. They conclude that global GDP per capita could fall 7% by 2100 in the absence of climate change mitigation effects, but that loss could be reduced to 1% by conforming to the Paris Agreement.

Of related interest: SHARE Canada (Shareholder Association for Research and Education) summarizes the position of the major Canadian banks in an October 10 blog post [“Responsible Banking – Part 2: Aligning finance with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement”](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Economic impacts](#), [Economic Risk](#), [Federal Reserve Bank](#), [Financial Risk](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Social workers urged to advocate for a Green New Deal and climate justice

Posted on **November 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The November issue of the journal *Environmental Justice* includes [“Time is Up: Social workers take your place at the climate change table”](#) (free access only until November 22, 2019). The authors maintain that “Social workers are uniquely situated to be involved, with their training in social policy, legislative advocacy, and community organizing, in combating the negative effects of climate change and the inherent social justice issues associated with this issue. However, they must be trained on topics such as disaster-specific trauma, bereavement, and resource disruption.

The article begins with a broad overview of policies related to climate change – including the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement, but the main focus is on social workers in the United States as actors in climate change. Based on reviews of the social work literature between 2008 and 2019, the authors conclude that what little has been written has focused on consequences and/or coping strategies after a natural disaster. They also conclude that most of the climate-related training of social workers is occurring outside of the United States in countries such as Australia and New Zealand.

The article reveals how the professional organization, the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, has viewed the climate emergency. The AASWSW issued its [12 Grand Challenges for Social Work](#) in 2016, and it included a goal to “Create social responses to a changing environment”. A separate [Policy Briefing](#) outlines ambitious goals,

including: (1) adopt and implement evidence-based approaches to disaster risk reduction, (2) develop policies targeting environmentally induced migration and population displacement, and (3) strengthen equity-oriented urban resilience policies and proactively engage marginalized communities in adaptation planning. A 2015 background paper preceded the goal statement: ***Strengthening the Social Response to the Human Impacts of Environmental Change*** .

The latest issue of the Association's journal ***Social Work Today*** is a progress report on the Grand Challenges. Regarding the changing environment, it reports that the Association has been advocating for the Green New Deal, and will "examine the social work implications of the proposed Green New Deal and to call social workers to action around environmental justice policies." It concludes:

"One of the greatest challenges toward continued progress is in making social workers aware of their role and responsibility in addressing both the causes and consequences of climate change," Many social workers feel there are more immediate issues to deal with, even if they acknowledge the seriousness of the problem."

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Climate Activism, disaster response, Green New Deal, Professional Associations, social workers** | [Leave a reply](#)

How nurses can contribute to climate and health justice

Posted on **November 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Nurses' Unions, Climate Change and Health: A Global Agenda for Action was



written by Sean Sweeney, Irene Shen and John Treat of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED). (A summary appears in the September 2019 **Bulletin 90 of the TUED**). The report provides a brief overview of climate change issues, and an extensive chapter about the human health impacts of climate change. It concludes by outlining six key areas where nurses and their unions "can make use of their expertise and political strength in the fight against the climate and health emergency, and for climate and health justice." The agenda for action includes: Resist new fossil fuel projects; Make Emergency Response and Recovery Services "Climate Ready"; Work with Allies at the Global Level on Preparedness; Fight Poverty and Racism. Defend Worker Rights and Protections; Articulate and Advocate for a Pro-Public Shift in Policy; and Extend Public Control Over Energy Generation and Use through Energy Democracy. Although the report was written for nurses' unions, the authors express the hope is that it can be useful for the labor movement more generally, "to wage the struggle for climate protection and climate justice with a clearer understanding of the challenges that must be faced in order to achieve it."

The report was written for **Global Nurses United** , a federation of the nurse and health care worker unions which has grown to represent 27 nations since its founding in 2016. The **Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions** and **Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec** are members from Canada; **National Nurses United** is the member from

the United States. The purpose of GNU is to fight against austerity, privatization, and attacks on public health, as well as to work for nurses' and workers' rights and improved patient care for all.



The Canadian Federation of Nurses released its own publication in June 2019, *Climate Change and Health: It's Time for Nurses to Act*, "as a starting point for for advocacy and leadership". It shares some content with the Global report, but focuses on Canadian examples, and outlines its own six recommendations for action. A summary appears [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [health care professionals](#), [labour union handbooks](#), [nurses](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Workers who respond to wildfires – some news you might have missed

Posted on **November 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The *Columbia Journalism Review* published an article on November 1: "[What journalists miss when covering the California fires](#)". It states "we discuss celebrities and show pyro-pornography to capture attention. journalists could also use the borrowed interest to discuss bigger environmental consequences impacting people inside (and sometimes outside) of California."



Here are some articles which focus on the impacts for working people in California and Canada, especially first responders and health care workers. A previous WCR article, "[What happens to workers when wildfires and natural disasters hit?](#)" appeared in December 2017, after the Fort McMurray wildfires in Alberta.

California:

"[At PG&E, a workforce on edge — and under attack — as fire season arrives](#)" in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 8) describes how front line workers are suffering harassment because the public blames their employer, Pacific Gas and

Electric Company, for the 2018 Camp fire, as well as for the disruptions of their planned power outages to avoid sparking more fires.

A blog post [Power Shutoffs: Playing with Fire](#) summarizes the issue of California power shutoffs and includes anecdotal reports from a focus group study of home health care and nursing home workers, which found that lack of communication was a common problem as they try to care for or evacuate their vulnerable patients. The focus group was convened by the Emerald Cities Collaborative and SEUI2015.

[Home healthcare in the Dark : Why Climate, Wildfires and Other Emerging Risks Call for Resilient Energy Storage Solutions to Protect Medically Vulnerable Households from Power Outages.](#) This report published by Clean Energy Group and Meridian Institute in June 2019 identifies the problems associated with unreliable power when the electric grid goes down either through disaster or through planned power outages to prevent wildfires. The report makes a series of recommendations directed at policy makers, including: “truly resilient power should be generated onsite, should not be dependent on supply chains that may be disrupted during catastrophic events”.

[“Getty fire: Housekeepers and gardeners go to work despite the flames”](#) in the *LA Times* which also highlights the chaos brought by lack of communication, and the need for low-wage workers to work, despite danger.

International Association of Firefighters press release **[“California Members Work around the Clock to Contain Wildfires”](#)** provides an overview of wildfire fighting by their members and points out that firefighters’ homes may also be in the path of destruction. (a fact that is true for other essential workers such as health care workers).

[“As fires rage, California refines an important skill: Evacuating”](#) in the *Washington Post* (Oct. 29). Describes the challenges of first responders responsible for vulnerable patients in hospitals.

[“New threats put wildfire fighters health on the line”](#) in the *New York Times* points out : “While burning wood poses some threat to lungs, man-made products and the gases and particles they produce when burned are far more dangerous... Unlike urban firefighters dealing with structural blazes, these wildfire responders do not wear heavy gear that filters air or provides clean air because the gear is unwieldy and too limited to allow the kind of multi-hour, high-exertion efforts demanded on the front lines of these large outdoor infernos.”

And from 2017, **[“Suicide rate among wildland firefighters is “astronomical”](#)** in *Wildfire Today* , based on a more substantial article in The Atlantic: **[“A Quiet Rise in Wildland-Firefighter Suicides”](#)**.

Canada:

[“Climate change is making wildfires in Canada bigger, hotter and more dangerous”](#) in *Maclean’s* (July 18 2019) is a quick overview of the Canadian experience.

[“We were blindsided: Rappel firefighters criticizes UCP for axing program”](#) in the *Edmonton Journal* (Nov. 7) and an article in the newspaper **[Fort McMurray Today](#)** react to the Alberta government cuts which will eliminate the 40-year-old rappelling program, which employs more than 60 firefighters who rappel from helicopters into forest fires. Staffing for close to 30 wildfire lookout towers and one air tanker unit will also be cut. The articles describe the dangerous job of fighting fires.

A British Columbia **[government press release](#)** at the end of October 2019 announces two research projects underway to study firefighter health and wellness (including its physical, mental and emotional dimensions). One at the University of Northern B.C. is a scoping study to contribute to a long-term research strategy for worker health by the B.C. Wildfire Service. The second, supported by the government of Alberta, is examining the nature and concentration of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in the air that firefighters breathe and accumulate on their skin. This study will also “explore the practicality and effectiveness of firefighters using respiratory protective equipment; and investigate whether wildland firefighters have more chronic lung disease than other people of the same age, gender and geographic location.” A progress report on the initial phase of this project is expected in March 2020.

“Fire-weary Western Canadians are picking up stakes and moving on” in the *National Observer* (June 24 2019) considers the impact of smoke as well as fire over the past two years in the West, discussing how “residents ... young and old, often on fixed or limited incomes, are making tough choices about where they want to live and to work. The decisions are being informed by many factors, but often the most pressing concern is the increasing frequency of forest fires.” (This updates some of the themes of a 2017 *Globe and Mail* article **“Fort McMurray wildfires leaves livelihoods in limbo”**).

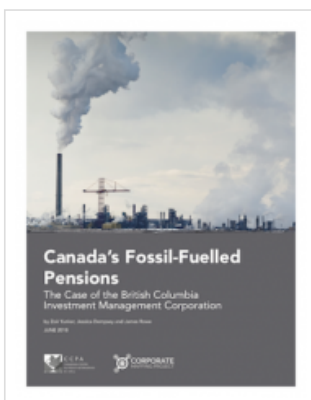
Unions have made consistent and significant donations to wildfire-affected communities. Some examples: **“Steelworkers Humanity Fund Contributes \$69,000 to Fort McMurray Recovery”** (2016); **“Steelworkers Contribute \$100,000 to B.C. Fire Relief”** (August 2017), and **Steelworkers Humanity Fund Contributes \$58,950 to Support Disaster Recovery Here and Abroad** (June 2019) – which specifies a \$10,000 donation to the High Level Native Friendship Centre food bank in Northern Alberta after forest fires caused the evacuation of the town. Also, **“Unifor wildfire relief donations top \$220k”** in 2017, and a **2018 press release** announced \$150,000 to the B.C. Fire Relief Fund of the Canadian Red Cross in 2018 through Unifor’s **Canadian Community Fund** as well as its Social Justice Fund .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta, British Columbia, California, evacuations, firefighters, first responders, forest fires, Fort McMurray, health care professionals, natural disasters, Occupational Health and Safety, wildfires** | **Leave a reply**

Alberta government proposes to snatch away joint governance of public sector workers’ pension funds

Posted on **November 7, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

The UCP government in Alberta has made the unilateral decision to consolidate Alberta public sector pensions under the control of the Alberta Investment Management Corporation, a crown corporation administered by the provincial government . According to an article in the *Calgary Herald*, **“Unions blast provincial decision to shift billions in public sector pension funds”** : “(The) government intends to reverse the option of public sector pension plans leaving AIMCo as a fund manager. Moreover, the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund, Workers’ Compensation Board and Alberta Health Services will be expected to transfer funds to AIMCo for management, reducing redundant administration.” More details appeared in **“Government contemplates changes to management of more than 400,000 Alberta workers’ pension plans”** in the *Edmonton Journal* (Nov. 1) which summarizes the opposition by the Alberta public sector unions on the grounds that the decision reverses a recent change that gave more than 351,000 public sector employees joint control of their pension funds, through a joint governance model that had been authorized by 2018 legislation and which only took effect in March 2019. The *Edmonton Journal* article also states that police and firefighter pensions might also be included in the government plans. **“Alberta’s public unions prep for a fight, whether in the streets or the courts”** is a broader overview from CBC Calgary which discusses the pension consolidation, as well as the wage cuts and workforce reduction included in **Bill 21** of the new budget under the new UCP government.



The attempt to shift Alberta workers' pension funds brings to mind the 2018 report, [*Canada's Fossil-Fuelled Pensions: The Case of the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation*](#) by the Corporate Mapping Project. The report found that despite its statements that it was a climate responsible investor, BCI had actually increased its fossil fuel investments – for example, by boosting investment from \$36.7 million in 2016 to \$65.3 million in 2017 in Kinder Morgan, owner of the Trans-Mountain pipeline. And although the new publication by the Corporate Mapping Project, [*Big Oil's Political Reach: Mapping fossil fuel lobbying from Harper to Trudeau*](#), examines the power of the fossil fuel industry at the federal level, some might argue that its influence could also extend to Alberta's pension management decisions.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [government workers](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [public sector works](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board shifting toward renewables; new study shows fossil fuel investments lose value

Posted on **November 7, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canadian workers can hope that climate change awareness is finally dawning at the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), responsible for the financial health of the Canadian public pension system. On November 4, a [CPPIB press release](#) announced that the Board entered into a purchase agreement with Pattern Energy Group Inc. ; the *Globe and Mail* describes the deal in [“CPPIB bets on renewable energy with \\$2.63-billion purchase of wind-farm operator Pattern Energy”](#) .



This would demonstrate a big leap for the CPPIB, which reported in its [2019 Report on Sustainable Investing](#), released on November 6, “CPPIB’s investments in global renewable energy companies more than doubled to \$3 billion in the year to June 30, 2019. This is up from just \$30 million in 2016.” The annual Report includes other details, including a description of the new climate change investing framework, launched in April 2019. *Bloomberg News* video channel (Nov. 5) offers [an interview with the CEO of CPPIB](#) discussing the CPPIB climate risk strategy, and providing the good news that the CPPIB will *not* participate in the expected blockbuster fossil fuel public offering by Saudi Aramco.

Changes to public sector pensions in Alberta

One hopes that the Alberta government may also invest in that province’s growing renewable energy industries, as it has made the unilateral decision to consolidate Alberta public sector pensions under the control of the Alberta Investment Management Corporation, a crown corporation administered by the provincial government . According to an article in the Calgary Herald, [“Unions blast provincial decision to shift billions in public sector pension funds”](#) : “(The) government intends to reverse the option of public sector pension plans leaving AIMCo as a fund manager. Moreover, the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund, Workers’ Compensation Board and Alberta Health Services will be expected to transfer funds to AIMCo for management, reducing redundant administration.” More details appeared in [“Government contemplates changes to management of more than 400,000 Alberta workers’ pension plans”](#) in the *Edmonton Journal* (Nov. 1) which summarizes the opposition by the Alberta public sector unions on the grounds that the decision reverses a recent change that gave more than 351,000 public sector employees joint control of their pension funds – a

joint governance model that had been authorized by 2018 legislation under the previous NDP government, and which only took effect in March 2019. The *Edmonton Journal* article also states that police and firefighter pensions might also be included in their plans. **“Alberta’s public unions prep for a fight, whether in the streets or the courts”** is a broader overview from CBC Calgary which discusses the pension consolidation, as well as the wage cuts and workforce reduction included in **Bill 21** of the new budget under the new UCP government.

The dangers of investing pension funds to prop up the Alberta fossil fuel industry are indicated by a recent study of three major state public pension funds in California and Colorado (CalSTRS, CalPERS and PERA) . **“Study Shows Pension Funds’ Refusal to Divest From Fossil Fuels Cost Retired Teachers, Firefighters, and Public Workers \$19 Billion”** appeared in *Common Dreams* on November 5, summarizing a study by Canadian publisher Corporate Knights. Their analysis concluded that those three pension funds collectively lost over \$19 billion in retirement savings for teachers, state troopers and public workers by continuing to invest in fossil fuels. The full reports are not available yet on the Corporate Knights website, but are on Google Drive [here](#) . A **response by 350.org** also summarizes the study, calls fossil fuel investments “a Losing Strategy for Retirement Savings — and the Planet” and asks “Why would any fund manager continue to invest in fossil fuels? Risky, harmful to our planet and shared future, and less profitable than many other investment opportunities, fossil fuel investments are a lose-lose choice.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [public sector workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Scientists, engineers, doctors protest the climate emergency

Posted on **November 6, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Scientists captured global attention with dire climate warnings in November when the mainstream media amplified their message contained in an article **published in the academic journal *BioScience***. The article itself is clear and direct, beginning with:

“Scientists have a moral obligation to clearly warn humanity of any catastrophic threat and to “tell it like it is.” On the basis of this obligation and the graphical indicators presented below, we declare, with more than 11,000 scientist signatories from around the world, clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency.”

*On the issue of *The Economy*, the article states: “Excessive extraction of materials and overexploitation of ecosystems, driven by economic growth, must be quickly curtailed to maintain long-term sustainability of the biosphere. We need a carbon-free economy that explicitly addresses human dependence on the biosphere and policies that guide economic decisions accordingly. Our goals need to shift from GDP growth and the pursuit of affluence toward sustaining ecosystems and improving human well-being by prioritizing basic needs and reducing inequality.”*

The **Alliance of World Scientists** invites scientists from around the world to sign on to the message. Summaries about the warnings appeared in *The Guardian* [here](#) and in *Common Dreams* **“Warning of ‘Untold Human Suffering,’ Over 11,000 Scientists From Around the World Declare Climate Emergency”** . A Canadian viewpoint appears in an article in the Edmonton edition of the *Toronto Star* , **“5 Alberta scientists tell us why they joined 11,000 scientific colleagues in declaring a climate emergency”** .

Engineers:

Like the scientists, other professionals recently spoke up about their “moral obligation” to do what they can to fight the climate emergency. **“Leading Australian engineers turn their backs on new fossil fuel projects”** in *The Guardian* reports: “About 1,000 Australian engineers and 90 organisations – including large firms and respected industry figures who have worked with fossil fuel companies – have signed a declaration to “evaluate all new projects against the environmental

necessity to mitigate climate change". The article focuses on a new group, [Australian Engineers Declare](#), which issued an [Open Letter](#) in September 2019, acknowledging that their professional organization, Engineers Australia, has a strong policy regarding climate change, but calling for faster action to address climate breakdown and biodiversity loss.

[Engineers Declare](#) states that engineers are connected to 65% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, and that "engineering teams have a responsibility to actively support the transition of our economy towards a low carbon future. This begins with honestly and loudly declaring a climate and biodiversity emergency...we commit to strengthening our work practices to create systems, infrastructure, technology and products that have a positive impact on the world around us." The declaration continues to list specific actions, including: "Learn from and collaborate with First Nations to adopt work practices that are respectful, culturally sensitive and regenerative."

Physicians:



On November 1, the editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*, one of the world's most prestigious medical journals which has published a [Countdown Report on Climate Change and Health](#) since 2016. As reported in "[Protesting climate change is a doctor's duty](#)", the most recent remarks were made in a [video](#) which calls for health professionals to engage in nonviolent social protest to address climate change. The [video](#) cites the British professional standard, Duties of a Doctor, and lauds [Doctors for Extinction Rebellion](#), four of whom have been arrested in London. The website of Doctors for Extinction Rebellion chronicles recent activities including that on October 17th 2019, the Royal College of Physicians committed to Divest from Fossil Fuels.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Climate Activism](#), [doctors](#), [Engineers](#), [Extinction Rebellion](#), [physicians](#), [Professional Ethics](#), [scientists](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Plastics in a circular economy: Canadian and global updates

Posted on [November 6, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In Oslo on October 23, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the UN Environment Programme published the first annual [Progress Report on the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment](#). Part 1 provides a high-level overview of the Global Commitment and its achievements; Part 2 profiles of the programs reported by some of the 400 businesses, organizations and governments which have signed on to the Global Commitment since it launched in 2018. An overview of the Global Commitment, including a list of all participants, is [here](#). The Progress Report states that the aim of the Global Commitment is to: "eliminate the plastic items we don't need; innovate so all plastics we do need are designed to be safely reused, recycled, or composted; and circulate everything we use to keep it in the economy and out of the environment." This first progress report sets a benchmark against which progress can be measured, and clearly calls for an increase in the ambition level, particularly to go beyond recycling, to encourage elimination and reuse. The Press release and [summary is here](#).

Recent actions to reduce Plastic waste in Canada:

The Canadian government is not a signatory to the Global Commitment, although at least one Canadian organization, Sustainable Prosperity Institute at the University of Ottawa, is a signatory, and the global [Progress Report](#) provide other examples of initiatives by Canadian businesses and the provincial government of British Columbia.

Plastic waste is a high-profile policy issue for Canadians, though nearly 90% of plastic waste in Canada is not recycled, according to the [Economic Study of the Canadian Plastic Industry, Market and Waste](#), commissioned by Environment

and Climate Change Canada and released in June 2019.



In October 2019, Greenpeace Canada conducted an audit of 13,822 pieces of plastic waste collected in volunteer shoreline clean-ups and identified the top five plastic polluters in Canada as Nestlé, Tim Hortons, Starbucks, McDonalds and Coca-Cola. CBC summarized the findings and the wider issue of plastic pollution in “[Nestlé, Tim Hortons named Canada’s top plastic polluters again](#)”.

Recent Actions on Plastic Waste:

On October 31, the government of Nova Scotia passed Bill 152, the [Plastic Bags Reduction Act](#), which also addresses other single-use plastics. This follows plastic bag bans by Prince Edward Island and some municipalities.

The government of British Columbia issued a [Plastics Action Plan Consultation Paper](#) which discussed four options for regulatory amendments, including single-use bans and extended producer responsibility. The [consultation process](#) was extended to September 30, with amendments to the regulations promised by the end of 2019.

In Ontario, where waste management has played an outsized role in the Conservative government’s [Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](#), an August 2019 [government press release](#) announced next steps for recycling and plastic waste management. The government had appointed a Special Advisor on Recycling and Plastic Waste, who released recommendations in his report [Renewing the Blue Box: Final report on the blue box mediation process](#). The report calls for a transfer of responsibility for the consumer stream Blue Box program to a new producer responsibility system across the province by December 31, 2025. These concluding remarks typify the business approach of the exercise:

“Investment in research and innovation to create the jobs from the recycled materials should be an interministerial responsibility. Garbage and recycling are not just an environmental issue – they are also economic opportunities.... More than 99 percent of the plastics collected by the city of Toronto are sold to recyclers right here in Ontario, going to facilities in Shelburne, Sarnia, and Toronto. Steel and glass collected by Toronto’s recycling programs are processed in Hamilton and Guelph, respectively. This is a prime example of recycling creating jobs and adding value to Ontario’s economy.”

Earlier actions:

The federal-provincial body, the [Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment](#) (CCME), approved the Phase 1 statement of a [Canada-Wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste](#) in June 2019. Phase 1 focuses on product design, single-use plastics, collection systems, recycling capacity and domestic markets. The Council promises to release Phase 2 of the Action Plan in 2020, focusing on preventing plastic pollution in oceans, inland lakes and waterways, advancing science to monitor the impacts of plastics pollution within the environment, consumer awareness, clean-up and global action.

Also in June 2019, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development released [The Last Straw: Turning the Tide on Plastic Pollution in Canada](#), the result of a [consultation](#) which received nine briefs and testimony from 41 witnesses (some of which were environmental groups, and none of which were labour unions). *The Last Straw* made 21 recommendations, calling on the federal government to take the lead on developing standards for plastic products made or sold in Canada, as well as on a national model recycling system and an extended producer responsibility framework for plastics. Other recommendations: Canada should establish a more ambitious goal of reaching zero plastic waste by 2030; commit to banning harmful single-use plastic products – specifically straws, bags, cutlery, cups, cigarette filters and polystyrene packaging.



At the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) National Convention in Montreal in October, one of the environmental resolutions approved by delegates was a call for a ban on single-use plastics, according to **Notes from the Floor**. (Online access to the Resolutions is restricted to CUPE members).



In April 2019, the Association of Postal Officials of Canada, the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and the Union of Postal Communications Employees reached a **formal agreement** with Canada Post to collaborate to reduce Canada Post's environmental footprint. The initial focus of activities will be towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste and single-use disposable plastics from Canada Post operations. In early 2020, the parties will publish an action plan for 2020-2022, with agreed-upon targets for 2020-2030.

Canada's Circular Economy Leadership Council published a **Policy Brief** in the winter 2019 – with recommendations for government action. The Council includes advocacy groups such as IISD and the National Zero Waste Council, as well as corporations including Unilever, Walmart, Canadian Tire, and IKEA.



In February 2019, the Sustainable Prosperity Institute released ***A Vision for a Circular Economy for Plastics in Canada: The Benefits of Plastics Without the Waste and How We Get it Right***.

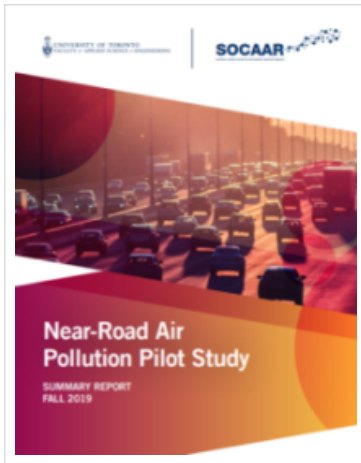
Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Extended Producer Responsibility](#), [plastic pollution](#), [Plastics Industry](#), [postal workers](#), [Recycling](#), [single-use plastics](#), [Waste management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

30% of Canadians exposed to air pollution from road traffic – with SUV's and diesel trucks the top polluters

Posted on **November 4, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The scientific journal *Nature* underscored the health dangers of air pollution in an April 2019 editorial titled, “**Stop denying the risks of air pollution**”, which stating that exposure to outdoor air pollution accounts for 4.2 million deaths globally each year, according to the World Health Organization. Although we face nothing like **the tragic current situation in Delhi**

India , Canadians should not be complacent. A two-year study into traffic-related pollutant concentrations found that nearly 30 per cent of Canadians live near major roadways and thus are exposed to a “soup” of pollutants in their daily lives.



Scientists measured pollutants at six monitoring stations near Toronto, including Highway 401, and Vancouver between 2015 – 2017, and published their latest results in October, in ***Near-road air pollution Pilot Study*** . Findings include:

Highly polluting diesel trucks are making a disproportionate contribution and they represent the major source of key pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and black carbon. Data for these pollutants indicate that excessive exposure to diesel exhaust can occur near roads with a significant proportion of truck traffic.

Canada’s cold winters can increase concentrations. Ultrafine particle concentrations, for example, are higher in winter. Nitrogen oxide concentrations are higher on cold winter days, suggesting that the emission control systems for diesel vehicles may not perform well at low temperatures.

... non-tailpipe emissions of particles from brakes and tires have been rising in Toronto since 2012 and now exceed primary emissions through tailpipes. The cause is attributed to the growing popularity of SUVs and pickup trucks, which cause more tire and brake wear because they’re heavier.

Many of the recommendations of the pollution study relate to strategies for continued scientific monitoring of transport-related pollution, but the report also recommends:

“Exposure to traffic-related air pollutants should be reduced where people live, work and play. Strategies should be taken to shape communities so that residents’ exposure to traffic-related air pollution is reduced. These strategies can contribute to existing plans for vibrant and compact communities. For example, a mix of land uses (e.g., commercial, retail, etc.) can be promoted within higher exposure areas; pedestrian and cycling infrastructure can be moved away from high exposure areas; and walkability, transit service quality and access, and parking management can be improved. Indoor exposure can be reduced by improving building design and operation, including ventilation and filtration systems.”

The research was conducted over a two-year period by The Southern Ontario Centre for Atmospheric Aerosol Research at the University of Toronto (SOCAAR), in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, and Metro Vancouver. The lead author is Professor Greg Evans of the University of Toronto. The **full report** is available in English only; a Summary report is available in English or French **from this link** .

Although the results have been published previously in academic journals, the study was widely covered in the media – for example, in the ***Toronto Globe and Mail*** , and a thorough **summary by the CBC** .

The growing threat of SUV’s and Diesel trucks :

An October **blog** by the International Energy Agency highlighted “a dramatic shift” to SUV’s: “...there are now over 200 million SUVs around the world, up from about 35 million in 2010, accounting for 60% of the increase in the global car fleet

since 2010. Around 40% of annual car sales today are SUVs, compared with less than 20% a decade ago.” The full analysis underlying the blog will be published in the forthcoming [World Energy Outlook 2019](#) in mid-November 2019.

In Canada, heavy duty trucks form the majority of the freight fleet, and freight transport accounts for 10.5% of our greenhouse gas emissions. The Pembina Institute published [Fuel savings and emissions reductions in heavy-duty trucking](#) in May 2019, to provide a roadmap to the technological solutions already available to reduce trucking emissions.

On October 16, the Capital Plan for Clean Prosperity published recommendations for the transportation sector: [How greening transport can boost economy and curb GHGs](#). These policy recommendations deal with all personal transportation, public transit, and freight transportation; regarding freight, the Capital Plan recommends that a federal grant system be established to allow for 50% of new freight trucks to be zero emissions vehicles, at an estimated total cost of \$14.4B. Estimated benefits for the freight industry include emissions reductions, savings of \$53.8 billion in fuel and maintenance costs, and 24,800 to 50,000 new jobs in the freight industry alone.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [diesel cars](#), [freight industry](#), [Toronto](#), [Trucking Industry](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia legislation targets “boldest” GHG emissions reduction targets in Canada

Posted on **November 4, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Tidal turbine in the Bay of Fundy NS

Nova Scotia’s Premier Stephen McNeil issued an [October 30th press release](#) to mark the end of the legislative session, stating: “We began the sitting by introducing a ban on single-use plastic bags at retail checkouts and calling for an emergency debate on climate change. We ended by bringing in the boldest greenhouse gas emission reduction target in the country and some of the strongest environmental legislation in North America.” The “boldest” GHG emissions reduction target referred to is stated in Bill 213, the [Sustainable Development Goals Act](#) passed on Oct.30, calling for GHG emissions reduction of 53 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. The Act recognizes the urgency of a global climate emergency, and states that the goal of sustainable prosperity must include the elements of sustainable development, a circular economy, an inclusive economy, and “Netukulimk”, which is defined as a Mi’kmaq First Nation concept: “the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community by achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity or productivity of the environment”.

A [press release](#) from the Ecology Action Centre of Halifax welcomes the new legislation; a more detailed [EAC Backgrounder](#) discusses the level of GHG emissions called for, and concludes: “..... A legislated target of 53% below 2005 levels by 2030, for Nova Scotia ... sets us on track to overshoot 2 degree C of global warming and it is not based on

our differentiated responsibility and capability. For this reason, the EAC continues to advocate for a legislated target of 50% below 1990 levels by 2030 (equivalent to 58% below 2005 levels by 2030)."

Other initiatives introduced in the [Sustainable Development Goals Act](#) include: an extensive public consultation process to update the province's climate strategy, to be called Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth and to be released by the end of 2020, and a Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund to help communities with mitigation and adaptation. Summaries of the legislation are provided by articles in the [National Observer](#) and the [CBC](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [First Nations](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta updates: Budget targets public sector, sets stage for new regime for oil and gas industry

Posted on **November 1, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the federal election over, the provincial government in Alberta released two important new policies: the Budget statement on October 26, and the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) regulation, a system for output-based carbon pricing for industrial GHG emissions.

Alberta Budget – a recipe for a “Kenny Recession”?:

A [government press release](#) announced the budget on October 26, with Highlights provided at a [Budget webpage here](#). The government states that social service programs: “will be redesigned methodically and responsibly to address economic, social and fiscal challenges, while continuing to support the most vulnerable. Countering that statement is [“Alberta wants to cut public service wages. It will hit everyone from teachers to hospital support staff”](#) in the [National Observer](#) (Oct. 30), as well as reaction from the unions, including [the Health Sciences Association of Alberta \(HSAA\)](#), which calls the Budget “incredibly dishonest” and details the cuts which form “the groundwork to justify a transfer of vital public services to the private sector”. The Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) campaign against the Budget flies under the flag of [“The Kenney Recession”](#), with arguments built on a report prepared for the AFL by economist Hugh Mackenzie: [The Kenney Recession: Proposed UCP cuts would hurt economy worse than oil price crash](#). The report considers four different scenarios and states “The loss of 50,000 jobs during the oil price crash from 2014 to 2017 will pale in comparison to the estimated 113,500 jobs that would be lost in Alberta if the Kenney government goes ahead with cuts of the magnitude being considered.” In an earlier press release, AFL President [Gil McGowan disputes](#) the findings of a government-commissioned report by Janice MacKinnon, saying “her report is filled with distortions and outright lies about public services, public-sector spending and public-sector wages.”

As for the Budget's impact on the energy sector, the government's Highlights state an allocation of \$601 million, yet do not directly mention the [Coal Workforce Transition Program](#) or Fund, initiated by the previous NDP government and flagged for concern in an [October 15 article in The Energy Mix](#).

The Government's Budget [Highlights](#) for the Energy industry are:

increase focus on natural gas and pipelines by implementing a strategic plan to help reinvigorate the industry and stand up for Alberta's economic interests

work with industry to help streamline project approvals, improve pipeline access and facilitate the construction of infrastructure to get our natural gas to international markets

review the Alberta Energy Regulator to identify changes and enhancements to its mandate, governance and operations so Alberta remains a predictable place to invest and a world leader in responsible resource development

extend the royalty credit model under the Petrochemicals Diversification Program to incent future projects and cancel the Partial Upgrading Program and Petrochemicals Feedstock Program to reduce the financial risk to Albertans

cancel the transition to a capacity market and end the rate cap program – saving Albertans about \$270 million

cancel the crude-by-rail program, saving Albertans at least \$300 million

establish the Canadian Energy Centre corporation to implement the “Fight Back Strategy” to proactively defend our critical energy industry and the people who work in it

TIER – the proposed new Emissions Reduction Regulation for industrial emitters:

On October 29, the **government announced** the introduction of Bill 19, the **Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act (TIER)**, characterized in the press release as “the centrepiece of government’s upcoming climate strategy, .. an improved system to help energy-intensive facilities find innovative ways to reduce emissions and invest in clean technology to stay competitive and save money. TIER is a unique solution that allows the province to reduce emissions without interference from Ottawa.”

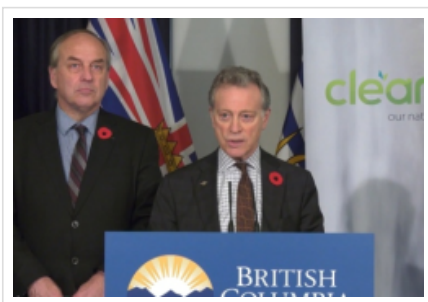
Reaction comes in “**Alberta bets the house on technology to help province slash carbon pollution**” in the *National Observer*, and in a lengthy Opinion piece by Andrew Leach, “**Alberta’s TIER regulations good on electricity, not so good on oilsands**” at the CBC. Leach characterizes the TIER policy as “a serious greenhouse gas policy in Alberta” but states that it is “backwards”: “TIER makes emissions-reducing innovation less advantageous than it would be under CCIR [the existing system], since the better performing your new facility is, the lower your emissions credits will be every year for as long as the policy remains in place.”

The Smart Prosperity Institute provides an explanation of the complexities of the proposed system, which if passed, would take effect in January 2020: “**TIER in a nutshell – The Alberta Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction regulation**” (Oct. 30). More briefly, CBC published “**How Alberta will keep its \$30-per-tonne carbon tax but make it easier for some big emitters to avoid paying**”.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Carbon Pricing, Energy policy, Oil and gas industry, output based pricing, privatization, provincial climate change policies** | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. climate change legislation improves transparency, breaks cycle of “setting targets then missing them”

Posted on **October 31, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A press release from the government of British Columbia announced “**Climate action gets new teeth with accountability act**”, describing Bill 38, **The Climate Change Accountability Amendment Act** introduced in the provincial legislature by

the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy on October 30. The press release summarizes the main provisions, including:

- Government will set an interim emissions target for GHG emissions by no later than Dec. 31, 2020, on the path to the legislated 2030 target – which remains unchanged at 40% in greenhouse gas reductions below 2007 levels.
- No later than March 31, 2021, separate 2030 sectoral targets will also be established following engagement with stakeholders, Indigenous peoples and communities, to “make sure carbon pollution is reduced effectively across B.C.’s economy, homes, workplaces and transportation choices”.
- Every fifth year, the climate change accountability report will include an updated provincial climate risk assessment, which will build on *B.C.’s Preliminary Strategic Risk Assessment*, published in July 2019.
- A new independent advisory committee will be established, consisting of no more than 20 members, of which at least half must be women. The new committee is to be modelled on the Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council, now completed.

Initial response have been published by the **Pembina Institute**, which states: “We applaud the government for taking concrete steps to break the cycle of setting goals and missing them.” and “The reforms put forward by the B.C. government should form a blueprint for transparency and accountability on climate action at the federal level.” Also, from the **Business Coalition for a Clean Economy** (an initiative of the Pembina Institute): “As businesses committed to acting on climate change, we commend the government for its willingness to be accountable for its climate action promises.”

Less favourable reaction is reported by **CTV News**, which highlights reaction from the West Coast Environmental Law Association, (full statement [here](#)) and also the Georgia Straight Alliance, whose spokesperson states: “We are disappointed that B.C. did not choose to put a mechanism in place to reassess their climate targets in the light of the best available science, and will continue to advocate for them to do so.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A proposal to convert GM Oshawa to electric vehicle production under public and worker ownership

Posted on **October 30, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Triple Bottom Line Preliminary Feasibility Study of the GM Oshawa Facility: Possibilities for Sustainable Community Wealth was released in September 2019 by **Green Jobs Oshawa** – a coalition of workers, community leaders, environmentalists, labour and social justice advocates whose goal is to re-purpose the soon-to-be-shuttered GM Oshawa auto assembly plant “for socially beneficial manufacturing.”

The call to convert GM Oshawa to electric vehicle production has been made before – notably [by Sam Gindin](#), as part of a Lucas Plan-style conversion, and by journalist Linda McQuaig, most recently in her new book [The Sport & Prey of Capitalists](#). But the new [Triple Bottom Line feasibility study](#) fleshes out these goals with facts and figures: it estimates that a public investment of \$1.4 to \$1.9 billion would be required to acquire and retool the Oshawa assembly plant for Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) production, which, when supported by government procurement of the vehicles, would result in financial break-even by year 4, and create over 13,000 jobs (up to 2,900 jobs in parts supply and manufacturing) and over 10,000 multiplier jobs.

The *Triple Bottom Line* study was written by Russ Christianson, a consultant and active proponent of worker cooperatives. He uses “a triple bottom line evaluation”, including: 1. an economic analysis of the current and future auto industry market, capital investment required, skills and equipment available at the GM facility and in the community, and the potential new products that could be manufactured. 2. Social needs in the Oshawa community for well-paid, dignified work, and 3. “How production at the plant can address the defining issue of our times, climate catastrophe”.

Some Highlights from the report:

“By paying a good wage to auto workers – this study proposes the existing GM Oshawa tier 1 wage of \$35 per hour for assembly workers – it will be possible to gain the workers’ commitment by investing in their jobs through shared-ownership of the new organization.”

“Governments will need to negotiate alongside the workers and community to gain public ownership of the GM Oshawa plant. The financial forecasts include a start-up investment of \$10,000 from each of the workers combined with community investment for a total of \$37.5 million in Scenario 1, and Scenario 2 estimates \$25 million in investment from workers and the community.”

“By the end of year 5, the forecasts show that BEVs will represent 30 to 40 percent of these governments’ total fleets, except for Canada Post, which (like the U.S. Postal Service) is expected to replace the majority of their delivery fleet vehicles with BEVs.”

The CBC reported on the launch of the feasibility study on September 21 in [“Autoworkers at GM’s Oshawa plant ask feds for more than \\$1B to build electric vehicles”](#) and included commentary from supporters and detractors. In support, the article quotes from an email by Olivier Trescases, head of the University of Toronto’s [Electric Vehicle Research Centre](#), which stated: “I think that aiming for government owned EV fleets and electrified public transportation is strategically very important and more logical than trying to produce passenger cars through a Crown corporation.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Automobiles](#), [car manufacturing](#), [cooperatives](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [GM Oshawa](#), [worker ownership](#) | [2 Replies](#)

Canadian youth sue federal government seeking stronger climate action

Posted on [October 29, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Just days after the federal election, on October 25, fifteen Canadians aged 10 to 19 launched a lawsuit in federal court, seeking a court-ordered plan for climate change based on the best available science. The plaintiffs, from seven Canadian provinces and the Northwest Territories, announced their suit in Vancouver at [the Fridays for Future climate strike alongside Greta Thunberg](#) and recounted their personal experiences, including asthma, Lyme disease, mental health challenges, and injuries from wildfire smoke.

The **Statement of Claim** in *La Rose v. Her Majesty the Queen* alleges that by failing to protect essential public trust resources like air and water, the Canadian government has violated the children's right to life, liberty and security of the person under Section 7 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It also alleges that the government has violated Section 15 of the *Charter*, since youth are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change. A [press release](#) from the David Suzuki Foundation includes quotes from some of the individuals involved; the case was widely reported in the following sources: the [CBC](#), [The Energy Mix](#), the [National Observer](#), [Toronto Star](#), and the [Vancouver Star](#).

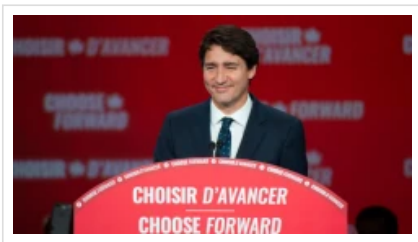
This is the second climate change case brought by Canadian youth: in 2019, ENvironnement JEUnesse brought a class action suit on behalf of Quebecers under the age of 35, which argued that the Canadian government was violating the class members' fundamental rights by failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to ensure a safe climate. [In July 2019, the Quebec Superior Court dismissed](#) the petitioners' motion because it rejected the nature of the class, namely, the age limit of 35 years. The case is under appeal.

The children in *La Rose v. Her Majesty the Queen* are represented by the B.C. law firms of Arvay Finlay LLP and Tollefson Law Corporation, and supported by the [Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation \(CELL\)](#), the [David Suzuki Foundation](#), and [Our Children's Trust](#) in the U.S., which pioneered the pending landmark youth case of *Juliana vs. United States*. Our Children's Trust compiles information on climate change [lawsuits around the world](#) including Australia, Belgium, Columbia, France, India, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Uganda, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. The [Sabin Center for Climate Change Law](#) at New York's Columbia Law School maintains a database of cases in the U.S., and a separate database from the rest of the world – approximately 1400 climate lawsuits against governments and fossil fuel corporations in more than 25 countries.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [climate change and youth](#), [Climate change Law](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Protesters arrested as they demand Green New Deal policies from newly-elected Members of Parliament in Canada

Posted on [October 29, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Liberal party of Justin Trudeau was returned to power in the Canadian federal election on October 21 as a minority government. Enthusiasts such as the [Washington Post](#) called the election “a victory for the planet”, based on the fact that climate change was a key issue and that a strong majority of the popular vote went to the four parties with serious plans for action (Liberals, Greens, NDP, and the Bloc). Catherine Abreu, executive director of Climate Action Network Canada, sums up a more complex situation in a [National Observer](#) article: “With at least 63 per cent of voters casting ballots for parties that put forward strong climate platforms, it is clear that a majority of Canadians asked for more ambitious and urgent climate action...People voted out of fear of the Conservatives today, rejecting their threats to roll back climate policy. At the same time, voters did not have enough confidence in the Liberal climate record to hand them another majority.”



Environmental activists are determined to press the Liberal government to forge ahead with strong climate action – as evidenced by the arrest of 27 protesters on October 28. Youth activists organized by [Our Time for a Green New Deal](#) were arrested and served with a 30-day ban from Parliament Hill after holding a sit-in in the House of Commons in an attempt to deliver “mandate letters” to newly-elected members of Parliament. The letters call for a Green New Deal, including strong climate action, respect for Indigenous rights, job creation, and adherence to the IPCC target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. The [CBC](#) and [Common Dreams](#) describe the protest demonstration. The mandate letter is [here](#), as part of the Our Time ongoing [news reports](#).

What do environmentalists want from the new government?

In “[Climate Community Declares the Win as Polling Shows Climate Concern Driving Vote](#)”, *Energy Mix* compiles reactions from representatives of Climate Action Network-Canada, Smart Prosperity, Clean Energy Canada, and others across Canada and the U.S.

“[Canada to Trudeau – We expect more on climate](#)” is a press release from Oil Change International which lays out four core demands: Legislate the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; Promote a just transition for oil and gas workers and communities; Say no to Trans Mountain Pipeline, and Eliminate all fossil fuel subsidies.

“[With Climate On The Agenda, Advocates Call For Legislated Targets, Fossil Industry Phasedown](#)” is an Opinion piece by Mitchell Beer in *The Energy Mix* which surveys responses of environmentalists, including that of Environmental Defence Executive Director Tim Gray, calling for: “a legislated and more ambitious greenhouse gas target, an accountability mechanism to keep emission reductions on track, a swift end to fossil fuel subsidies, and reform of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act as first orders of business for the new government.”

“[McKenna wins, Sohi loses in mixed result for Liberals on green, energy files](#)” in the *National Observer* comments on the results of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the loss for the Minister of Natural Resources, both of whom have carried the torch of Liberal climate policy.

“What a Liberal minority government means for Canada’s environment” in *The Narwhal* predicts the likely policies which will survive in the minority position, including a carbon tax, incentives for electric vehicles, a ban on single use plastics, and “sooner rather than later”, a phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies.

“Minority government an opportunity for progressives”, a press release by Jerry Dias, president of Unifor, states that the union is “already making plans, in fact, to go to Ottawa and push progressive causes, including labour law reform, infrastructure funding, green transition, pharmacare, electoral reform, affordable housing and more.”

Articles addressing the election’s other take-away, regional divisions:

“Why are Albertans so damned angry?” in *The Straight* (Oct. 25) has been widely praised in the Twittersphere. The article is by Eric Denhoff, a self-described “Prairie boy” and a former deputy minister in B.C. and Alberta under Liberal, NDP, Conservative, and Social Credit governments. He writes that “Trudeau and his Ottawa team are mystified that having factually delivered much more cash to Alberta in four years than Harper in nine-plus, buying a pipeline at considerable political expense, they face this level of hostility.” But sparing no criticism of Alberta Conservative Premier Jason Kenney, Denhoff concludes that “politicians find it easy to trade in a province with a median family income 25 percent or so higher than the rest of the country, with no sales tax, lower income and corporate taxes, and services Ontarians could only dream about. So, the battle will continue... more intense than ever. Ottawa will have to give, and Alberta will have to adjust. As in any relationship.”

“Liberal win stokes talk of separation in Alberta” from the *Calgary Herald* and **“Oilpatch market reaction muted after election of minority Liberal government”** in *The Star*.

“A landslide win for climate politics. Now beware its nemeses” (Oct. 22) in the *National Observer* states: “We have got to be self-reflective at an important moment like this, and we should beware the twin nemeses of victory — factionalism and triumphalism... We can’t allow the parties’ activists and operators to go on placing politics above planet... we need to raise the chorus demanding deeper, faster action and simultaneously convince sensible, normal people that the policies needed are completely reasonable.”

“Of course Canada is divided- that’s the whole point of elections” by Crawford Kilian in *The Tyee* (Oct. 24) calls for us to focus on the self-diagnosis in the election results, “and explore possible remedies for all our ailments: Progressive Narcissism, the Tories’ Prairie Victimization Syndrome, the Bloc’s Passive-Aggressive Separatism, and the Liberals’ High-Functioning Climate Denialism.”

“Politicians Offered a Choice between Climate Fantasies as Our Future Grows Bleaker” (Oct. 25) in *The Tyee* in which Andrew Nikofoeruk grimly states: “Our pathetic politics reflects the inertia in the fossil fuel system, the moral poverty of the status quo and a popular denial about the scale of change required to prevent an unending emergency.”

Shawn McCarthy, former Globe and Mail reporter, writes in the *National Observer* – **“What Trudeau needs to do to win the West”**. He calls for “a multi-pronged approach to address the seemingly contradictory realities: the urgent need to reduce emissions, and the uneven cost that effort imposes across the country.” He argues “We tend to focus on — and argue over — the supply side of the energy equation, especially oil and gas versus renewables. The demand side requires far more attention. There is a vast amount of progress that can be made in improving our national efficiency and reducing energy consumption, thereby saving businesses and consumers money over the medium term.”

In a similar vein, Bruce Lourie, Director of Canadians for Clean Prosperity wrote in the *National Observer* before the election: **“If Scheer wins, Albertans can kiss their economic future goodbye”**. He promotes a Capital Plan for Clean Prosperity and states: “The only option for Canada is to understand and embrace the complexity of how to finance the transition to a clean economy through a measured, long-term transition investment strategy that sees the cleaning up of the fossil fuel sector in a way that demonstrates global leadership. Politicians pitting different parts of Canada against each other is about the worst possible outcome for Canadians and a sad reflection on the narrow-mindedness of our Balkanized politicians. We need to be competing with the world, not each other.”

For readers from the international community seeking more insight into Canadian politics, the *New York Times* focuses on the regional differences in **“Trudeau Re-election Reveals Intensified Divisions in Canada”** and Jeremy Wildeman

of the University of Bath, England explains “Justin Trudeau’s political setback: A surprise to the world, but not to Canada” in *The Conversation* .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [climate change and politics](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition Initiative among positive developments at U.N. Climate Action Summit 2019

Posted on **October 15, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The **United Nations 2019**

Climate Action Summit in New York at the end of September has been viewed as a disappointment by many because it failed to deliver new and dramatic commitments from the major polluting countries, as summarized by *Inside Climate News* in “**Small Countries Step Up While Major Emitters Are Silent, and a Teen Takes World Leaders to Task**” . But **CBC provides a more optimistic view in its summary** of the “Big Takeaways” from the meetings, including news that the Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance, composed of pension fund managers and insurers (and including La Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec) **committed to carbon-neutral investment portfolios by 2050** . A **compilation of UN Press releases** reveals many new initiatives announced at the Summit.

Climate Action Jobs Initiative to promote Just Transition

One important such initiative: the Climate Action Jobs Initiative, aimed at the creation of decent jobs and protecting livelihoods as part of climate action. The Initiative will be led by the International Labour Organization (ILO), along with International Trade Union Confederation and the International Organisation of Employers, and will build on the **ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition**, released in 2016. According to the **press release** of September 18, almost 50 countries have committed to forming Just Transition Plans, with suggested specific measures including skills development and upgrading, social protections, and mechanisms for inclusive social dialogue to achieve consensus for transformative change.

“The commitments represent a significant engagement by governments, employers organizations, trade unions, UN agencies and civil society to pursue a common agenda to advance a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.”

Other Reports announced before and during the U.N. Climate Summit included:



The Heat is On: Taking Stock of Global Climate Emissions, released by the UNFCCC and the U.N. Development Program in advance of the Summit meetings. It analyses trends in the international progress to “ratchet” the emissions reductions goals under the Paris Agreement and emphasizes the urgency for countries to put plans in place for the 5-year review of the Paris targets in 2020... “While climate action has accelerated since Paris, it still falls far short of an unprecedented transformation needed to limit impacts of climate change. ...Many developed economies are mapping out long-term plans to eliminate GHGs by 2050, even as they have yet to clarify plans for shorter-term NDC revisions.” Regarding “Long Term Strategies”: “12 countries have submitted LTS to the UNFCCC since 2016 – Canada, Germany, Mexico, the United States, Benin, France, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Marshall Islands, Fiji and Japan.”

The ***United in Science*** report, which is composed of a number of reports from such agencies as the World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Global Carbon Project, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The reports state that the world is currently on track for a more than 10 per cent rise in emissions above 2016 levels by 2030, and concluded that governments must triple their 2015 pledges to keep global warming well below 2 C by 2100, or increase them fivefold to hold it to 1.5 C . The WMO’s greatest concern is with sea level rise, which has averaged 3.2 millimetres per year since 1993 but hit 5.0 millimetres per year between 2014 and 2019. It also found that the oceans had the highest heat content on record in 2018.

Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) : this IPCC report presenting the work of 104 scientists from 36 countries, synthesizing 7,000 publications – the most comprehensive study to date of the current and future impacts of the climate crisis on Earth’s oceans and the cryosphere (the parts of the planet that are covered in ice). Rising ocean temperatures means more intense tropical cyclones, with more powerful storm surges and downpours, leading to more extreme weather along the coasts and potentially devastating loss of marine ecosystems. Summaries are provided by the ***National Observer*** , ***Inside Climate News*** and international NGO ***OneOcean***.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [decent work](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Just Transition](#), [Ocean Protection](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [United Nations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change litigation in Canada: ENvironnement JEUnesse is under appeal

Posted on **October 15, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A September [blog published by legal firm Aird Berlis](#) summarizes the July 2019 decision of the Quebec Superior Court in Canada's youth climate change litigation: *ENvironnement JEUnesse v. Canada*. The environmental group [ENvironnement JEUnesse](#) also summarizes the progress of the case, which sought to represent Quebecers under the age of 35 in a class action suit, arguing that the Canadian government was violating the class members' fundamental rights by failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to ensure a safe climate. In July 2019, the Quebec Superior Court dismissed the petitioners' motion because it rejected the nature of the class proposed by the petitioners, namely, the age limit of 35 years. Lawyers for ENvironnement JEUnesse filed an appeal of the decision in August and await a hearing. The French-language decision is [here](#) ; an unofficial English-language translation posted by Columbia Law School is [here](#) . ENvironnement JEUnesse sees itself as part of the global movement of climate litigation begun with the Urgenda decision in The Netherlands, and summarizes other cases around the world on its [English-language website](#). The [French-language website](#) is much more informative – in addition to updates on the case, it posts news on the Quebec climate youth movement and [its annual conference](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change Law](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Quebec](#), [Urgenda Decision](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Court rules that government broke the law by failure to consult on repeal of Cap and Trade regulations

Posted on [October 15, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A suit against the Conservative Ford government of Ontario was dismissed by the Ontario Divisional Court on October 11, but in the decision, a majority of judges wrote that the government breached Ontario's *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR) by repealing the province's Cap and Trade regulations without the required public consultation. The CBC [summarizes the decision](#) and the [National Observer writes](#),

“the judges found the Ford government was in “clear breach of the EBR” and that “its apparent efforts to avoid judicial review of this conduct raises serious concerns – not about whether the government had the lawful authority to repeal the Cap and Trade Act, but of its respect for the Rule of Law and the role of the courts, as a branch of government.”

The suit was brought by Greenpeace and Ecojustice in 2018. The [Greenpeace reaction](#) on October 11 states:

“Scrapping cap-and-trade not only undercut a successful program that was helping Ontario reduce climate change-causing greenhouse gas emissions, it also cancelled 227 clean energy programs that would have benefit schools, hospitals, small businesses and public housing projects. It’s especially concerning that the Ford government did this in a way that silenced groups like Greenpeace and Ontario’s youth – who do not have a voice to vote, but stand to lose the most from climate inaction... Ontarians are marching in the streets demanding real action in response to the climate emergency and we call on the Ford government to listen to the people this time, starting with an abandonment of its challenge of the federal carbon tax.”

The Greenpeace statement also refers to [Failure to Launch](#) , a progress report on climate action in Ontario released on October 10 by Environmental Defence. A blog [summarizes the findings](#); the full report is [here](#) , describing the destruction

of climate change policies from the previous Liberal government, and making recommendations for improved future action.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Climate change Law](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How are workers affected by PG&E power outage in California?

Posted on **October 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The California utility company largely blamed for the catastrophic Camp Fire in 2018 is making headlines again. In the midst of dry, windy weather conditions, Pacific Gas & Electric shut off power to approximately 800,000 accounts (translating into 1.8 million people) on October 8, in an effort to reduce the risk of another wildfire caused by sparking from their electricity transmission lines. The *Los Angeles Times* provides a general overview in [“Gov. Newsom slams PG&E over ‘unacceptable’ power outages and failure to fix systems”](#) (Oct. 10) and [“Millions Brace for Unprecedented Power Cuts in California”](#) in *Bloomberg News* reports that shutoffs will affect major cities in the San Francisco Bay area, including Oakland, San Jose and Berkeley, with a possible duration of up to 6 days.

The chaos, anger and inconvenience has additional significance for workers, described briefly in [“Confusion reigns as California utility cuts power in 34 counties to reduce wildfire risk”](#) (Oct. 10) in *Energy Mix*. More details appear in [“What happens when a power company decides to turn off the electricity for millions of residents?”](#) in *Wildfire Today* which states: “The indirect effects of having no electricity expand to a much larger population when you consider traffic lights not working, tunnels on highways being shut down, plus the closure of gas stations, schools, and businesses At some point, cellular telephone towers and infrastructure may exhaust their emergency power supply systems, not to mention the batteries in the public’s cell phones...And in an emergency, firefighters’ communications could be hampered by the disabling of their radio repeaters on mountaintops. Notifying residents of approaching fires and conducting evacuations in order to save lives could be challenging.”

And what of the PG&E workers? The local *Sacramento Bee* newspaper reported [“PG&E employee shot at ahead of utility’s massive Northern California power shutoff”](#) (Oct. 9) as residents take out their frustrations on employees doing their jobs. The *Washington Post* reported [“PG&E pleads for employee safety amid outage after police report egging, gunfire at vehicle”](#). One worker’s wife is widely reported to have issued [a social media plea](#) stating that utility workers “are simply employees and have no say in any decision making so shouting profanities or resorting to violence towards

PG&E workers will never do any good but it would instead hurt someone's father, mother, brother, sister, husband or wife. " Truly a dark time.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [California](#), [climate change and violence](#), [electricity sector](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Pacific Gas and Electric](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Norway municipal pension fund divests from Canada's oil sands

Posted on **October 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 7, the *National Observer* reported "[Norway public pension fund severs final link with Canada's oilsands](#)". The article describes that KLP, which manages the pensions of Norway's 900,000 nurses, firefighters and other local and state government employees, has sold off US\$33 million worth of equity holdings and US\$25 million in bonds from Canada's Cenovus Energy, Suncor Energy, Imperial Oil (majority owned by ExxonMobil) and Husky Energy, as well as Russia's Tatneft PAO. This follows the June 2019 vote by the Norwegian Parliament to tighten the coal exclusion criteria of Norway's Government Pension Fund Global (GPF), and the **October 1 decision** by the GPF to divest from oil exploration companies (although it still maintains investment in downstream and integrated ventures). The moves are seen as reflective of the instability of oil and gas investments, and it is notable that the KLP fund has had a 22.8 percent return so far this year, 1.5 per cent ahead of its benchmark.

In contrast to the Norwegian pension administrators, the **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB)** as recently as March 2019 **invested \$1.34 billion** in a joint venture which will expand fracking in the western Marcellus and Utica shale basins of the U.S.. The CPPIB manages \$400 billion to support the public pensions of Canadians, and continues to hold hundreds of millions of dollars in oil and gas companies, including Enbridge, Suncor and Pembina Pipeline. The Green Party of Canada platform in the 2019 election commits to "regulate the CPP Investment Board to require divestment of coal, oil and gas shares and ensure that all investments are ethical and promote environmental sustainability."

Another recent, high-profile divestment: The University of California announced that by the end of September, the university's \$70 billion pension fund and \$13.4 billion endowment fund will have divested all investments related to fossil fuel extraction. The reason given: "*The reason we sold some \$150 million in fossil fuel assets from our endowment was the reason we sell other assets: They posed a long-term risk to generating strong returns for UC's diversified portfolios.*" A September 18 [article in Vox](#) is one of many reporting on this high-profile decision.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Divestment](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Norway](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Calls for public banks to finance a Green New Deal and Just Transition

Posted on **October 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new reports in September call for a greater role for public banks to finance a Green New Deal and just transition.

A US Green Investment Bank for All: Democratized finance for a Just Transition was published by the Next System Project in September, proposing a new, democratically-managed structure for financial institutions so that they function in the public interest to achieve a green and just transition. From the report: "Of the \$454 billion in climate finance invested in 2016, the private investment sector, which controls 80 percent of all banking assets, contributed \$230 billion, while the public sector contributed \$224 billion. That is, with only 20 percent of total assets, public banks invest nearly as much as all

private banks combined. The short-term, return-maximizing horizons of private finance have failed, utterly, to drive anything like a green transition. The future of climate finance must look to the public sphere, not the private.” “ The key political-economic decision in the design is the balance between concessionary lending (nonprofit and loss-making operations) and non-concessionary lending (that is, for-profit). The answers must follow from the bank’s public interest mandate and triple bottom line.” The full report is summarized in “[We need a democratized Green Infrastructure Bank for a Just Transition](#)” in Open Democracy.

A second report also cites the failures of the international global market-based financial system. The [2019 Trade and Development Report: Financing a Global Green New Deal](#) was **released** by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on September 25, and states: “We can meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, but only if we find the political will to change the rules of the international economic game and adopt policies that scale up the resources needed for a big investment push led by the public sector and set the global economy on an expansionary course.”

UNCTAD economists project that a net increase in global employment of at least 170 million jobs, with an overall reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, if total green investment were increased annually by around US\$1.7 trillion, which they estimate at one third of what is currently spent by governments on subsidizing fossil fuels. Although each country will require a unique policy mix, the report calls for changes for all to include fiscal stimulus, public investment in infrastructure and green energy, and measures to boost wages. The report also contends that the 2030 Agenda goals to eradicate poverty and meet nutrition, health and education goals will impose unsustainable financial burdens on many developing countries, also requiring reforms to the international trade, financial and monetary system.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [Green Finance](#) | [21 Replies](#)

Will the fossil fuel industry hijack energy policy in Canada’s election?

Posted on **October 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

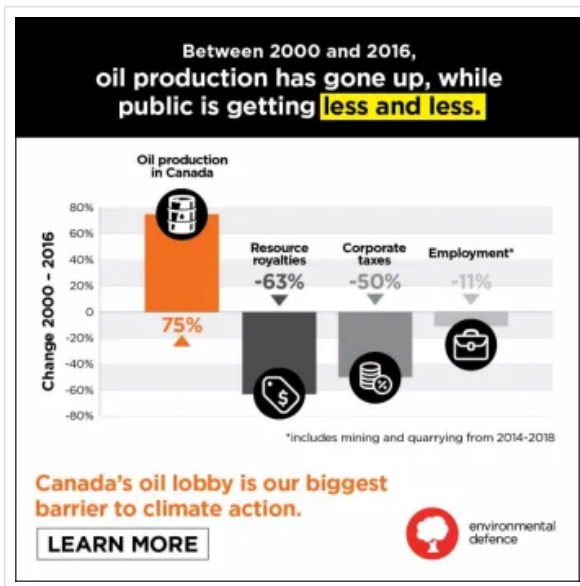
As the Canadian federal election campaign counts down to October 21, *The Narwhal’s* [Explainer](#) from September remains one of the most readable and interesting overviews of the parties’ energy and environmental platforms; the [survey responses](#) from a consolidated questionnaire from the major environmental advocacy groups remains the most complete. Climate activism has been a backdrop to the campaign: according to [Fridays for Future Canada](#), over one million Canadians in 245 communities participated in climate strikes between September 20 to September 27 (a [summary from Energy Mix](#) gives more details). On October 7, Extinction Rebellion began their demonstrations, blockading bridges in Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto, Edmonton and Halifax – and [according to the Vancouver Star](#), pledging to escalate actions.

New publications regarding the fossil fuel industry:

Canada’s relationship with its oil and gas industry was the subject of a [country profile of Canada](#) published by Carbon Brief on October 8, providing the basic facts and figures. *The Narwhal* published an Opinion Piece highlighting the issue of fossil fuel subsidies: “[Canada’s fossil fuel subsidies amount to \\$1,650 per Canadian. It’s got to stop.](#)” The article is based on a [May 2019 report](#) from the International Monetary Fund which estimated Canada’s fossil fuel subsidies at close to \$60 billion in 2015, despite the government’s G20 commitments to phase out “inefficient” fossil fuel subsidies. A related report by Environmental Defence and the International Institute for Sustainable Development in February, [Doubling Down with Taxpayer Dollars](#), examined \$2Billion in fossil fuel subsidies in Alberta.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) [Energy Platform](#) – essentially a “wish list” from the fossil fuel industry – calls for expanded production for oil and gas and Liquefied Natural Gas. In report released on October 7, Environmental Defence estimates that the CAPP proposals would increase oil and gas emissions by 60% from 2017 to 2030. The report, [The Single Biggest Barrier to Climate Action in Canada – the Oil and Gas Lobby](#), documents the two types of barriers created by the oil and gas lobby: 1. the actual carbon emissions of the sector, which are responsible

for 27% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions and for 80 % of the increase in Canada's overall emissions; and 2. Industry campaigns and lobbying to block or weaken climate change policies.



Regarding the economic benefits which the oil and gas industry claims, Environmental Defence states: "... job creation in oil and gas is far from guaranteed even as the industry expands and reaps significant corporate profits. Despite growing production since 2014, almost 30,000 jobs (10 per cent of the workforce) have been axed in the oil patch in the following four years, with another 12,000 expected to be cut in 2019. That's because oil and gas companies are moving increasingly towards automation, with the stated goal to "de-man" the industry. Meanwhile, the CEOs of companies such as Suncor, Encana, TransCanada, and CNRL rake in salaries north of \$10 million per year."

The report concludes: "Canada is bigger than oil. The opportunities that are available to Canadian businesses, citizens, and governments get shortchanged when one industry is able to hijack public policy on energy development and environmental protection." Or, as Richard Heede wrote more bluntly in a new series in *The Guardian* called **The Polluters: "It's time to rein in the fossil fuel giants before their greed chokes the planet"**. Heede's Opinion article is based on the **latest research** about the global fossil fuel industry by the Climate Accountability Institute. The research found that "chiefly from the combustion of their products, the top 20 companies have collectively produced 480bn tonnes of carbon dioxide and methane since 1965 – 35% of all fossil fuel emissions worldwide in that time." The **press release** names the top 20 polluters, led by Saudi Aramco, Chevron, ExxonMobil, GazProm, and BP. All research and data is [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [carbon majors](#), [climate change and politics](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental injustice for Canada's First Nations – updated

Posted on **October 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



An overview of the state of environmental injustice in Canada appears in [*The Statement of United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances and wastes*](#), issued following his visit in May/June 2019. The full report will be presented to the United Nations in Fall 2020. The preliminary information presented in the Statement identifies “a pervasive trend of inaction of the Canadian Government in the face of existing health threats from decades of historical and current environmental injustices and the cumulative impacts of toxic exposures by indigenous peoples.” The Statement commented on the specific cases of the oil sands (Fort McMurray, Fort MacKay and Fort Chipewyan), Sarnia, Muskrat Falls, and mining sites such as Elk Valley. He noted that Canada has “the second highest number of known mining accidents from 2007-2017, increasing significantly from previous years.”

The Special Rapporteur concluded: “It was clear during the course of my visit that many communities in Canada continue to be exploited by toxic exposures. Some key concerns include: (1) the limited degree of protection of human health and ecosystems under various legislation; (2) the lack of environmental information and monitoring in areas of high risk; (3) long delays or absence of health impact assessment for affected communities; (4) the inadequate compliance with and enforcement of laws and policies; (5) systemic obstacles to access to justice, in particular for cases of health impacts due to chronic exposures; and (6) the recalcitrance to ensure that victims can realize their right to an effective remedy. The situation of affected communities outside Canada is of equal concern in many of these regards, including the inordinate power imbalance faced by communities in low- and middle-income countries relative to Canadian corporations.”

The Special Rapporteur visited Sarnia’s “Chemical Valley” and highlighted it in his Statement. This area has been identified as a “pollution hot spot”, and the Aamjiwnaang First Nation have long fought for redress – including a [**legal challenge**](#) under the Environmental Bill of Rights in 2007. More recently, on October 9, the *Toronto Star* published [**“Whistleblower alleges province failing to protect First Nations community in ‘Chemical Valley’ from ‘dangerous’ air pollutants”**](#), a senior engineer employed by the provincial Ministry of the Environment alleges that ministry executives withheld technical and scientific information about sulphur dioxide impacts, failed to properly consult the Aamjiwnaang First Nation representatives, and that he was subject to workplace reprisals for raising the issues. His grievance, filed with the labour board, details his accusations and asks for \$186,000 to compensate for the reprisals, and for the ministry to begin discussions with him and Aamjiwnaang representatives “with the goal of providing capacity funding and to develop a program” that would transfer authority from the ministry to the Aamjiwnaang to enforce Ontario air pollution requirements that impact their territory.

Other examples are described by reporters at *The National Observer* – for example, [**“How Alberta kept Fort McKay First Nation in the dark about a toxic cloud from the oilsands”**](#) (April 2019) and [**“Alberta officials are signalling they have no idea how to clean up toxic oilsands tailings ponds”**](#) (Nov. 2018). *The Narwhal* maintains an archive of articles concerning [**Canadian mining examples**](#), including the Mount Polley and Taesko mines. One example, [**“This is not Canada’: inside the Tsilhqot’in Nation’s battle against Taseko Mines”**](#) (August 2019). The APTN News article [**“Amnesty uses World Water Day to highlight environmental racism in Canada”**](#) provides an overview of First Nations actions as of March 2019.



Another example of long-standing concern, mercury pollution at Grassy Narrows, has emerged as an election issue, with the [**Chief of Grassy Narrows running for the NDP**](#) in the riding of Kenora. Dozens of other Indigenous leaders are running in the current election to bring attention to their own areas, according to a [**CBC report**](#): for the NDP, 10 candidates; for the Liberals, 12; for the Conservatives, 7, and for the Greens, 6.

Related reading:

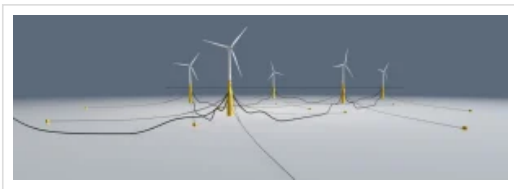
The Alberta Environmental Law Centre published a blog in September, [**Access to Environmental Justice: Costs and scientific uncertainty raise barriers to protecting communities**](#). This brief blog acts an introduction to the issue of environmental injustice by providing brief overviews (with links to further readings) of case studies which illustrate the

barriers to legal action experienced by Alberta First Nations. The specific cases described are Kearsy Oil Sands Environmental Assessment (2007), Fort McKay (2016) and the Beaver Lake Cree Nation. Looking beyond Alberta, the blog also notes examples of Sarnia Ontario's Chemical Valley, and Africville Nova Scotia, and briefly discusses the concept of climate justice.

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The right policy mix determines the extent of job creation for California's proposed offshore wind industry

Posted on **October 7, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



California Offshore Wind: Workforce Impacts and Grid Integration is a report released on September 27 by the Center for Labor Research and Education at University of California, Berkeley, in partnership with Energy and Environmental Economics Inc. The report seeks to quantify what benefits for workers and communities would emerge from a major offshore wind power sector, given that the depth of California's waters require floating platform wind installations, and floating wind is in its infancy. (According to the report, the only commercially operating project now is the 30 MW **Hywind project**, opened in 2017 off the coast of Aberdeen, Scotland). The author interviewed union leaders, offshore wind industry participants, workforce training professionals, and port and transportation specialists for their firsthand accounts of the impacts of offshore wind, as well as analyzing the research to date on the economic and employment impacts of the fixed-bottom offshore wind industry around the world. A [press release](#) provides an executive summary of the report.

The conclusion: state policy intervention is a crucial determinant of the level of benefit for offshore wind. Excerpts from the report: The largest economic benefits would occur "if an in-state supply chain were developed for the primary components of wind turbine generators—blades, nacelles (hubs), and towers—as well as the floating platforms, thus creating thousands of manufacturing and construction jobs. But the offshore wind industry is highly globalized, with its supply chain centered in Europe, and by the mid-2020s, China is likely to become a major exporter of wind components. ... policymakers should set a clear goal for offshore wind as part of the long-term renewable energy planning process (for example, a mandate for at least 8 GW over a decade). If the offshore wind planning process were to evolve in a more piecemeal basis, without strategic direction or fixed targets, wind developers and manufacturers would lack incentive to make major California investments.... Although the state has a strong workforce training system, including the construction industry's state-certified apprenticeships, skills gaps are likely to be a challenge for offshore wind on the North Coast. The state should consider creating a High-Road Training Partnership (H RTP) for offshore wind to fill these gaps and broaden community access to offshore wind jobs. H RTPs are a new state program of industry-specific training programs that prioritize job quality, equity, and environmental sustainability."

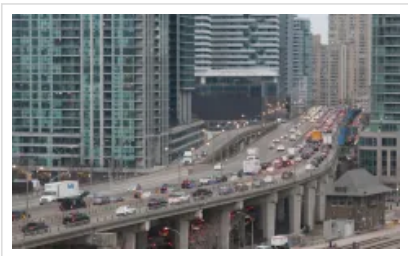
City of Toronto declares climate emergency

Posted on **October 7, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Canada's largest city, Toronto, has unanimously adopted a **climate emergency resolution** on September 20, joining hundreds of other municipalities across Canada. The city's **TransformTO Climate Action Plan**, passed in 2017, had a target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 80 per cent below 1990 city levels by 2050. The emergency resolution passed in September speeds up that timetable, with a new commitment to net zero emissions before 2050. (As of July 2019, the **city was ahead of schedule** with a 44% reduction below 1990 levels). The action was precipitated by a **Call to Action**, which includes a call for a "Just Economic Transition" and for "Equity and Inclusion" is described in a press release from the Toronto Environmental Alliance: "**Forty-seven organizations call on Toronto City Council to declare a climate emergency**" (Sept. 20). The **Call to Action** statement is [here](#), the list of signatories is [here](#), and it includes Toronto and York Region Labour Council, Toronto Community Benefits Network, Good Jobs for All, and BlueGreen Alliance. A spokesperson for the Toronto Environmental Alliance states: "The good news is that just about everything that Toronto needs to do will improve our quality of life. For example, properly insulating our buildings will make them more energy efficient and safe from extreme weather, and create jobs for people in the skilled trades.... If developed in a thoughtful and well-coordinated way, green workforce strategies can be inclusive and reduce poverty."

The mayor's voluntary Green Ways Initiative is described in "**Mayor John Tory enlists major institutions in emissions plan as Toronto declares 'climate emergency'**" in the *Toronto Star*. Developers, hospitals, and universities are being urged to cut their energy consumption and emissions – and one of those volunteer entities, the University of Toronto, announced its **Low Carbon Action Plan** on September 27. The University of Toronto maintains 266 buildings on three campuses, and more than half of those are over 80 years old. Other participants in the Green Ways Initiative include include Oxford Properties, Ryerson University, Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, Toronto Community Housing, and the University Health Network.



The major criticism of the climate emergency resolution is outlined in "**Toronto just declared a climate emergency, so why is it still fixing up the Gardiner?**" at the CBC (Oct. 4), referring to the major highway artery across Toronto's downtown. Journalist John Lorinc also pursues this in his [article](#) in *Spacing* (Sept. 30), which contends that the Gardiner Expressway redevelopment project accounts for 5% of the city's entire \$40.7 billion ten-year capital budget, which is money which could be better used to fund transit, such as the Queen's Quay East LRT, or to finance the retrofitting of the city's portfolio of buildings, including community housing. To these criticisms, the mayor is quoted [in the Toronto Star](#) and the CBC with this statement: "The amount we're spending on rebuilding a small part of the Gardiner Expressway pales in comparison to what we're investing in public transit to get people out of their cars entirely".

European and U.S. studies discuss training needs for green and greenable jobs

Posted on **October 4, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 2019 edition of the European Commission's flagship analytical report *Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE)* was released in July, dedicated to the theme of sustainability. On September 10, the European Trade Union Institute hosted a **conference** to discuss Chapter 5 of that report, titled "Towards a greener future: employment and social impacts of climate change policies". The chapter, [downloadable from this link](#), focuses on three aspects of environmental and social sustainability in the EU: 1. the definitions and discussion framework of green jobs and occupations in the EU economy; 2. the key findings of recent studies of the expected impacts on employment, skills, income and task structures of jobs in a clean transition; and 3. energy poverty and the link between climate action, air pollution and human health. In general, the chapter states that the transition to a climate-neutral economy is expected to provide additional jobs in growing, green(ing) sectors both in industry and services, including construction, waste management and sustainable finance, but will require significant reskilling and labour reallocation across sectors and occupations, with careful and early policy intervention required to ensure success. Opinions from the ETUI discussants is [summarized here](#), including the view that the chapter may underestimate the costs of transition.

Training for "greenable jobs"

Chapter 5 of the EU report states that "Analysis of task content also shows that green jobs vary in 'greenness', with very few jobs only consisting of green tasks, suggesting that the term 'green' should be considered a continuum rather than a binary characteristic. While it is easier to transition to indirectly green rather than directly green jobs, greening is likely to involve transitions on a similar scale and scope of existing job transitions. Non-green jobs generally appear to differ from their green counterparts in only a few skill-specific aspects, suggesting that most re-training can happen on-the-job."

Appendix 1 of Chapter 5 (p. 36) highlights four recent studies on the "greenness of jobs" with one North American study: Bowen et al. "[Characterising green employment: The impacts of 'greening' on workforce composition](#)" which appeared in *Energy Economics* in May 2018. Using the U.S. O*NET database and its definition of green jobs, the paper estimates that "19.4% of U.S. workers could currently be part of the green economy in a broad sense, although a large proportion of green employment would be 'indirectly' green, comprising existing jobs that are expected to be in high demand due to greening, but do not require significant changes in tasks, skills, or knowledge."



O*NET describes itself as "the primary source of occupational information" for the United States, part of the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration. O*NET counts any occupation that will be affected by greening as a greenable job, and defines three subcategories, according to the effect that greening will have on the tasks, skills, and knowledge required for the job – namely changing skill green occupations (e.g. construction workers and farmers); higher demand green occupations (e.g. bus and train drivers and renewable energy engineers); and new green occupations (e.g. energy and sustainability auditors and sustainable finance managers).

With progressive policies, Canada’s clean energy sector will provide over 500,000 jobs by 2030

Posted on **October 4, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new economic studies project the potential for growth in the clean energy sector to 2030 in Canada and in Nova Scotia.



On October 3, Vancouver-based Clean Energy Canada **announced** its new report, *The Fast Lane*, which predicts that “Canada’s clean energy sector will employ 559,400 Canadians by 2030—in jobs like insulating homes, manufacturing electric buses, or maintaining wind farms. And while 50,000 jobs are likely to be lost in fossil fuels over the next decade, just over 160,000 will be created in clean energy—a net increase of 110,000 new energy jobs in Canada.” That translates into a job growth rate of 3.4% a year for clean energy from 2020, compared to an overall job growth rate of 0.9% for Canada as a whole and a decline of 0.5% a year for the fossil fuel sector.



Navius Research conducted the economic modelling underlying *The Fast Lane*, as well as a May 2019 Clean Energy Canada report, *Missing the Bigger Picture*, which reports on clean energy investment and jobs from 2010 to 2017. The more detailed economic modelling reports by Navius are available as *Quantifying Canada’s Clean Energy Economy: A forecast of clean energy investment, value added and jobs*, and *Quantifying Canada’s Clean Energy Economy: An assessment of clean energy investment, value added and jobs* (May).

The message for policy-makers is made clear in the introduction to [The Fast Lane](#) by Merran Smith, Executive Director of Clean Energy Canada: “The sector’s projected growth is modelled on policy measures either in place or announced in early 2019 at both federal and provincial levels. If climate measures are eliminated—as we’ve recently seen in Alberta and Ontario—our emissions will go up and Canadians working in clean energy could lose jobs.”

An [article in The Energy Mix](#) summarizes [The Fast Lane](#) . It quotes Liam Hildebrand, Executive Director of [Iron and Earth](#) , a worker-led non-profit which promotes upskilling and retraining for fossil fuel workers: “It’s really important for people to know that most fossil fuel industry workers are really proud of their trades skills and would be excited—and are excited—about the opportunity to apply those skills to building a sustainable energy future But they need support in making that transition.”

A similar message comes through in “[After oil and gas: Meet Alberta workers making the switch to solar](#)” , an article in *The Narwhal* which profiles three workers who have transitioned from jobs in the fossil fuel industry. The article also summarizes the policy environment in Alberta, where according to Statistics Canada, roughly **1 in every 16 workers** in Alberta is employed in the category described as “forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas.” *The Narwhal* quotes Rod Wood, national representative from Unifor, who states that the global energy transition “is going to happen in spite of Alberta... You’re either part of the conversation or you’re lunch. It’s just going to steamroll over you.” And Mark Rowlinson of the United Steelworkers Union and BlueGreen Alliance Canada states: “ The market tends to move with its own feet. If the market sees that the future of the fossil fuel industry is not looking great, it will move quickly... And it will move without a plan. That means there will be wreckage left behind it, and that’s what we need to try to avoid.”

Clean economy policies could bring 180,000 jobs to Nova Scotia by 2030:

Nova Scotia’s [Ecology Action Centre](#) submitted what it calls a “Green Jobs Report” to the province’s [consultation on its proposed Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act](#), just ended on September 27. EAC proposed six policy choices, including supplying 90% of the province’s electricity from renewables by 2030, with a summary [here](#). A detailed report, [Nova Scotia Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act: Economic Costs and Benefits for Proposed Goals](#) was prepared by economic consultants Gardner Pinfold and estimates the benefits of each proposal, with the conclusion that the proposed policies could create over 15,000 green jobs per year in Nova Scotia, for a total of just less than 180,000 job-years between now and 2030.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [employment impacts](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Just Transition](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [2 Replies](#)

Election updates: Liberal platform calls for Just Transition Act, national flood insurance plan for high risk homeowners

Posted on **October 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the federal election only weeks away on October 21, Justin Trudeau began to flesh out the Liberal Party [climate change platform](#) with a campaign speech in Burnaby B.C. on September 24. His speech, titled [A Climate Vision that Moves Canada Forward](#) , promised that Canada would achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and announced that a re-elected Liberal government would halve the corporate tax rate for clean-technology businesses – from 9% to to 4.5 % for small business, from 15% to 7.5% for larger companies. The *Energy Mix* summarized the clean tech proposals [here](#) .

In French only, Trudeau also promised a Just Transition Act: “On va donc introduire une Loi sur la transition équitable, qui fera en sorte que les travailleurs aient accès à la formation et au soutien dont ils ont besoin pour réussir dans une économie plus verte. ... Ensemble, on peut continuer de bâtir un pays où les entreprises de technologies propres sont prospères, où nos citoyens sont encouragés à faire des choix plus verts et où nos travailleurs s’épanouissent alors qu’on

amorce notre transition écologique.” An unofficial English translation of that promise might read: “We will be introducing a law on Just Transition, where there’s access for workers for the training and support that they’ll need if they are to take part in an economy becoming steadily greener. Together, we can continue to build a country where our own high tech businesses prosper, where citizens choose green and greener ways of living, and where workers fulfill their goals while they make the choices that will shape Canada’s environment of the future.”



A [CBC article](#) provides a summary of a second round of Liberal climate change announcements which came on September 25. Trudeau, like the other leaders, promised financial incentives to encourage energy efficiency retrofits, but also promised to address the human costs of flood disasters through: creation of a low-cost national flood insurance program for homeowners in high-risk flood zones without adequate insurance protection; a national action plan to help homeowners at highest risk of repeat flooding with potential relocation; efforts to design an Employment Insurance Disaster Assistance Benefit to help people whose jobs and livelihoods are negatively affected by disaster; and to work with provinces and territories to update and complete flood maps to guide Canadians in home-buying decisions.

Looking for guidance on how to vote?

Canadians are facing climate change or risk the irreversible impacts of climate chaos. In light of the recent report from global scientists highlighting the need for ambitious action in the next 11 years to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, will your party commit to, if elected?

	B	C	Green Party	L	+NDP
Achieving and strengthening Canada's current emissions reduction targets to line up with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting average global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius?	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green
Legislating the strengthened target for 2035 and legislating either an interim 2022 target or annual carbon budgets between 2025 and 2035?	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green
Using all the tools in the climate policy tool box to reduce Canada's emissions in oil, economic activity – oil and gas, transportation, electricity, heavy industry, buildings, agriculture and water?	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green
Stop subsidizing fossil fuel production with public money?	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green
Strengthen and create new centers in the green economy, while phasing out the approval of new fossil fuel infrastructure?	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green

Canada
CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK
FEDERAL ACTION PLAN

Although [Elections Canada made the ground shaky](#) for environmental groups to speak publicly in the current election, some are stepping up with information. [Fourteen of Canada’s major environmental advocacy groups](#) consolidated their priorities to produce a questionnaire, sent to the federal parties in July 2019. The responses from five parties are [here](#); the People’s Party of Canada did not respond. Questions included: “Will you immediately legislate a climate plan that will reduce Canada’s emissions in line with keeping warming below 1.5°C?; Will your climate plan clearly and precisely describe programs to reduce emissions from transportation, buildings and the oil and gas sector? Will you ensure that workers and their families thrive during the transition to a low-carbon economy, by extending the Task Force on Just Transition to include all fossil fuel industries?; Will you create a Federal Environmental Bill of Rights that formally recognizes the legal right to a healthy environment?”.

Climate Action Network Canada was one of the fourteen, and had released [Getting Real about Canada’s Climate Plan](#) in June, intended as “a baseline against which we can assess federal parties’ climate plans.” EcoJustice was also part of the collaborative questionnaire, but has posted its own analysis of the party platforms [here](#). *Macleans* magazine has compiled their own guide to the platforms on [all issues here](#); on [environment and climate change issues here](#) and on [energy policy \(including pipelines\) here](#).

A sampling of Opinions:

“Climate change the sword as Liberal and Conservatives battle for power” in the *National Observer* <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2019/09/25/news/climate-change-sword-liberal-and-conservatives-battle-power> (Sept. 25), which describes the competing political rhetoric in the wake of Trudeau’s first announcement;

Clean Energy Canada issued a [press release](#) on October 1, stating: “The platform identifies similar areas of focus as the NDP and Green plans: more and cleaner public transit, increasing the number of zero-emission vehicles on the road, generating more clean power, and building and retrofitting more energy efficient homes. While not as aggressive as those plans, the proposed policies, programs, and investments are generally laid out in greater detail....The Liberal plan is unique, however, in its identification of electrification as a strategic opportunity to make Canadian industries and manufacturing the cleanest in the world, supported by a proposed \$5-billion Clean Power Fund sourced from the Canada Infrastructure Bank. “

Simon Donner, professor of climatology at the University of British Columbia [writes in Policy Options](#) (Oct. 1): “Despite lofty claims and aspirational goals, there is no Canadian plan consistent with avoiding 1.5°C or 2°C warming. Wherever you are on the political spectrum, the rhetoric of your party on climate change does not match the numbers.” His article was featured [in the Toronto Star](#) .

“[This week in climate inaccuracy: Climate strike poses](#)” by Chris Turner in *The National Observer* (Sept. 30) is the first in a promised series of critiques of all parties.

“[On climate change, the Liberal plan \(mostly\) adds up](#)”, an Editorial in the *Globe and Mail* (restricted access) (Oct.1).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Flooding](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

What if the financial sector moved away from fossil fuel investments?

Posted on [September 30, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 17, Bill McKibben, a leader of the divestment movement, wrote [Money is the oxygen on which the fire of global warming burns](#) , published in *The New Yorker*. The essay traces the progress of the divestment movement and asks, *What if the banking, asset-management, and insurance industries moved away from fossil fuels?*. On the same day came the announcement that “ [University of California drops fossil fuels from its \\$80 billion portfolio](#)”. An [article in Rolling Stone](#) quotes the UC representatives, stating “it wasn’t moral or political pressures that convinced them to phase UC’s hundreds of millions of dollars in fossil-fuel investments. Instead, they say, it was the growing realization that fossil fuel investments no longer made financial sense and weren’t a worthwhile investment.”

Investment performance of Fossil fuel companies

In what has been seen as an historical turning point, ExxonMobil lost its spot on the S&P Index list of “Top Ten Companies” in August 2019 – the first time it had not appeared since the Index launched in 1957. In 1980, the energy sector as a whole represented 28% of the S&P 500 Index; as of August 2019, it represents 4.4%. According to [a summary](#) by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), the energy sector claimed last place in the S&P rankings of sector performance in August 2019, following similar results in 2018 and 2017. “This is not some temporary aberration. The oil and gas sector is in decline, profits are shrinking and investment options problematic This is true even for companies like ExxonMobil that historically have deep pockets.”

The full Briefing Note, [ExxonMobil’s Fall From the S&P 500 Top Ten: A Long Time Coming](#) (August 2019) also includes discussion of the role Canada’s oil sands have played in the decline of the industry. Carbon Tracker Initiative provides further information in [Exxon’s New Clothes – the tale of why Exxon lost its prized position in the S&P 500](#) .

Are the banking, asset-management, and insurance industries moving away from fossil fuels?

New initiatives launched at U.N. Climate Summit in New York in September point in that direction:

1. 130 banks from 49 countries signed on to the [Principles for Responsible Banking](#) (PRBs), committing to align their business operations with the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the fact that

the **Bank of Canada issued a report** flagging the investment risks of climate change in May, the only signatories from Canada were the **National Bank of Canada and the Desjardins Group** . Hardly surprising, given the April 2019 **Fossil Fuel Report Card from Banktrack** , which showed that Canada's big banks rank 5th, 8th, 9th and 15th in the world for fossil fuel investment since the Paris Agreement in 2015. In response to the PRI pledge, civil society groups issued a statement, "**No More Greenwashing: Principles must have Consequences** " which highlights the lack of concrete plans and the slow time frame: signatory banks are allowed up to four years to demonstrate their implementation of the principles. A thorough discussion published by Open Democracy asks "**The UN banking principles are welcome – but do they go far enough to stop climate destruction?**"

2. A new **Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance** was launched, convened by the U.N. Environmental Program's Finance Initiative and the Principles for Responsible Investment, and supported by WWF as part of its Mission 2020 campaign. The Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance signatories are insurance and pension fund management companies which hold approximately \$2.3 U.S. Trillion. Their **commitment document** pledges to re-balance those investment portfolios to make them carbon neutral by 2050, with intermediate targets set for 2025, 2030 and 2040. Founding members include German insurer Allianz, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), Swedish pension fund Alecta, PensionDanmark, Swedish pension manager AMF, Nordea Life & Pension, Norwegian insurer Storebrand, and Swiss RE.



The European Investment Bank **strengthened its climate commitments** at the U.N. Climate Summit pledging to "position the EIB as an incubator for climate finance and expertise to mobilise others, helping our societies and economies transform to a low carbon future." Specifically, the bank pledged that 50% of new investments will be for climate action and environmental sustainability by 2025 (previously the target had been 30% by 2020). Also, "we aim to align all our financing activities with the principles and goals of the Paris agreement by the end of 2020. As an important first step, we will phase out energy projects that depend solely on fossil fuels."



The **Climate Finance Leadership Initiative** (CFLI) , chaired by Michael Bloomberg, released **Financing the Low Carbon Future** , a thorough but readable analysis of how clean energy investment works globally, with practical recommendations . The CFLI is composed of senior executives of seven major private-sector financial institutions–Allianz Global Investors, AXA, Enel, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF) and Macquarie.

5. Over 500 environmental and advocacy groups from 76 countries supported the Lofoten Declaration at the U.N. Climate Action Summit. The **Lofoten Declaration** , (named after the Lofoten Islands of Norway where it was first drafted in 2017) states in part: "It is the urgent responsibility and moral obligation of wealthy fossil fuel producers to lead in putting an end to fossil fuel development and to manage the decline of existing production." Canada is one of those countries, and Catherine Abreu of Climate Action Network Canada was one of the supporters, stating: "True leadership in response to the climate emergency means having the courage to commit to ending the expansion of oil and gas production and make a plan to transition communities and workers to better opportunities." A summary appears in "**If a House Is on Fire, You Don't Add Fuel: 530 Groups Back Call to Rapidly Phase Out Fossil Fuels Worldwide**" in *Common Dreams* (Sept. 23); Background to the Lofoten Declaration [here](#) .

Much remains to be done: Consider the September 2019 report by Carbon Tracker Initiative. **Breaking the Habit – Why none of the large oil companies are "Paris-aligned", and what they need to do to get there.** The report examines oil company investment activities , and concludes:

- Last year, all of the major oil companies sanctioned projects that fall outside a "well below 2 degrees" budget on cost grounds. These will not deliver adequate returns in a low-carbon world. Examples include Shell's \$13bn LNG Canada

project and BP, Total, ExxonMobil and Equinor's Zinia 2 project in Angola.

- No new oil sands projects fit within a Paris-compliant world. Despite this, ExxonMobil sanctioned the \$2.6bn Aspen project last year – the first new oil sands project in 5 years.
- The oil and gas in projects that have already been sanctioned will take the world past 1.5°C, assuming carbon capture and storage remains sub-scale.

And *Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2019*, commissioned by the United Nations, was published in September, reporting the good news that global investment in new renewable energy capacity, led by solar power, “is set to have roughly quadrupled renewable energy capacity (excluding large hydro) in the decade ending in 2019. Renewables accounted for 12.9 percent of global electricity in 2018—and if hydropower is also included, the renewable’s share of global electricity production is measured at 26.3%. Cost-competitiveness of renewables has “risen spectacularly over the decade, as the levelised cost of electricity has been steadily decreasing, down 81 percent for solar photovoltaics and 46 per cent for onshore wind since 2009.”

Yet despite this good news, the report states: “Overall, we note that these figures represent a small share of the overall economic transition required to address climate change.... global power-sector emissions are likely to have risen by at least 10 percent between the end of 2009 and 2019.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Energy Investment](#), [ExxonMobil](#), [Financial Risk](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

16 young people file landmark petition for climate action under the U.N. Rights of the Child

Posted on [September 23, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 23, climate activist Greta Thunberg made an emotional, unforgettable speech to the on the U.N. Climate Summit in New York City. The full Youtube video is [here](#); her words are reproduced by *The Guardian* in an Opinion Piece titled “**If world leaders choose to fail us, my generation will never forgive them**”, and stating: “We are in the middle of a climate breakdown, and all they can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth.” A summary from The Guardian is [here](#).



New landmark climate litigation

Also on September 23, Greta Thunberg and fifteen other young people from around the world submitted a groundbreaking legal petition to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Respondent countries Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, and Turkey are the largest polluters amongst the 45 countries in the world which have ratified the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and agreed to an additional protocol that allows children to petition the UN directly about treaty violations.

The young people contend that these five countries are violating their rights under the Convention by failing to curb emissions and promoting fossil fuels, despite have known about the risks of climate change for decades. They are asking the U.N. Committee to make specific recommendations to the five nations about what they need to do to meet their treaty obligations, including changing laws to speed up the response to climate change and applying more diplomatic pressure on big polluters like the United States and China.

The complaint was prepared and filed on behalf of the youth petitioners by the international law firm [Hausfeld LLP](#) and the nonprofit environmental public interest law organization [Earthjustice](#) – whose press release is [here](#) . A dedicated website, [Children vs Climate Crisis](#) provides biographies and statements from each of the children, a copy of the 101-page [Petition](#) ,and a 338-page [Appendix](#) with detailed statements of the impacts on the petitioners' lives.

The [Earthjustice website](#) is hosting a petition in support of the children's case.

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Unions, tech workers, and even some employers set to Climate Strike in September

Posted on [September 17, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The [wave of support for the youth-led Global Climate Strike](#) has become an ocean. The strike has focal points: on September 20 in the U.S. and most of the world, where iconic climate activist Greta Thunberg will participate outside the United Nations headquarters in New York; on September 27, [Greta will participate the strike in Montreal](#) . Indicative of the enthusiasm: the [New York City School District announced](#) that its 1.1 million students will be free to leave school on September 20, with parental consent. The Toronto District School Board also [posted a policy statement](#) on September 16, allowing students in Toronto with parental permission to be absent on September 27 without academic penalty. Schools and universities in Montreal (excluding McGill University) are also cancelling classes, [as reported by CBC](#).

And as organizers emphasize, "everyone is welcome and everyone is needed". Parents, teachers, and the general public are [all invited to participate](#) in one of the hundreds of strikes around the world. For information and news about Canadian strikes, check [#Fridays for Future Canada](#) or [#Climate Strike Canada](#) Twitter feeds.

Climate Strike in Canada, September 27:

According to the [on-going list](#) being maintained by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy Canadian unions supporting the climate strike include Unifor, The Toronto Labour Council, and the British Columbia Teachers Federation. Some others are listed below.



Unifor approved a resolution supporting the Global Climate Week of Action at [their constitutional convention in August](#), and according to TUED, Unifor's National President sent a letter to the union's members on September 10, encouraging them to "take part in these important events." Their press release to members is [here](#).

The **Toronto Labour Council** has [posted a statement](#) on the Climate Emergency on their website, calling on Labour Councils across Canada to be involved in local and national efforts on climate action, including on September 27th. The statement carries on with the initiatives outlined in their 2016 action plan, [Greenprint for Greater Toronto: Working Together for Climate Action](#). The Toronto Labour Council is part of the S27 coalition of Toronto activists in support of the strike: their [list of demands](#) includes "no worker left behind." The list of members is [here](#).

The **B.C. Teachers Federation** Resolution in support of the strike is [here](#), along with links to teaching resources related to the climate strike. The **Vancouver Secondary Teachers Association** also supports the strike and has posted [a detailed position](#) to guide teachers on their responsibilities.

The **Confederation Syndicats Nationaux** in Quebec are planning to coordinate union support across the province, according to their Convention document from June 2019, [La Planete s'invite au travail](#) (in French only).

The **Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo** has [announced](#) their support, and the University's administration is expected to follow.

Climate Strikes in the United States and other countries: September 20

The Labor Network for Sustainability is working hard to support the Climate Strikes, including publishing a [Climate Strike Special Issue](#) of their newsletter on September 12. LNS highlights climate strike initiatives by: Service Employees International Union; Amazon Employees for Climate Action; American Federation of Teachers; Alameda Labor Council; Labor Rise; and international initiatives, including support from the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Also included in the LNS Newsletter: links to resources, including social media tools, for anyone who wants to support the student climate strikers.

An on-going [list of international union initiatives](#) is maintained by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy.

The **International Trade Union Confederation** statement regarding the global week of climate action is [here](#), and a [video statement](#) by Sharan Barrow was released on September 11, calling the climate strike as a "gamechanger" and stating that "our 200 million members around the world are totally behind you".

An OpEd by Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary of the global federation, **Public Services International** appeared in *Common Dreams* on September 12, titled "[Unions: We must back the climate strike](#)", stating "Under sustained attacks from the right across the world, we were forced to fight to preserve our achievements rather than expand social justice, ... The climate strike provides an opportunity to break out of our constraints, to reinvigorate our movement, to learn from young people on the front lines, and to redefine what is possible." Another *Common Dreams* article, "[We Must Be Bolder Than Ever': Labor Federation Representing 30 Million Workers Calls on All Unions to Join Global Climate Strike](#)" describes the support from PSI and other unions.

The September/October issue of the [Greener Jobs Alliance newsletter](#) reports on similar sentiments amongst unions in the United Kingdom. From the GJA: “Unions will be backing the Youth Climate Strike on 20 September. The plan, agreed at the Trades Union Congress (TUC) annual conference in Brighton (September 10th), is for ‘30-minute workday campaigns’ across the UK. As Jo Grady, University and College Union, told the conference, ‘The Youth Climate Strikes movement is one of the most impressive forms of mass action in recent years.’ The education union’s general secretary asked, ‘How will young people forgive us if we let them down, whilst they are building a movement at this pivotal moment for the world’s climate?’ Or, as Unite’s Steve Turner put it, ‘Unions will back the school strikes on September 20th. If we don’t, we will be seen as irrelevant.’ Support for the climate strike was part of the composite motion, [Climate Crisis and a Just Transition](#) .

In Australia, government employees of Victoria [have been given formal permission](#) to ask for leave or flexible hours on September 20 to attend the climate strike, and the Australian Education Union, representing teachers, has endorsed the rally.

Technology workers take a stand with a Digital Strike:

[Amazon Employees for Climate Justice](#) have established themselves in the past with a shareholder’s resolution urging climate action and an Open Letter to their boss, Jeff Bezos. Now they are also supporting the September 20 climate strike: here is their [press release](#) , here is an [article in Wired](#) , and here is an [interview by CNBC](#) with one of the strikers.

Other tech workers are joining in support of the climate strike, including [Google Workers for Climate Action](#) , [Facebook Employees for Climate Action](#) , and [Microsoft Workers for Action](#) .

Not only the workers, but some tech companies are joining in, according to [a report from Common Dreams](#) (September 16). A planned “digital strike” is being organized with many of the largest websites in the world participating, including Imgur, Tumblr, and WordPress, as well as the websites of the Sunrise Movement, Greenpeace, Burton, and many others. An [organizational website](#) offers free coding so that these companies can use their social media platforms to spread the climate strike message by donating ad space, or putting climate change banners on their websites which, on September 20th, will expand to fullscreen so that the website will effectively be “on strike”.

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Climate change and oil economics threaten Canadian fisheries industry

Posted on [September 16, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

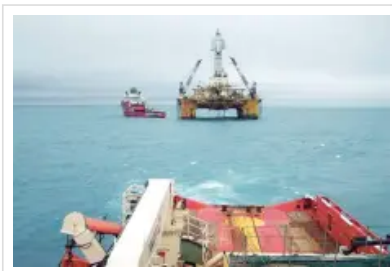
In its [July 2019 report](#), the Expert Panel on Climate Change Risks and Adaptation Potential identified fisheries as one of the top “domains” at risk from climate change between 2020 to 2040 in Canada. The experts recognized the complexity of the issue, stating: “the economic, social, and cultural context varies across Canada’s fisheries, and the choice of adaptation measures should be informed by the local situation Adaptation can be particularly challenging for communities that rely heavily on a single fishery, and can have widespread economic and social consequences.... A combination of approaches, including catch quotas, community management, regulations on fishing gear, ocean zoning, and economic incentives, can help manage and restore marine fisheries and ecosystems.”



Ocean Law Developments in Canada 2015-2019 , published at the end of August, summarizes the significant legal progress that has been made in four relevant areas of regulation: ocean governance, protection, marine protection, and marine spills . Improvements noted in the report: the G7 Ocean Plastics Charter; Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean; the Coastal First Nations Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement; creation of eight new Marine Protected Areas; Bill C-55, which amended the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act; the new Oil Tanker Moratorium Act, passed in June 2019; orders issued under the Species at Risk Act to protect the critical habitat of orcas, Right whales, bottlenose whales, belugas, leatherback turtles, abalone and seals; a series of measures to protect orcas on the West Coast, and rolling fisheries closures and seasonal speed restrictions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence to reduce industrial pressure on North Atlantic Right whales; new **Fisheries Act**, which among other things, includes prohibitions on habitat alteration, damage and destruction (HADD). The report was published by **SeaBlue Canada** , an alliance of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Oceans North, West Coast Environmental Law, and WWF-Canada, dedicated to protection of the oceans.

Will these changes be sufficient for the scale of the problems faced by Canadian fisheries industry? While general reaction to the legislative changes has been favourable, as reviewed in this **May article** from the *National Observer*, many problems remain.

Fish or Oil for Newfoundland?



On September 5, CBC News reported on a press conference from Atlantic Canada, with the headline: “**FFAW vows to stop oil and gas exploration in crab fishing area**”. The Fish, Food and Allied Workers union (FFAW), a division of Unifor, claims that oil interests were again put ahead of the interests of the fishery, when the regulator, the **Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board** , opened bids by oil companies for offshore areas in August. The union is demanding that the bidding process be halted, claiming that it was not consulted, even though the call threatens prime fishing areas on which their livelihoods depend. In November 2018 FFAW **also protested** when the C-NLOPB approved five successful bids by the oil and gas industry which, in two cases, allowed oil and gas exploration in marine refuge areas where fishing activity was restricted.

In August, the Federation of Independent Sea Harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador (FISH-NL), which represents independent inland fishers, **supported a call for an independent authority** to oversee the environment in the province’s offshore oil and gas industry. In spite of the **C-NLOPB statement** that “Offshore safety and environmental protection are paramount in all Board decisions. “, the Sea Harvesters concern seems understandable, given the recent history of oil spills from the Hibernia offshore oil platform in August, just days after it had resumed production following a spill in mid-July, and after **the largest oil spill in Newfoundland’s history** in November 2018. The Federation of Independent Sea

Harvesters have also protested the damage done by the seismic testing related to oil exploration, as described by iPolitics in “[Seismic testing concerns ignored in oil ‘obsessed’ NFLD and Labrador: union](#)” in April 2018.

West Coast salmon fishery and First Nations communities face “the worst commercial fishery in 50 years”

On the West Coast, the [State of Canadian Pacific Salmon 2019: Responses to changing climate](#) was published by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, summarizing a 2018 workshop of scientists which discussed the impacts of marine heatwaves, changes to marine food webs, warmer freshwater conditions, more extreme rain and drought, and various human activities. It concludes that “No single factor can explain all of the recent observed patterns in salmon abundances. Along with ecosystem changes, fisheries, hatcheries, disease, and contaminants can also affect salmon.” On September 6, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans **announced \$15 million** in additional annual funding to support wild Pacific salmon research and management, but meanwhile, 2019 has been reported as the worst commercial fishing season in 50 years, in “[Advocates sound alarm on unfolding disaster in B.C. salmon fishing industry](#)” (CBC, Sept. 9) and the Globe and Mail published “[Labour and First Nations groups call for federal disaster relief for West Coast Fishery](#)” (Sept. 9) which states: “As well as wanting immediate relief for struggling workers, the groups called on the federal government to develop a long-term strategy to conserve wild salmon in the face of climate change, which they described as a dire and growing threat to the species.”

Some of the “other factors” at play in the salmon crisis in 2019: a **massive obstruction of the Fraser River**, caused by a rockslide ; sea lice infestation from farmed salmon (see “[Sea Lice Plagues Return and Threat to Wild Salmon Increases](#)” in *The Tyee* (June 11); and shipping dangers, described in “[Fraser River Chinook jeopardized by shipping terminal’s expansion](#)” (July 29) in the *National Observer*.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Commercial Fisheries](#), [Fisheries Industry](#), [Newfoundland](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Mining and the Low carbon economy: Human and Labour Rights in the Supply chains of electric vehicles, wind turbines and solar panels

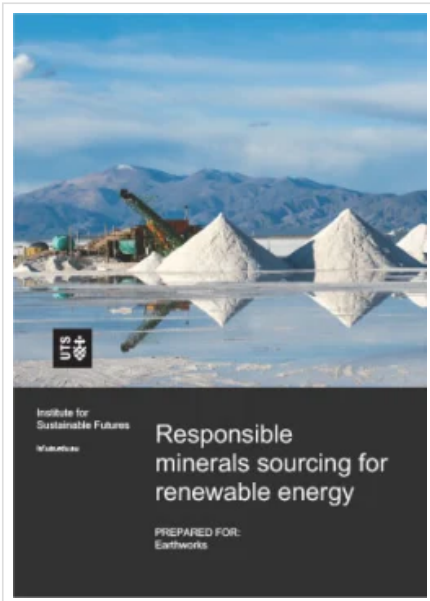
Posted on **September 12, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Mineral Tracker is a special project of the London-based Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, with the goal of “tracking the human rights implications of the mineral boom powering the transition to a low-carbon economy.” The website provides analysis, data, and case studies focused on the allegations of violations against mining multinationals, relating to environmental damage, access to water, health impacts, indigenous rights and labour rights in the mining of the cobalt, copper, lithium, manganese, nickel and zinc. The website monitors the mineral supply chains in the manufacture of [Electric vehicles](#) , [Wind Turbines](#) , and [Solar Panels](#) .

Geographically, Southern Africa leads in the number of allegations made, followed by South America, Asia Pacific, North America – where four allegations have been made regarding nickel mining, three regarding cobalt and two regarding zinc.

A special report is dedicated to practices in **Southern Africa** , where half of the top companies mining these minerals have been accused of serious human rights abuses, from violating access to water and land rights to corruption, violence and deaths. An overview **global analysis and summary** was released in August 2019, charting the number of human rights allegations by mineral, and identifying the top five companies and their countries of operation. Of these, only Teck Resources has Canadian Headquarters, with operations in Peru and the USA. Teck is cited for seven human rights allegations in zinc mining used in wind turbines and solar panels.



Mineral Tracker maintains **an archive of important articles** and reports from other organizations. Some other reports available there: **Responsible minerals sourcing for Renewable Energy** (2019) by Earthworks, and **Green Conflict Minerals: The fuels of conflict in the transition to a low-carbon economy** (2018) published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

The parent organization, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre published **Renewable Energy Risking Rights & Returns: An analysis of solar, bioenergy & geothermal companies' human rights commitments** in 2018. Read the WCR summary of that report [here](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **conflict minerals, Labour Rights, mining industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change will be a top issue as Canada votes on October 21

Posted on **September 11, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



On September 11, Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau **officially kicked off the federal election**, with voting set for October 21. Throughout the summer, polls have consistently shown that climate change and environmental issues will be a high priority for voters – an August **survey by Abaca Data** showed 82 per cent of Canadians say climate change is a serious problem and 42% think it is an emergency, ranking concern about climate change second only to the rising cost of living. In September, researchers from the Université de Montréal and the University of California Santa Barbara released **estimates of Canadian opinion on climate actions** in almost every single riding across the country, with an **online interactive tool** enabling anyone to see how their local riding compares to others across the country.

The Liberal government will be running on their climate change record – characterized by their “we don’t have to choose between the economy and the environment” approach, brought to life in their handling of the **Trans Mountain pipeline**. The other party platforms are here: Green Party: **Mission Possible: The Green Climate Action Plan**; New Democratic Party: **Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs**, and Conservative Party: **A Real Plan to Protect Our Environment**. **“Where the four main parties stand on climate issues”** is a *Globe and Mail* “Explainer” by Shawn McCarthy and Marieke Walsh (Sept 8), which quotes academic experts from all sides of the issue: Andrew Leach, University of Alberta; Jennifer Winter, University of Calgary; Mark Jaccard, Simon Fraser University; Kathryn Harrison, University of British Columbia, and Chris Ragan, chair, Ecofiscal Commission.

How to choose amongst the platforms?

Some commentators urge voting by your conscience – for example, Arno Kopecky in his Opinion Piece, **“So What’s a progressive voter to do?”** in *The Tyee*. Others urge strategic voting – such as Mark Jaccard, energy economist and professor at Simon Fraser University, who stated in his **August 1 Blog**: “Climate-concerned Canadians need to vote strategically this fall to make sure they don’t elect a climate-insincere government. At the time of writing this blog, the most likely outcome is that the 65% of Canadians who tell pollsters they want a climate-sincere government will split their vote among three parties and enable the election of a climate-insincere government, just as in 2006-2015.” Activist Tzeborah Berman also warns against a split vote in a *Toronto Star* article **“David Suzuki on climate change: ‘We have to address it as if it’s war’”** (Sept. 3), and Sandy Garossino wrote in July, **“Despite Pipeline Approval, \$70-Billion Federal Plan Is Canada’s Best Shot at Decarbonizing”** in *The Energy Mix*. Garossino’s arguments were almost immediately challenged by UBC Professor Kathryn Harrison in **“How ‘Serious’ is a Climate Plan that relies on Pipelines”**.

Unions are also Opinion Leaders

The Canadian Labour Congress election positions are gathered under their webpage banner: **“A Fair Canada for Everyone”**, which prioritizes Pharmacare,

Retirement Security, Climate Action, Good Jobs, and Equity and Inclusion. A statement re **Climate positions** calls for green manufacturing and infrastructure, better transit and electric vehicles, and green building and retrofits.

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) launched their **CUPE Votes** website in August, endorsing the New Democratic Party and offering information and tools for locals and individuals to get involved in the election. Informational “Notes” lay out positions on key issues, including, **Climate Change and the Environment**.

Unifor launched a “massive” **member-to-member campaign** for the election on September 4 under the banner of “Stop Scheer”. At the national constitutional convention in August, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland **addressed the full convention**.

The United Steelworkers have endorsed the New Democratic Party – their **Election 2019 webpage** offers news and resources, including their May 31 statement, **“NDP Climate Plan Protects our Planet and our Jobs”**. View the Steelworkers’ TV election ads **here**.

SOME WEBSITES TO FOLLOW FOR CLIMATE-RELATED ELECTION COVERAGE:

The National Observer Election 2019 Special Report: will compile stories throughout the election, in addition to a **special Election Integrity Project** which aims to highlight and call out disinformation – for example, on September 6 **“How Maxime Bernier hijacked Canada’s #ClimateChange discussion”**. These special features all feed from *National Observer’s* highly-regarded on-going reporting and Opinion pieces about climate change and the environment. One relevant recent article: **“Who were the winners and losers under Liberal climate policy?”** (Sept. 9)

The Energy Mix will monitor and compile news items from other sources, and publish original content under their special Canada Election 2019 banner .

The Tyee in Vancouver offers an [Election 2019 section](#) as well as a free election newsletter, called [The Run](#). It's worth noting that *The Tyee* [joined the global network](#) Covering Climate Now over the summer of 2019, and in addition to its special topic on Environmental stories, promises another special section on the Climate Crisis.

[Shake Up The Establishment](#) is a non-partisan website run by youth volunteers, dedicated to monitoring and comparing the climate and environmental commitments of the main parties. It publishes a monthly newsletter and maintains active social media sites.

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U.K. updates on Just Transition: Statement, Resolutions from the Trades Union Congress, and a training module from Greener Jobs Alliance

Posted on [September 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Trades Union Congress (TUC), the labour union central in the United Kingdom, published [A just transition to a greener, fairer economy](#) in July. According to the [accompanying press release](#) , the document sets out principles “to take the whole trade union family towards that new economy.” (This seems to be a reference to the divisive nature of the Just Transition debate during the 2018 TUC Congress, reported by the WCR [here](#)).

These excerpts from [A just transition to a greener, fairer economy](#) summarize the main demands:

“Companies and organisations moving to a lower carbon model should put in place Transition Agreements – agreed with unions – that cover a range of issues, including the overall number of jobs or workers employed, pay and conditions, job security, working time, job descriptions, duties assigned to job roles, training and skills, apprenticeships, retirement policy, monitoring and surveillance, performance management, health and safety implications and equal opportunities. Companies should also work with unions to identify and deliver best environmental practice at a workplace level.”

....”we’re calling for a cross-party commission on long term energy strategy, involving affected workers, unions, industries and consumers, to set out the path towards clean, affordable and reliable energy. The commission should study the social impacts of the transition, its regional impacts and necessary mitigation measures. Investment – in infrastructure, in new skills for workers, and in services such as public transport – is vital.”

...“Government has a key role in making this happen, as a funder and procurer of new energy and broader infrastructure. When government invests in new infrastructure it should use its procurement powers to ensure that jobs generated benefit workers in the local community and throughout the supply chain. It must also insist that jobs created provide workers with trade union recognition, and that employers have fair recruitment, industrial relations and pay policies for all workers. Companies winning government contracts must adhere to agreed standards of corporate behaviour; for example, contracts should not go to companies based in tax havens and companies must be registered in and pay tax in the UK.”

Trades Union Congress passes resolutions on Just Transition, endorses Student Strike on Sept. 20

The **151st Congress of the Trades Union Congress** was held from September 8 to 11, 2019 . Understandably, **debate about Brexit** loomed large over the meetings, but there were several motions related to climate change, most notably Composite Motion 02 **Climate crisis and a Just Transition**, which was approved on September 10, and resolves: “that the TUC calls for a 30-minute workday campaign action to coincide with the global school strike on 20 September. 2. to campaign for national and regional Just Transition Commissions including full union and education representation to develop, monitor and implement the process.” **An article in The Guardian** also summarizes the Congress vote; the TUC press release on student strikes is **here**; the University and Colleges Union position on the student climate strike is **here**;

Other climate change related motions at the TUC Congress: **“Buses and a green transport system”** moved by ASLEF ; **“Public ownership of energy”** moved by Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union ; and **Securing Green UK Jobs**, moved by GMB.

New training module on Just Transition available

Discussions and panels were held at the **Fringe Meetings** , most notably by the **Greener Jobs Alliance** , which used the occasion to launch their new, free, online **Just Transition Training Module** . Other Fringe sessions included: How Can We Grow The UK's Aviation Sector whilst Meeting Climate Change Targets?; Action on the Climate Emergency: How Should Trade Unions Respond?; sponsored by the Campaign Against Climate Change, Trade Unionists And Climate Strikes: Responding to the Climate Emergency.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate strikes, Just Transition, Labour Training, labour union policies, Trades Union Congress (TUC), United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

“Business as usual” could lead to 13% loss in growth for the Canadian economy.

Posted on **September 9, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

According to a study published in August by both the **National Bureau of Economic Research** and by U.K.'s Cambridge University Institute for New Economic Thinking, the overall the global economy could shrink by 7% unless the world's nations meet the Paris Agreement targets for GHG emissions reductions. **“Long-Term Macroeconomic Effects of Climate Change: A Cross-Country Analysis”** analyses data from 174 countries over the years 1960 to 2014 to model changes in output growth related to temperature and precipitation. The result: “Our counterfactual analysis suggests that a persistent increase in average global temperature by 0.04°C per year, in the absence of mitigation policies, reduces world real GDP per capita by 7.22 percent by 2100. On the other hand, abiding by the Paris Agreement, thereby limiting the temperature increase to 0.01°C per annum, reduces the loss substantially to 1.07 percent.”

The effects differ widely across countries. For Canada, the analysis finds that a “business as usual” scenario could result in a 13% loss in growth for the Canadian economy. A summary for non-economists **from the Climate News Network** quotes one of the authors of the study: “The idea that rich, temperate nations are economically immune to climate change, or could even double or triple their wealth as a result, just seems implausible.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change impacts](#), [Economic impacts](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [Productivity](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Post and its unions will collaborate to reduce environmental footprint

Posted on **September 9, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



From an August 30 [press release](#) on the website of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers(CUPW) comes the news that as of April 2019, Canada Post and its unions have reached a formal agreement to collaborate to reduce Canada Post's environmental footprint. The joint statement outlines six principles for collaboration, including long-term commitment, good faith, meaningful participation, and openness and transparency. The full 2-page [statement is here](#), signed by the Association of Postal Officials of Canada, the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and the Union of Postal Communications Employees, as well as Canada Post.

The initial focus of activities will be towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste and single-use disposable plastics from Canada Post operations. In early 2020, the parties will publish an action plan for 2020-2022, with agreed-upon targets for 2020-2030. After identifying a process and timelines, the parties will implement joint initiatives, "Working together with bargaining agents to develop methods of engaging all employees on local opportunities to reduce waste, emissions and energy."

At the CUPW Convention in May 2019, the union approved its own [Action Plan 2019-2023](#) with detailed objectives, with environmental objectives including: research and prepare detailed proposals to reduce the environmental impact of Canada's postal operations, utilizing the provisions of Appendix "T" of the [Urban Postal Operations \(UPO\) collective agreement](#); Ensure new jobs for servicing new vehicles and equipment to reduce the environmental impact; Conduct a thorough environmental analysis of CUPW operations at the Local, Regional and National levels and ensure structural changes include an environmental impact assessment; Work with the academic and environmental communities on initiatives beyond the postal system; Participate in conferences and organizations dealing with the impact of climate change and solutions to halt and reverse the damage to our planet.

Many of these environmental objectives spring from CUPW's innovative [Delivering Community Power](#) initiative, first unveiled in 2016, and also including a high-profile campaign for a [national postal banking system](#). The latest progress on the Community Power initiative is summarized in a [Report to the Convention](#) in May 2019.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada Post](#), [Canadian Union of Postal Workers](#), [postal workers](#), [Workplace Environment Committees](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition and Green New Deal as policy and bargaining issues for Unifor

Posted on **September 6, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



According to their website, “Unifor is Canada’s largest oil, gas and chemical sector union, representing over 11,800 members in nearly every province, from offshore platforms off Newfoundland’s outer banks to Suncor in Alberta’s oil sands; from energy crown corporations in Saskatchewan to private refineries in every region of Canada.”

The union’s 3rd Constitutional Convention was held in Quebec City in August , gathering delegates to debate **Resolutions** , including Resolution #5, submitted by the autoworkers of **Local 222** in the Oshawa area regarding a Worker’s Green New Deal...“defined as “a massive government jobs program and investment in clean energy, green technology and electrification.” A Workers’ Green New Deal must include just transition protection for workers whose jobs are affected and fair labour standards. BECAUSE: • This program meets the needs of and has the potential to unite the labour movement, environmentalists and all those who have been the victims of inequality, discrimination, racism and now, climate change.”

and Resolution #21 regarding Just Transition, submitted by the energy workers of **Local 707A** from Fort McMurray, Alberta: “.....UNIFOR NATIONAL WILL: 1. Launch and promote a nationally-coordinated awareness and action campaign that will include: a. Awareness materials to the attention of Unifor members explaining the idea of just transition and how it can apply to workers in Canada today to build a more sustainable, fair future for working people with workers at the table when planning for a Just Transition to a regenerative economy. b. A call to all levels of governments to: i. support strategic investments in infrastructure, ii. A recognition of climate change needs and a commitment to meeting international greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, iii. A national strategy on Just Transition for workers c. Unifor’s inaugural Just Transition Conference scheduled for September, 2019 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. 2. Encourage all local unions to take part in the campaign in solidarity with Unifor’s energy workers in all provinces...”

Just as the resolutions regarding Green New Deal and Just Transition call for advocacy and action campaigns, the 50-page **Collective Bargaining Program** approved at the Convention deals with these issues not as bargaining priorities, but as policy challenges: “...we demand that governments: • Bolster our public health care and education systems; • Secure industries and workplaces most vulnerable to ongoing trade disputes; • *Establish more rigorous income assistance and just transition supports for workers adjusting to labour market changes (including those that are climate-related) (italics added by WCR)*; • Invest in public and social infrastructure, including long-overdue universal public Pharmacare and Child Care programs; • Develop a coordinated national, sustainable industrial development strategy.”

The **National Unifor Just Transition Conference** is scheduled for September 22 -24 in Saskatoon, and is described in **this July letter** from the National Health, Safety and Environment Director . “The Conference plenaries, workshops and discussions will focus on the importance of climate policies aimed at reducing emissions along with those aimed at building resilience and adaptive capacity. These large table discussions that will take place at the conference will set the tone for Unifor’s position on carbon footprint reduction and job security as the entire country moves forward to address the need for climate change initiatives.” Unifor’s previous lobby document, *The International Climate Crisis and Just Transition*, from 2018, is [here](#).

A June press release, “**Unifor energy workers ratify historic national agreement**” announced a new pattern-setting four-year collective agreement with Suncor Energy, and highlights gains in wages, severance, and a new framework for addressing domestic violence. The Suncor agreement will set the pattern for all energy sector employers in Canada – the text is not publicly available as of early September 2019.

Unifor's Energy Council met in June, as summarized [here](#) , to discuss the new pattern bargaining and the union's new promotional campaign for the sector, anchored around a [YouTube video](#) produced by Unifor.

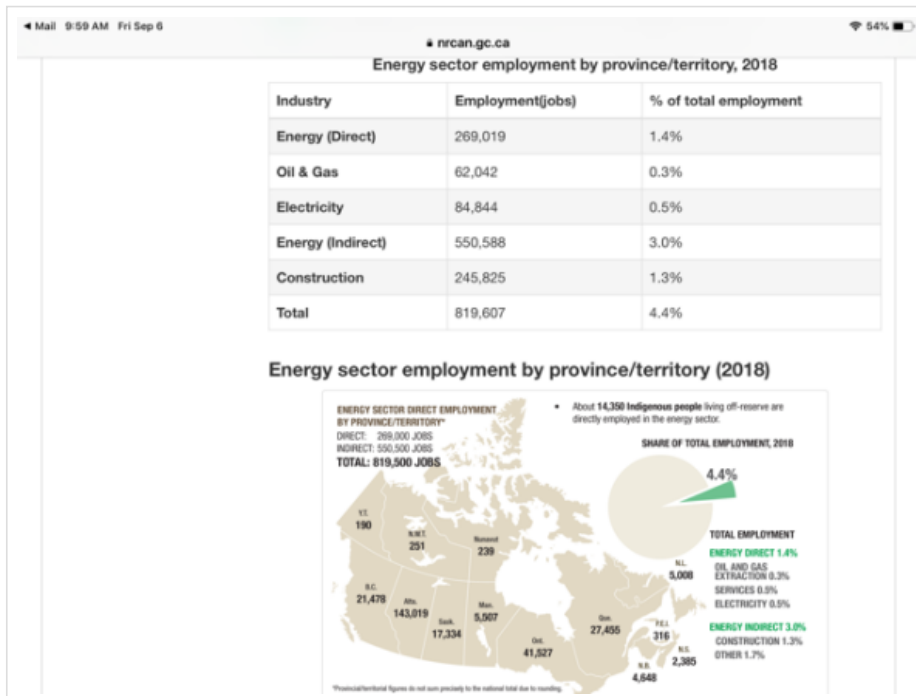
Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [green bargaining](#), [Green New Deal Canada](#), [Just Transition](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's new, free Energy Information website

Posted on [September 6, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Canada finally has a new, consolidated source of data about energy in our country. The **Canadian Energy Information Portal** launched in August – bringing together “reliable government data on Canada’s energy mix, including electricity, renewable energy and oil and gas.” The portal, housed at Statistics Canada, was developed in partnership with the National Energy Board, Natural Resources Canada, and Environment and Climate Change Canada , and according to the [August 26 press release](#) , “will be guided by a joint federal-provincial-territorial steering committee and will seek advice from Canadians, Indigenous peoples, industry, academics and municipalities.” The new website offers an interactive dashboard, maps, data and analysis regarding the following topics: [Clean technology](#); [Economic accounts](#); [Energy efficiency](#); [Energy markets](#); [Greenhouse gas emissions](#); [Imports and exports](#); [Investment and research](#); [Labour](#); [Prices](#); [Sustainable Development Goals](#); and [Transportation](#). One example:



\$15.2 million over five years was set aside in Budget 2019 to support the new Centre, in response to long-standing acknowledgement that Canada's energy data collection has been fragmented and inefficient – for example, in a **2017 report** by the Canadian Energy Research Institute, and the 2018 Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources, *Rethinking Canada's Energy Information System: Collaborative Models In a Data-Driven Economy* .

Two new articles provide history and context for the new data initiative, and emphasize the potential for accessible, reliable, impartial energy data and information to improve the polarized and sometimes misinformed energy policy discussions in Canada: **"How the launch of the Canadian Energy Information Centre could fill major gaps in energy data"** in *The National Observer* (September 5) , and **"Canada's Energy Data Problem"** in *Policy Options* in July.

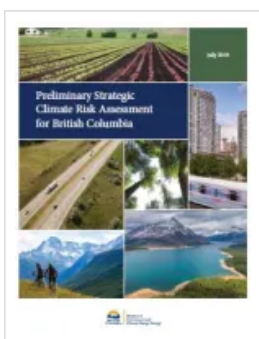
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The Summer of 2019: Flooding, hurricanes, wildfires and heatwaves

Posted on **September 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The world has awoken to the real-life manifestations of climate change in 2019, and we have been bombarded with media images of extreme weather disasters. July 2019 was approximately 1.2°C warmer than the pre-industrial era, according to a **summary of international heat waves** by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on August 1. The WMO also published **"Unprecedented wildfires in the Arctic"** (July 29) and **"Widespread fires harm global climate, environment"** on August 29, including information about the Amazon wildfires. **"Global heating made Hurricane Dorian bigger, wetter – and more deadly"** by scientists Michael Mann and Andrew Dessler appeared in *The Guardian* on September 4 and **"Is climate change making hurricanes stall?"** at the PBS website both offer clear summaries of the climate change connection to the most recent extreme weather disaster the world has seen.

In Canada, flooding was the predominant weather disaster: In a **July 2019 press release**, the Insurance Bureau of Canada described the flooding events of April and May and estimated that spring flooding in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick caused close to \$208 million in insured damage . In the same press release, the IBC advocates that all political parties in the upcoming federal election commit to a National Action Plan on Flooding. (The IBC published **Options for Managing the Flood Costs of Canada's Highest-risk Residential Properties** in June, the result of national consultations with the Working Group on the Financial Management of Flood Risk, co-chaired by Public Safety Canada and the IBC. The report is summarized in the **IBC press release** and in the *National Observer* **"Who should bear the financial risk of flooding? Report lays out three options"** in the National Observer June 19 .)



In what it calls the first report of its kind in Canada to examine climate risks at the provincial level, the British Columbia government published a [Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment for British Columbia](#) in July 2019. The report evaluates the likelihood of 15 climate risk events and considers their health, social, economic and environmental consequences, concluding that the greatest risks to B.C. are severe wildfire season, seasonal water shortage, heat wave, ocean acidification, glacier loss, and long-term water shortage. A compilation of forty-six articles concerning [Wildfires](#) is available from the *National Observer*, and includes “[‘Climate change in action:’ Scientist says fires in Alberta linked to climate change](#)” (June 10).

In late June, [Healthy Climate, Healthy New Brunswickers: A proposal for New Brunswick that cuts pollution and protects health](#) was released, written by Louise Comeau and Daniel Nunes. The report describes how climate change will affect the physical and mental health of all New Brunswickers, especially children, seniors, the isolated, and those living on low incomes. The report combines climate projections and existing community health profiles for 16 New Brunswick communities, emphasizing the risks of more intense precipitation, flooding and heat waves.

EXTREME HEAT IN CANADA AND BEYOND:



The Prairie Climate Centre at the University of Winnipeg released [Heat Waves and Health](#) in August – a brief and practical guide to the health impacts of heat waves, drought and wildfires in Canada. The report predicts future heat waves in Canada, based on data newly updated the [Climate Atlas of Canada](#). Previous projections were published as Chapter 4 in the federal government’s 2019 report *Canada’s Changing Climate Report*: “[Changes in Temperature and Precipitation Across Canada](#)”.

Heat is a much more widespread danger in the United States, with Phoenix Arizona experiencing 128 days at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit in 2018 – one of the hottest and fastest-warming cities in the country, according to an article in the New York Times, “[As Phoenix heats up, the night comes alive](#)”. The *Times* article describes how citizens and workers must re-schedule their lives and their job duties to avoid the killing heat of the day. Phoenix is also the main focus of a lengthy article, “[Can we survive extreme heat](#)” in the *Rolling Stone* (Aug. 27).



Killer Heat in the United States: Climate Choices and the Future of Dangerously Hot Days was released in July by the Union of Concerned Scientists, directed to a non-technical audience, and includes interactive maps and downloadable data [here](#). The report offers national and regional projections and in Chapter 5, addresses the particular implications for outdoor workers, as well as city and rural dwellers, and those in low-income neighbourhoods. A more technical version of the research appeared as **“Increased frequency of and population exposure to extreme heat index days in the United States during the 21st century”** in the Open Access journal *Environmental Research Communications*.

The accuracy and sensitivity of occupational exposure limits to heat is examined in **“Actual and simulated weather data to evaluate wet bulb globe temperature and heat index as alerts for occupational heat related illness”**. This important article, published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene* in January 2019, analysed the cases of 234 outdoor work-related heat-related illnesses reported to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 2016 and concluded that wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT) should be used for workplace heat hazard assessment. When WBGT is unavailable, a Heat Index alert threshold of approximately 80 °F (26.7 °C) could identify potentially hazardous workplace environmental heat.

Finally, **“Can the Paris Climate Goals Save Lives? Yes, a Lot of Them, Researchers Say”** in the *New York Times* (June 5) summarizes a more technical article which appeared in the journal *Sciences Advances* on June 5. **“Increasing mitigation ambition to meet the Paris Agreement’s temperature goal avoids substantial heat-related mortality in U.S. cities”** reviews the literature about heat-related mortality and concludes that achieving the 1.5°C threshold of the Paris Agreement could avoid between 110 and 2720 annual heat-related deaths in 15 U.S. cities.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [Heat Stress](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Business responsibilities for climate change: U.S. Roundtable nods, U.N. sets a high bar

Posted on **September 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. Business Roundtable generated headlines and surprised reaction with the August 19th **release of a new Statement of Purpose**, signed by 181 CEO’s of high-profile companies including Amazon, Walmart, Bank of America, Lockheed Martin, Morgan Stanley, UPS, and others. That statement redefines their shared, overarching corporate goal from “delivering value for shareholders” to promoting “An Economy That Serves All Americans” – including by: “supporting the communities in which we work. We respect the people in our communities and protect the environment by embracing sustainable practices across our businesses.” ...“Investing in our employees. This starts with compensating them fairly and providing important benefits. It also includes supporting them through training and education that help develop new skills for a rapidly changing world. We foster diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect.”

The full Business Roundtable **Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation**, with signatories, is [here](#); case studies of member corporations’ social responsibility initiatives are outlined in ***Building Communities, Meeting Challenges***.

A HIGHER BAR FOR BUSINESS

In contrast to the Business Roundtable statement, scant attention was paid to an international call for human rights and climate justice, released in July. The **Safe Climate Report** provides a guide to the obligations of States *and the responsibilities of businesses* under international agreements and law, regarding the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation, rights of the child, right to a healthy environment, and rights of vulnerable populations.

The Safe Climate Report, as well as the June 2019 U.N. **Report on extreme poverty and climate change** by Philip Alston, are the subject of a September 4 article in *The Conversation* Canadian edition, **“Climate change, poverty and human rights: an emergency without precedent”**. The authors state that “The Alston report suggests that the only way to address the human rights dimensions of climate crisis is for states to effectively regulate businesses and for those harmed by climate change to successfully sue responsible companies in court. “the Safe Climate report goes further...”

Specifically, the **Safe Climate Report** states:

*“Businesses must adopt human rights policies, conduct human rights due diligence, remedy human rights violations for which they are directly responsible, and work to influence other actors to respect human rights where relationships of leverage exist. As a first step, corporations should comply with the **Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** as they pertain to human rights and climate change.... **The five main responsibilities of businesses specifically related to climate change** are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their own activities and their subsidiaries; reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their products and services; minimize greenhouse gas emissions from their suppliers; publicly disclose their emissions, climate vulnerability and the risk of stranded assets; and ensure that people affected by business-related human rights violations have access to effective remedies.⁹⁰ In addition, businesses should support, rather than oppose, public policies intended to effectively address climate change.” (page 19/20).*

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF STATES:

The discussion in this report is also highly relevant to any litigation against states or companies regarding climate change, as well as for the rights of Indigenous peoples and children. Boyd concludes:

“A failure to fulfill international climate change commitments is a prima facie violation of the State’s obligations to protect the human rights of its citizens. As global average temperatures rise, even more people’s rights will be violated, and the spectre of catastrophic runaway climate chaos increases. There is an immense gap between what is needed to seriously tackle the global climate emergency and what is being done.

A dramatic change of direction is needed. To comply with their human rights obligations, developed States and other large emitters must reduce their emissions at a rate consistent with their international commitments. To meet the Paris target of limiting warming to 1.5°C, States must submit ambitious nationally determined contributions by 2020 that will put the world on track to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 45 per cent by 2030 (as calculated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). All States should prepare rights-based deep decarbonization plans intended to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 19, of the Paris Agreement. Four main categories of actions must be taken: addressing society’s addiction to fossil fuels; accelerating other mitigation actions; protecting vulnerable people from climate impacts; and providing unprecedented levels of financial support to least developed countries and small island developing States.”

The **Safe Climate Report** (formally titled *The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment*) was submitted to the U.N. General Assembly, written by Canadian human rights scholar and U.N. Special Rapporteur David R. Boyd, whose 2012 book, **The Environmental Rights Revolution: A Global Study of Constitutions, Human Rights and the Environment**, stands as a landmark study in environmental law. The Special Rapporteur’s Report was informed by a consultation period in 2019 in which States and organizations were invited to participate – the few which did are posted [here](#). (Neither Canada nor the U.S. were among the countries which submitted). Two noteworthy organizational submissions available are from Canada’s Ecojustice, and **Our Children’s Trust** (U.S.) on the issue of intergenerational responsibility and youth. A separate report by Special Rapporteur John Knox discussed **The Children’s Rights and the Environment** in 2018, and it may be significant the concluding sentence of the **Safe Climate Report** uses Greta Thunberg’s famous words, “I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Business attitudes](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [Human Rights](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ICYMI – More Labour support for a Green New Deal in the U.S.

Posted on **September 3, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“Hardhats vs hippies: how the mainstream media misrepresents the debate over the Green New Deal” appeared in *In these Times* (June 18) and was **re-posted to *Common Dreams*** . It responds to the negative image in **“Labor anger over Green New Deal greets 2020 contenders in California”** (*Politico*, June 1), and states “...though building-trades workers may fit Trump’s image of working-class America, they are not representative of labor or the working class as a whole when it comes to green issues. The future of labor will be helmed by service workers, women, immigrants and people of color. Accordingly, the Green New Deal or other strong climate change policies have won endorsements from [SEIU](#), [Los Angeles County Federation of Labor](#) and [National Nurses United](#), along with various locals like New York State Nurses Association and American Federation of Teachers – Oregon. A survey released by Data for Progress this month [found](#) that “union membership is one of the factors most highly correlated with support for Green New Deal policies as well as the Green New Deal framework as a whole.”

“Blue Collar Workers – let’s support the Green New Deal” in *Resilience* (July 18 2019) also takes issue with the *Politico* article. Author Steve Morse states: “I am a blue-collar worker – a retired member of Sheet Metal Workers Local 104, which represents workers throughout Northern and Central California. The union leaders quoted in that article certainly don’t speak for me, nor for tens of thousands of other building trades workers.” The article points out examples of positive union retraining initiatives, and calls for union workers to support the Green New Deal.

“Unions are finally learning to love the Green New Deal” appeared in *The Nation* on July 12, in which author Bob Massie profiles the recent Convergence meeting organized by Labor Network for Sustainability to discuss action strategies for a Green New Deal. He notes key leaders amongst unions, including SEIU and the Association of Flight Attendants, and also notes that a contentious resolution concerning racial and economic justice emerged on the final day of meetings, and explains: “The tension arose in part because the leaders committed to racial and economic justice—like the rest of their union counterparts—are waking up to the vast potential power of the Green New Deal as a set of ideas and as force for political change. They were not rejecting it; quite the opposite. They wanted to be certain that their concerns were not overlooked.”



The Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) is an active supporter of the Green New Deal, and maintains a compilation of labour union endorsements of the Green New Deal [here](#) , and a compilation of other GND articles and tools [here](#) . The most recent article appeared in June, by Jeremy Brecher, Director of Research and Policy at LNS. He presented an essay at *The Climate Movement, What’s Next?* , a forum organized by the Great Transition Initiative (GTI). Brecher’s essay, **“The Green New Climate Deal,”** characterizes the Green New Deal as the third and current phase of the climate movement. He considers the GND as unique for several reasons: like the Extinction Rebellion and the Student Strike for Climate movement, it represents a shift to using direct action techniques against governments and politicians; it calls for strong government leadership and authority; it is specifically directed to the needs of the working class (for example, calling for universal job guarantees and labour rights protection); and finally, it is uniquely ambitious by calling for public policies to meet the targets as laid out by climate science.

Brecher acknowledges many dangers to the Green New Deal initiative: “Opposition from the friends of fossil fuels, combined with tepid support from the supposed friends of climate protection, workers, and justice, could easily turn the GND into one more inadequate, toothless, feel-good public relations fig leaf. In a worst-case scenario, the initiative could morph into a cover for expanding nuclear energy, geoengineering, “clean coal,” and other environmental nightmares.

Fortunately, we have the start of a GND movement that is alert to these dangers and mobilizing to push back against them. The outcome is likely to be largely determined by how hard those of us who should be fighting for the GND actually do so.” He calls for that fight to begin, knowing that “The truth is that we don’t know how compatible effective climate protection is with capitalism.... The rational thing to do under such conditions of uncertainty is to start implementing the measures that are necessary to protect the climate while compensating for the negative consequences we can clearly anticipate.”

Brecher’s essay was part of a forum, *The Climate Movement, What’s Next?*, organized by the Great Transition Initiative (GTI). In his **overview/introduction** to the forum, Bill McKibben asks “Do we need a meta-movement?”. Among the many other contributors: Guy Dauncey of the British Columbia Sustainable Energy Association, with *Charting how we get there*; Gus Speth of the Next System Project with *Imploding the Carbon Economy*; climate justice expert Tom Athanasiou, with *Globalizing the Movement*; and Anders Wijkman, chairman of the Swedish Association of Recycling Industries, with *A Climate Emergency Plan*. The **Great Transition Initiative** (GTI) has a long history as a worldwide network of visionary thinking and writing. Most recently, in 2014, it was relaunched by the Tellus Institute as an online forum, “offering a rolling series of essays, viewpoints, reviews, and interviews.”

And further discussion of a Green New Deal:

Decarbonizing the U.S.economy: Pathways towards a Green New Deal was released in June 2019 by the Roosevelt Institute. In this detailed (80-page) report, three economists argue that the Acasio-Cortez/Markey Green New Deal proposals are based on sound economic policy, and make detailed proposals to move to a low-carbon economy based on 1) large-scale public investments; 2) comprehensive regulations to ensure decarbonization across the board; and 3) a cap-and-dividend system that puts a price on carbon while offsetting the regressive effects on income distribution.

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Equity for marginalized workers needed in Canada’s Just Transition policies

Posted on **September 3, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A new discussion of Just Transition in Canada was released in August 2019, *Who is included in a Just Transition? Considering social equity in Canada’s shift to a zero-carbon economy*. Co-authors Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, senior researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Zaeesh Deshpande provide this introduction: “After establishing a conceptual framework for just transition, including a distinction between reactive and proactive approaches, we analyze Canada’s existing transition policies to determine who is benefiting from them and who is excluded. We specifically consider gender identity, Indigenous status, racialized identity and immigrant status in our analysis of coal communities covered by the transition. We find that the main beneficiaries of present just transition policies are Canadian-born white men, which reflects their disproportionate presence in the coal workforce. However, many socially and economically marginalized people also face costs and risks from the same climate policies but do not share in the benefits of transition policies, which means these policies may lead to further marginalization.” The conclusions are supported by the labour market analysis based on Statistics Canada employment data, combined with a synthesis of federal and Alberta

Just Transition policies currently in place for the coal industry. The paper makes a series of policy recommendations including targeted training, apprenticeship and education for people from marginalized groups.

The August report was co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy and Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project (ACW), as was a 2018 report by Mertins-Kirkwood, ***Making decarbonization work for workers: Policies for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy in Canada***, in which he sets out the distinctions between “reactive” and “proactive” Just Transition policies. In November 2019, a related article by Mertins-Kirkwood and Ian Hussey, “A top-down transition: A critical account of Canada’s government-led phase-out of the coal sector,” will appear in the forthcoming international book *Just transition(s): social justice in the shift towards a low-carbon world*, to be published by Pluto Press .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta Coal Phase-out](#), [coal phase-out](#), [First Nations](#), [Gender Equality](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Youth-led Global Climate Strike in September asks for workers’ support – updated

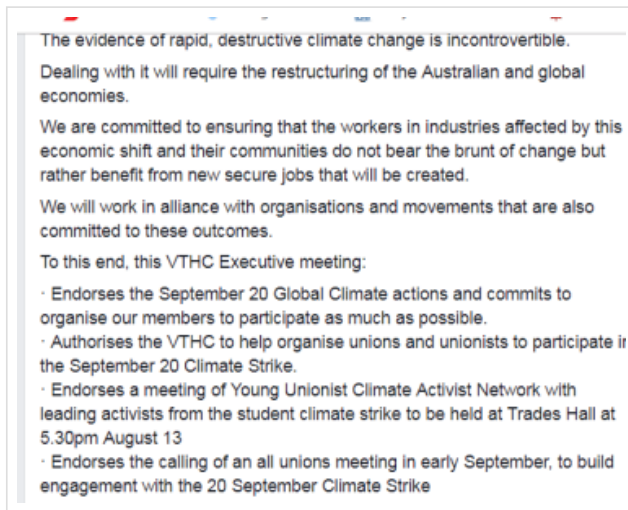
Posted on [August 21, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



What a difference a year makes!

The #FridaysforFuture youth movement began in August 2018 when the Swedish teenager, Greta Thunberg, [began her solitary climate strike](#) . Since then, millions of students (and their adult supporters) have been inspired to copy her action in almost every country in the world, including Canada. In May 2019, Thunberg and other young climate activists sent out a [call for a global climate strikes](#) in the week of September 20 – 27, timed to coincide with the [United Nations Climate Summit](#) in New York on September 23.

The youth movement has explicitly called for the support of adults and workers in the global climate strike. One of the first unions to offer support was Ver.di in Germany, as reported in [“Youth and Workers Uniting Behind This Crisis’: German Labor Union Urges 2 Million Members to Join Global Climate Strike”](#) in *Common Dreams* (Aug. 6). The Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) , in cooperation with 350.org, has issued an [appeal on the LNS website](#), asking unions to participate and providing [A Climate Strike Toolkit for Workers: How to Support the Young People Who Are Striking to Save Our Planet](#) . The [Global Climate Strike website](#) also offers their own [Guide to organizing a workplace climate strike](#). The [University and Colleges Union in the U.K.](#) is submitting a resolution at the Trades Union Congress conference in early September, asking all members to support the Sept. 20 action with a 30-minute strike.



From the state of Victoria Australia, the Victoria Trades Hall Executive Committee posted on Facebook with their August 9 resolution which endorses the September 20 global climate strike and “commits to organize our members to participate as much as possible.”

Updates, as of August 30:

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), in its [Bulletin #88](#), has compiled statements and actions from unions around the world in support of the calls for a “Global Climate Strike”, with ongoing updates [here](#) . For Canada, the TUED list includes the B.C. Teachers Federation , who will be using their September 23 Professional Development Day to hold a **“Rally & Teach-in for Climate Justice”** in Victoria; and the Toronto and District Labour Council is included for its endorsement of the global strike at the General Delegates Meeting on August 1, 2019.

The Toronto Labour Council has [posted a statement on the Climate Emergency](#) on their website, calling on Labour Councils across Canada to be involved in local and national efforts on climate action, including on September 27th. The statement carries on with the initiatives outlined in their 2016 action plan, [Greenprint for Greater Toronto: Working Together for Climate Action](#) . Not included in the TUED list, but also from Canada: the Confederation Syndicats Nationaux in Quebec are planning to coordinate union support across the province, according to their Convention document from June 2019, [La Planete s’invite au travail](#) (in French only).

Management attitudes to Climate Strikes: **“Workers’ strike will reveal if firms really care about climate change”** in *The Irish Times* (July 8) reports on the results of a journalist’s informal emailed survey to 20 global companies, asking about their company policies concerning climate protests . Either vague responses or no response was received from Apple, Amazon, Facebook, Google, Bloomberg, IKEA, BP, Exxon Mobil, BlackRock, and Virgin Group . Of the few who responded: Patagonia is quoted as saying that it “actively encourages its employees to take part in environmental protests and has a global policy of providing bail for workers arrested during such actions. In September it plans to expand digital efforts to connect customers with local green groups.” Germany’s GLS ethical bank said “it will close on September 20 so all employees can march ‘against the climate catastrophe’”. And Shell stated that “it backed peaceful protest and its employees could seek leave to join such action.”

For updated news, check the [Global Climate Strike website](#) , and for Canada, the [#Fridays for Future Canada](#) or [#Climate Strike Canada](#) Twitter feeds. And even the mainstream media will be awake to the global climate movement. The **“Covering Climate Now”** initiative, led by the *Columbia Journalism Review* and *The Guardian*, has gathered commitments from print and online newspapers and magazines, as well as television, to run one week of focused climate coverage, to begin September 16 and culminate September 23. Canadian participants include [Maclean’s magazine](#) and [The Tyee](#).

Canada's Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance recommends incentives to green pensions, RRSP's

Posted on **July 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada's Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance released its final report on June 14, ***Mobilizing Finance for Sustainable Growth***. The report makes fifteen recommendations, stating "... climate change opportunity and risk management need to become business-as-usual in financial services, and embedded in everyday business decisions, products and services." Although the Panel's main focus was on institutional investments, they also made recommendations which would help individuals to make greener personal investments.

*Tiff Macklem, Chair of the Expert Panel, summarizes and simplifies the message of the Panel Report in "**Climate change should be part of regular savings and investment decisions**" in The Conversation on July 3. Concerning individual actions, he states: "To accelerate climate-conscious investment, we ... recommend actively engaging Canadians in the climate opportunity and making their stake in fighting climate change more tangible...To engage them, we recommend the federal government create an incentive for Canadians to invest in accredited climate-conscious products. Specifically, we recommend that the Minister of Finance create additional space in RRSPs and defined contribution pension plans for these investments and offer a "super deduction" — in other words, a taxable income deduction greater than 100 per cent —on eligible investments." This proposal was further explained in "**Expert panel on sustainable finance recommends super tax deduction to incentivize green savings**" in Benefits Canada magazine.*

Other recommendations in the final Report include: Establish a standing Canadian Sustainable Finance Action Council (SFAC), with a cross-departmental secretariat, to advise and assist the federal government in implementing the Panel's recommendations; Establish the Canadian Centre for Climate Information and Analytics as an authoritative source of climate information and decision analysis; Define and pursue a Canadian approach to implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). Although the recommendations include goals for private financing of the building retrofit market and clean tech industry, they also include a call to support Canada's oil and natural gas industry "in building a low-emissions, globally competitive future."

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Pact for a Green New Deal gathers input across Canada

Posted on **July 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada's **Pact for a Green New Deal** has issued a new blog titled, "**What we heard**", summarizing the input from 150 town hall events held since it launched in May 2019. "...All told, with groups ranging in size from four in Iqaluit to more than 300 in Edmonton, the town halls have attracted more than 7,000 participants, each representing environmental groups, labour unions, faith groups, political parties, city councils, community and neighbourhood associations, Indigenous organizations, women's organizations, the Fight for \$15 and Fairness, student unions, [and] local media."

The report is organized according to twelve "Green Line" themes (topics which participants want to see included in a Green New Deal). Most frequently raised amongst "Green Lines": Economy and Government, Green Infrastructure, Social Justice, and Indigenous Sovereignty (others included Nature, Agriculture, Democracy, Plastics, Climate Science, Decent

Work, Climate Debt, and Rights) . Workplace issues appear in the recommendations under “Economy and Government”, including: “Creating millions of good, high-wage jobs through a green jobs plan, ensuring fossil fuel industry workers and directly affected community members are guaranteed good, dignified work with the training and support needed to succeed.Increasing unionization and implementing workers’ rights, including at least a \$15 minimum wage, pay equity, paid emergency leave, job security, protections for migrant workers, and the right to organize and unionize.”

The highlighted Red Lines (or themes which are negatives) the fossil fuel industry, extraction and pollution, plastics, and a failing democracy.

Under “Next Steps”, the report states: “The communities and organizations represented by people who attended town halls did reach beyond the “green bubble” that typically exists within mainstream environmental events and campaigns. That being said, there is much room for improvement in reaching out to the labour movement, social justice movements, Indigenous peoples, and those who are marginalized or who have been most impacted by the current and historical harms a Green New Deal must address.” More town hall meetings are promised.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green New Deal Canada](#), [labour union policies](#), [Pact for a Green New Deal](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

First Nations, environmentalists file court challenges to Trans Mountain pipeline

Posted on **July 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 18, as described in an earlier WCR post, [Government gives the go-ahead to Trans Mountain pipeline despite declaring a climate emergency](#). By July 8, two court challenges have been filed against the decision. Six First Nations, led by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, filed a court challenge on the grounds that the federal government failed in the requirement to adequately consult them. More details are described in [First Nations launch new court challenge to Trans Mountain pipeline](#) at the CBC (July 9), and [First Nations renew court battle to stop Trudeau and Trans Mountain](#) in the *National Observer*.

Another separate appeal was also filed on July 8 by EcoJustice on behalf of Raincoast Conservation Foundation and Living Oceans Society, on grounds that the government decision doesn’t comply with the responsibility to protect endangered southern resident killer whales, whose survival would be threatened by increased tanker traffic. CBC reports [here](#), the *National Observer* also reports in [“Conservationists file legal challenge to Trans Mountain reapproval over whales.”](#)

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [First Nations](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Strong community advocacy brings landmark climate legislation to New York State



On June 18, the New York State Assembly passed the ***Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act*** – what the ***New York Times*** calls “one of the world’s most ambitious carbon plans” (June 18) . Originally tabled in 2016 as the *Climate and Community Protection Act* , the *Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act* calls for the state to achieve 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2040 and economy-wide, net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The final legislation was a compromise – stripped of measures on prevailing wages, apprenticeship programs, preferences for women- and minority-owned businesses, and investment for disadvantaged communities. The **NY Renews** coalition, comprised of unions, community and environmental groups issued a **statement** which reads, in part: “Ultimately, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act is a partial victory for New Yorkers. The fight for true climate justice demands transformative change, and we will bring that fight until our communities win...We stand strong knowing that as recently as last week, the Governor dismissed any funding for frontline communities, and in his Climate Leadership Act, refused to set a timeline for economy-wide emission reductions. This new legislation does both, and that is a direct result of years of tireless organizing by the members of the NY Renews coalition.”

“**New York Is About to Pass One of the Most Ambitious Climate Bills in the Land**” in *The Nation* (June 19) describes the political battles and compromises involved, and states “the real heroes of the fight for the CCPA are the hundreds of protesters who stormed the state Capitol on a recent Tuesday in June, and the dozens who staged a “die-in” outside the governor’s office to illustrate the consequences of failing to pass climate legislation.” An **article** by David Roberts in *Vox* (June 20) also summarizes the nitty gritty of the bill and its evolution.

Planning under the new legislation will be led by a 22-member Climate Action Council, composed of the heads of various New York state agencies, along with members appointed by the governor, the Senate, and the Assembly. The Council will convene advisory panels on, for example, transportation, land use and local government, and will also convene working groups on Just Transition and Climate Justice.

Posted in **Government Policy, United States** | Tagged **Climate Justice, Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction, New York State** | **Leave a reply**

Climate apartheid and chaos – U.N. official warns that only the rich will escape poverty, disease and displacement

Posted on **July 5, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



It appears that Greta Thunberg is not the only person willing to speak truth to power. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights for the United Nations, officially tabled a report at the U.N. on June 28. Although the title, ***Climate Change and Poverty***, sounds like another bureaucratic exercise, his language is urgent and blunt.

The full report is available from [this link at the U.N. press release](#). Some excerpts :

“Climate change threatens to undo the last 50 years of progress in development, global health, and poverty reduction. ...It could push more than 120 million more people into poverty by 2030 and will have the most severe impact in poor countries, regions, and the places poor people live and work...”

We risk a ‘climate apartheid’ scenario where the wealthy pay to escape overheating, hunger, and conflict while the rest of the world is left to suffer... The risk of community discontent, of growing inequality, and of even greater levels of deprivation among some groups, will likely stimulate nationalist, xenophobic, racist and other responses. Maintaining a balanced approach to civil and political rights will be extremely complex...

...Staying the course will be disastrous for the global economy and pull vast numbers into poverty. Addressing climate change will require a fundamental shift in the global economy, decoupling improvements in economic well-being from fossil fuel emissions. It is imperative this is done in a way that provides necessary support, protects workers, and creates decent work.

Governments, and too many in the human rights community, have failed to seriously address climate change for decades. Somber speeches by government officials have not led to meaningful action and too many countries continue taking short-sighted steps in the wrong direction.....Although climate change has been on the human rights agenda for well over a decade, it remains a marginal concern for most actors. Yet it represents an emergency without precedent and requires bold and creative thinking from the human rights community, and a radically more robust, detailed, and coordinated approach.

... incremental managerialism and proceduralism ...are entirely disproportionate to the urgency and magnitude of the threat. Ticking boxes will not save humanity or the planet from impending disaster.”

Summaries from the media appear in: **“To Prevent ‘Climate Apartheid Scenario’ Where Rich Escape and Poor Suffer, UN Report Issues Urgent Call for Global Economic Justice”** in *Common Dreams* (June 25) and **“‘Climate apartheid’: UN expert says human rights may not survive”** in *The Guardian* .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change impacts](#), [Climate Justice](#), [Human Rights](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to break the green ceiling in the U.S. environmental movement

Posted on **July 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Leaking Talent: How People of Color are Pushed out of Environmental Organizations is the latest publication of **Green 2.0** (formerly the Green Diversity Initiative), a U.S. NGO whose purpose is “to stimulate the demand for, and demonstrate the supply of, talented leaders of all backgrounds” in the mainstream environmental movement.

Leaking Talent reports on a 2018 survey which determined that, amongst the 40 largest green NGOs in the U.S., only 20% of the staff and 21% of the senior staff identified as “People of Color”. The survey results for environmental foundations were similar: 25% of the staff and 4% of the senior staff identified as People of Color. To determine the factors related to retention and promotion, the author examined qualitative and quantitative data from employees, their HR or diversity managers, and their CEOs. Results showed that a focus on employee development and transparency in the promotion process had the most consistent impact on intent to stay for all employees. For top-level leaders, the strongest effect came from diversity and inclusion commitments stated in the organization’s mission, vision and values .

Green 2.0 established a baseline of data, and coined the term “green ceiling” in 2014 with ***The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations: Mainstream NGOs, Foundations & Government Agencies*** . That survey concluded that unconscious bias, discrimination, and insular recruiting were the top three barriers to hiring and retention in the mainstream movement. Other publications are: ***Beyond Diversity: A Roadmap to Building an Inclusive Organization*** (2017) , and in January 2019, the 2017 ***Transparency Report Card*** was updated.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **climate change activism, discrimination, diversity, Environmental Justice, environmental organizations** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Court of Appeal rules against the provincial challenge to the federal carbon price – Seven provinces will intervene in the Supreme Court appeal

Posted on **July 4, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



On June 28, the Ontario Court of Appeal issued their **Decision** , 4 to 1 in favour of the federal government’s right to impose a system of carbon pricing across Canada, under the ***Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*** . Some important excerpts from the majority decision:

“Parliament has determined that atmospheric accumulation of greenhouse gases causes climate changes that pose an existential threat to human civilization and the global ecosystemThe need for a collective approach to a matter of national concern, and the risk of non-participation by one or more provinces, permits Canada to adopt minimum national standards to reduce [greenhouse gas] emissions...

The Act does this and no more. It leaves ample scope for provincial legislation in relation to the environment, climate change, and GHGs, while narrowly constraining federal jurisdiction to address the risk of provincial inaction.

The charges imposed by the Act are themselves constitutional. They are regulatory in nature and connected to the purposes of the Act. They are not taxes.

The Act is the product of extensive efforts – efforts originally endorsed by almost all provinces, including Ontario – to develop a pan-Canadian approach to reducing GHG emissions and mitigating climate change. This, too, reflects the fact that minimum national standards to reduce GHG emissions are of concern to Canada as a whole. The failure of those efforts reflects the reality that one or more dissenting provinces can defeat a national solution to a matter of national concern”

The Ontario government **immediately announced** that it will appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. The Premier of Alberta, part of the Canada-wide Conservative opposition to the federal carbon tax, said that Alberta is reviewing the decision in his **press release**. Saskatchewan, which **lost its own court challenge** to the GGPPA in May 2019, has already filed an appeal in the Supreme Court of Canada, scheduled for December 5 2019 – notably after the coming federal election, in which climate change issues are widely expected to be a top priority for voters.

For a thorough discussion of the decision and compilation of reactions, read: **“Doug Ford loses carbon tax battle with Trudeau”** in the *National Observer*. **“Ontario Court of Appeal Upholds Federal Carbon Tax”** appeared in *The Energy Mix* on July 2 and also compiles reaction from many sources. **“Federal Carbon Pricing Regime Now Two-for-Two”** (July 2) in *Lexology* offers a more lawyerly perspective. And for the mood in Ontario, read **“Doug Ford’s \$30 million carbon tax fight is money down the drain but it keeps his brand afloat”** in the *Toronto Star* (July 3) or in the *Globe and Mail*, **“The real carbon tax is the money provinces are spending on lawyers.”**

Provinces line up to participate in Supreme Court appeal: (Updated as of July 10): As of July 8, seven provinces are registered as intervenors in the Saskatchewan challenge to the carbon tax, scheduled to be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada in December 2019. On July 8, CBC reported that **New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs abandons planned carbon tax court fight**, stating that the province will not waste taxpayers’ money on their own carbon tax court case, but will act as an intervenor in the Saskatchewan’s appeal. Prince Edward Island is also intervening, as explained in **P.E.I. intervening in Saskatchewan’s carbon tax court challenge** (July 5). The Premier of PEI states they are “absolutely not” joining the fight against a carbon tax, but are intervening as a way to reserve the right to participate in future. Even more surprisingly, **“Quebec intervenes in Saskatchewan’s challenge of carbon tax”**, as reported in the *Montreal Gazette* on July 8. Quebec has joined the case to ensure its provincial rights are upheld in any court decision, and to protect Quebec’s existing cap and trade system.



Aaron Wherry of CBC posted an analysis of the Conservative premiers’ positions against the federal carbon price in **Premiers say they want a ‘co-operative’ approach to climate policy. Are they serious?** (July 10). It discusses the differences amongst Alberta’s Jason Kenney, Ontario’s Doug Ford, Saskatchewan’s Scott Moe, New Brunswick’s Blaine Higgs and Bob McLeod of the Northwest Territories, who are meeting separately, in advance of the formal **Council of the Federation meeting** in Saskatoon, July 9 to 11.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing, Carbon Tax, Ontario, Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, provincial climate change policies** | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal government announces \$275 Million subsidy to LNG Canada in B.C.

Posted on July 3, 2019 by [elizabethperry493](#)

Despite the ongoing contentious development of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in British Columbia and commitments to end fossil fuel subsidies, on June 24 federal Finance Minister Morneau announced that the federal government will invest \$275 million into LNG Canada's \$40 billion liquefied natural gas project in Kitimat: \$220 million to be spent on energy-efficient gas turbines for the project, and \$55 million spent on replacing the Haisla Bridge in Kitimat. The announcement is summarized by the CBC in "[Feds announce \\$275M 'largest private sector investment in Canadian history' — Kitimat, B.C.'s LNG project](#)"

The Narwhal maintains an ongoing archive of excellent articles which chronicle the controversy over fracking and LNG in B.C., [here](#) . Two recent "must read" articles from: "[6 Awkward Realities behind B.C.'s big LNG Giveaway](#)" (April 6) which discusses the B.C. government's move to bundle tax exemptions and cheap electricity rates into a \$5.35 billion incentive package for LNG Canada in March 2019, and "[B.C. government quietly posts response to expert fracking report](#)" (June 28) which discusses the government's response to the [report of its own independent Scientific Review of Hydraulic Fracturing in British Columbia](#), released in February 2019. As noted in the Narwhal article, the panel was mandated to assess the potential impacts of fracking on water quantity and quality; on seismic activity, and on fugitive emissions – but not on public health, despite concerns raised and the known scientific evidence. According to the government news release, a working group has been established to address the 97 recommendations made by the expert panel.

Some recent relevant reading about LNG and the fracking associated with its production:

RE the Emissions of LNG: *The New Gas Boom* , published on July 1 by the Global Energy Monitor, an international non-governmental organization that catalogues fossil-fuel infrastructure. The report states that a growing global supply of natural gas is on a "collision course" with the Paris Agreement, and that the increase in natural gas is driven largely by the North American fracking boom- with 39% of new development occurring in the U.S., 35% in Canada. The GEM report is discussed from a Canadian viewpoint in "[Global boom in natural gas is undermining climate change action: report](#)" *National Observer* (July 2) and "['Clean' natural gas is actually the new coal, report says: Don Pittis](#)" at CBC . Previous to the Global Energy Monitor report, Marc Lee had weighed in on the high GHG emissions of fracked natural gas in " *LNG's Big Lie*", an article in the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Policy Note (Lee's arguments were also published in *The Georgia Straight*, (June 17) and an *OpEd in The Globe and Mail* .)



In the U.S. in June 19, The sixth edition of the *Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking* was published by **Physicians for Social Responsibility** and Concerned Health Professionals of New York. Written by scientists, doctors and journalists, it is an analysis of original research studies published from 2016-2018 on the health impacts of fracking . One of the most impactful statements from the press release: "The notion that natural gas can serve as an intermediate "bridge fuel" between coal and renewable energy is fallacious

and now disproven by new scientific evidence showing that methane is a more powerful greenhouse gas than formerly appreciated and escapes in larger amounts from all parts of the extraction and distribution process than previously presumed, including from inactive, long-abandoned wells. Grossly underestimating methane emissions threatens to undermine the efficacy of efforts to combat climate change.” A summary press release is [here](#) , or see the *Common Dreams* article “[‘We Need to Ban Fracking’: New Analysis of 1,500 Scientific Studies Details Threat to Health and Climate](#)” (June 19).

International Energy Agency report, [LNG Market Trends and their Implications](#) (June 20) provides statistical analysis of the changing Asian markets for LNG.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Fracking](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#), [LNG](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Coal transition funds announced for Alberta and Saskatchewan communities

Posted on **July 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 28, the federal government announced funding of \$4,489,100 through the Canada Coal Transition Initiative. Details of the funded projects – four in Alberta and five in Saskatchewan – are listed in the [Backgrounder](#) . The Saskatchewan projects include establishing a solar installation training program in Estevan; development of business retention and expansion plans for Weyburn, Estevan, Moose Jaw and Coronach; and an economic and employment impact analysis with a regional strategic economic mitigation plan to support the Coronach & Region Coal Transition Initiatives. The Canada Coal Transition Initiative is a \$35 million, five-year strategic fund to support skills development and economic diversification activities for workers and communities impacted by the government’s February 2018 decision to phase out traditional coal-fired electricity generation by 2030.

Since the June 28 announcements, brief reactions have appeared: “[Federal government gives \\$1.2M to Sask. groups to phase out coal](#)” at CBC Saskatchewan; “[Feds announce funding for coal energy transition in Saskatchewan, Alberta](#)” which quotes a United Mineworkers spokesperson and the official province of Saskatchewan response; “[Leduc, Parkland counties among recipients of federal coal transition handout](#)” in the *Edmonton Journal*, and “[Edmonton-area counties get help from Ottawa for coal transition](#)” at CBC Edmonton.

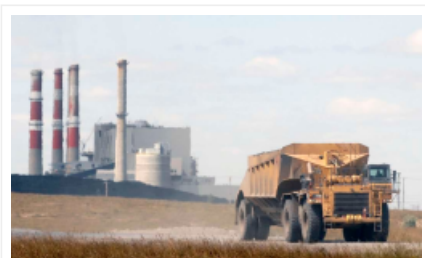
The [June 28 funding press release](#) also states:

In response to the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities, the Government of Canada intends to:

Create worker transition centres (funded through Budget 2018);

Explore new ways to protect wages and pensions; and

Create a \$150 million infrastructure fund, beginning 2020-21, for impacted communities, administered by Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.



— Boundary Dam facility in Estevan -photo
by Don Healy / Regina Leader-Post)

How the coal transition is impacting the communities across Canada is evident from the *What we heard from Canadian coal power workers and communities* report which accompanied the release of the *Final Report* of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities in January 2019. Climate Justice Saskatoon has also published the results of its interviews with people in Estevan and Coronach in its *Bridging the Gap project*. Articles have also appeared: “**Estevan, Sask. preparing for coal phase-out putting hundreds of jobs at risk**” at *Global News* (May 2019) is a profile of the community; “**Saskatchewan reaches agreement with Ottawa to cut power-generation emissions**”(January 2019) outlines the agreement reached between the federal and provincial government, allowing Boundary Dam Three near Estevan to continue beyond 2030, thanks to its nearly \$1.5 billion Carbon Capture and Storage retrofit.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#), [Retraining](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [1 Reply](#)

New ILO report estimates productivity effects of working at over 35 degrees C.

Posted on **July 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Released on July 1 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), *Working on a warmer planet: The impact of heat stress on labour productivity and decent work* presents estimates of the current and projected productivity losses at national, regional and global levels, and recommends policy and workplace actions. The report defines heat stress as “heat in excess of what the body can tolerate without suffering physiological impairment.” Roughly, it occurs at temperatures above 35°C, in high humidity. A growing body of research show that it restricts workers’ physical capabilities and work capacity and thus, productivity, and can lead to potentially fatal heatstroke.

The report projects that the equivalent of more than 2 per cent of total working hours worldwide will be lost every year by 2030. Agriculture and construction are the two sectors which will be worst affected , especially in south Asia, where job losses due to heat are projected to be 43 million jobs by 2030, and western Africa, where 9 million jobs are predicted to be lost. Other sectors especially at risk are environmental goods and services, refuse collection, emergency, repair work, transport, tourism, sports and some forms of industrial work. And as with so other climate change impacts, low-income countries are expected to suffer the worst, and people in the poorest regions will suffer the most.

Solutions: *From the report introduction: “Solutions do exist. In particular, the structural transformation of rural economies should be speeded up so that fewer agricultural workers are exposed to high temperatures and so that less physical effort has to be expended in such conditions. Other important policy measures that can help are skills*

development, the promotion of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, public investment in infrastructure, and improved integration of developing countries into global trade. **At the workplace level**, enhanced information about on-site weather conditions, the adaptation of workwear and equipment, and technological improvements can make it easier for workers and their employers to cope with higher temperatures. Employers and workers should discuss together how to adjust working hours, in addition to adopting other occupational safety and health measures. Accordingly, social dialogue is a relevant tool for improving working conditions on a warming planet.”

The report chapters include a global overview, as well as chapters for Africa, The Americas (composed of 4 sub-regions: North America, Central America, South America, and The Caribbean), Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia. The Americas discussion reiterates our favoured situation, with low levels of heat stress and relatively high labour standards, although the patterns remain consistent: “Whereas the impact of heat stress on labour productivity in Canada is practically zero, the United States lost 0.11 per cent of total working hours as a result of heat stress in 1995 and is projected to lose 0.21 per cent in 2030. The expected productivity loss in 2030 is equivalent to 389,000 full-time jobs. This effect is concentrated in the southern states of the country and concerns mostly outdoor workers, such as construction workers and farm workers in California.”

Outdoor workers and cancer: *Working on a warmer planet* includes a highlight section regarding North American farm workers which cites the “**Sun Safety at Work Canada**” programme, which began in 2016 and is funded by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. In 2014, as many as 7,000 skin cancers in Canada were attributed to work-related sun exposure, and outdoor workers have a 2.5-3.5 times greater risk of developing skin cancer than indoor workers. The Sun Safety at Work program focuses on skin cancer but also includes information about heat stress and eye damage in its **Resource Library**. Downloadable publications for employers and individuals include fact sheets, videos and presentations.

Other recent, relevant reading:

“**Changes in Temperature and Precipitation Across Canada**” : Chapter 4 in the federal government’s *Canada’s Changing Climate Report*, released in 2019. It assesses observed and projected changes for Canada.

The **Urban Heat Island Effect** at the Climate Atlas of Canada website discusses the issue and provides links to some of the adaptive municipal programs.

Healthy Climate, Healthy New Brunswickers: A proposal for New Brunswick that cuts pollution and protects health, by Louise Comeau and Daniel Nunes, released by The Conservation Council of New Brunswick on June 25. It predicts that average temperatures in the 16 communities studied could rise 1.9 to 2.1 degrees Celsius between 2021 and 2050, and the number of days over 30 degrees are modelled to increase in the range of 122 to 300 per cent.

“**Life and Death under the Dome**” (May 23) in the *Toronto Star*, documents the summer of 2018 when at least 66 deaths in Montreal were attributed to heat.

Climate Change and Health: It’s Time for Nurses to Act published by the the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions includes heat stress in its overview of health-related dangers of climate change in Canada, and highlights the heat waves in Ontario and Quebec in 2018.

Internationally:

The Imperative of Climate Action to protect human health in Europe” released on June 3 by the European Academies Science Advisory Council is mostly focused on the general population, but does include discussion of heat stress and of its effects on productivity.

“**Can the Paris Climate Goals Save Lives? Yes, a Lot of Them, Researchers Say**” in the *New York Times* (June 5) summarizes an article from the journal *Sciences Advances* (June 5). “**Increasing mitigation ambition to meet the Paris Agreement’s temperature goal avoids substantial heat-related mortality in U.S. cities**” reviews the literature about heat-related mortality and concludes that achieving the 1.5°C threshold of the Paris Agreement could avoid between 110 and 2720 annual heat-related deaths in 15 U.S. cities.

BlueGreen Alliance releases historic climate action platform

Posted on **June 28, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 24, the Blue Green Alliance in the U.S. released a platform document titled [Solidarity for Climate Action](#). According to the [press release](#), Leo Gerard, retiring International President of the United Steelworkers, stated: “This historic moment in labor and environmental cooperation is the culmination of more than a decade of work.... The platform we are unveiling today is a roadmap to address both the climate crisis and growing income inequality in a way that leaves no workers or communities behind.” The press release includes endorsement statements from: The Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Utility Workers Union of America, Service Employees International Union, Union of Concerned Scientists, Environmental Defense Action Fund, and the League of Conservation Voters. Others whose logos appear on the document include: Communications Workers of America, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, American Federation of Teachers, and the United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing & PipeFitting Industry.

In a [blog](#), the [National Resources Defense Council](#) calls the platform a “defining moment in the fight against climate change” and states: “[Solidarity for Climate Action](#) marks a significant milestone in the relationship between the labor and environmental movements regarding climate action. We’ve had our disagreements, to be sure, but there is more agreement than most might realize, particularly around the need for climate action and income equality, which is one of the reasons this platform was created. It is an expression of hope that our movements will begin a renewed cooperation from a foundation of broad agreement.” The Center for American Progress also [endorsed the platform](#).

Here are the issue areas, as stated in the 8-page [Solidarity for Climate Action](#) document:

Climate Stability: “Limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society... This global effort to address climate change and inequality must happen at the speed and scale demanded by scientific reality and the urgent needs of our communities.”

High-Quality Jobs: “We must strive to create and retain millions of high-quality jobs while putting forward bold solutions to climate change. Unions are a primary vehicle to confront the economic insecurity most Americans face.”

Community Resilience: “We must dramatically increase the capacity of the public sector, the health care system, and community-based nonprofit sectors to prepare for and respond to the demands our changing climate places on first responders, healthcare workers, social workers, and others who deal with climate-induced disasters.....”

Repair America: “We cannot address climate change with derelict infrastructure. Infrastructure must be designed in ways that reduce emissions and that reflect projected conditions over its lifespan, including the ability to withstand the increased frequency and severity of climate-driven natural disasters.”

Rebuild American Manufacturing: “A comprehensive national commitment to sustainably manufacture the next generation of energy, transportation, and other technologies in the United States will fully capture the benefits to workers

and communities.”

Clean Air, Clean Water, Safe and Healthy Workplaces and Communities: “Tackling climate change goes hand in hand with ensuring that all workers and communities have access to clean air and water. We must also guarantee that our workplaces and communities are safe, clean, and free of hazardous chemicals and toxic pollution. This must include stepping up workplace protections and improving our industrial infrastructure through improved process safety and investments in inherently safer technologies.”

Equity for Marginalized Communities: “Generations of economic and racial inequality have disproportionately exposed low-income workers, communities of color, and others to low wages, toxic pollution, and climate threats. We must inject justice into our nation’s economy by ensuring that economic and environmental benefits of climate change solutions support the hardest hit workers and communities.”

The platform offers multiple, specific recommended policies for each of these areas of concern.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [BlueGreen Alliance](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

European Industrial Policy report calls for social dialogue, shared responsibility for skills training in transition

Posted on [June 28, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A Vision for the European Industry until 2030, released by the European Commission on June 27, is the final report of a High-Level Industrial Roundtable working group of 20 members from business and academia, and also including the General Secretary of industriAll Europe and the former Deputy General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The press release from the ETUC is titled “**Industry 2030 report is a step towards just transitions**”, and states: “The comprehensive report puts European industry on a path to an “innovative, sustainable, competitive and human-centered collaborative economy [that] respects planetary boundaries.... It proposes an action plan which includes massive investment in innovation on digital and zero or low-carbon technologies, a commitment to fair and rules-based international trade and to social inclusiveness that leaves no worker or region behind.”

The report is wide-reaching, and includes a strong awareness of environmental and climate change imperatives – for example, amongst the the “game-changing actions” recommended are: Carbon-leakage 2.0 plan; a Green Deal with industry which shares risks and benefits, drawing on the principles of the “Entrepreneurial State” concept outlined by Mariana Mazzucato; standardized carbon reporting; and a Circular Economy leadership role for Europe by 2030.

Some statements on the issue of Social Dialogue:

“Climate, energy, raw materials, and bio-economy policies are key areas considered essential for the future of EU industry in terms of challenges and opportunities. They need to go hand in hand with industrial policy and a societal dialogue on what emission reduction and other environmental policies mean in terms of costs, benefits and behavioural changes for everyone. (p. 13)

Considering the speed with which technologies and new business models transform entire industries, planning structural disruption regularly and proactively is key. The establishment of a culture of social dialogue at all levels (company, sector, regional, national) becomes imperative to ensure smooth and just workforce transitions, to help re-train those whose jobs are at risk and to support the regeneration of adversely affected regions.”(p. 19)

Ensure social fairness of industrial transition: Foster a culture of constructive and effective social dialogue at all levels of the economy (company, sector, country), according to national industrial relations systems and timely information and consultation processes as key elements for anticipating and managing change, i.e. skills.”

Selected statements from the extensive proposals re education and training:

“Link education and training policy more strategically to the industrial policy for instance by reinforcing cooperation between companies (especially SMEs), social partners & industry and education and training providers.

Enhance industry’s active role in upskilling and skills development. EU citizens of all ages need to be sensitized to engage in lifelong learning. At the same time, private sector, in collaboration with EU, national and European social partners, should be encouraged to provide training and life-long learning opportunities for all workers. This could be done by establishing new and innovative educational programmes and solutions to complement the role of academia and scaling-up successful existing initiatives, e.g. work-based learning and dual systems, modularized learning offer, e-learning; promotion of quality and effective apprenticeships; promotion of sector-specific training initiatives; providing adult learning opportunities to prevent skills obsolesce and support employability; installing a culture of lifelong learning, including through the promotion of the internal mobility of workers inside the company....

Maintain or increase the employability of the workforce, especially in sectors in transition, by up- and reskilling of the workforce to the jobs of the future, and supporting a smooth transition from one job to another (group outplacement, employment cells, tailor-made training programmes, job search assistance). This should be a shared responsibility between industry and the public sector.” (p.32)

Build a pan-European coalition involving the EU, Member States, regions, industry, education and training systems and trade unions to take a systemic approach to skills.... Under the coalition, the EU will build on existing instruments to further facilitate flexibility and fast response mechanisms to react to changing labour market needs through procedures for the certification and compatibility of skills and qualifications across borders and industrial sectors, e.g. using skills badges, which shall recognize informal learning, e.g. by working in a company. (p.33)

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Education and Training](#), [Europe](#), [European Union](#), [industrial strategy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [social dialogue](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Government gives the go-ahead to Trans Mountain pipeline despite declaring a climate emergency

Posted on **June 27, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 18, in a controversial but expected move, the federal cabinet approved the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline, which would triple the capacity of the existing pipeline, and allow up to 890,000 barrels per day of bitumen to travel from the Alberta oil sands to a marine terminal in Burnaby, British Columbia. The approval was described by *The Energy Mix* as “the height of cynicism” because the House of Commons had only 24 hours previously approved **a government resolution declaring a climate emergency**. Although the government put on a positive face by predicting that “shovels will be in the ground” by September, the project still has to satisfy conditions set out by the National Energy Board, including negotiated approval from First Nations. As described in **“Why we’ll be talking about the Trans Mountain pipeline for a long while yet”** in *The Narwhal*: “The embattled oilsands pipeline has become a proxy battle, pitting the urgency of the climate crisis against near-term economic concerns”.

A sampling of Reaction and Analysis:

An Angus Reid poll, *Shovels in the Ground* was released on June 21. It reports that 56% of Canadians agree with the government’s approval of TMX, compared with 24% who disagree. The primary concerns for Canadians, both those who support and oppose the TMX, are the possibility of a tanker spill due to increased traffic in the Burrard Inlet (68%) and the increased burning of fossil fuels from pipeline expansion (66%).

“Canada approves Trans Mountain pipeline expansion for second time” in the *National Observer* (June 18). This general overview of the decision is part of the ongoing ***Special Report on Trans Mountain*** by the *National Observer*.

“Trans Mountain approval makes mockery of climate emergency declaration” press release from the Council of Canadians.

“Cognitive Dissonance: Canada declares a national climate emergency and approves a pipeline” by Warren Mabee of Queen’s University in *The Conversation* (June 20).

“Trudeau Declared a Climate Crisis, then Backed Trans Mountain Again” in *The Tyee* (June 18), which summarizes reactions from British Columbia, and states that B.C. will take its **case to the Supreme Court of Canada** as it seeks the legal right to regulate the shipment of materials (including oil and gas) within the province.

“Transmountain pipeline approval triggers lawsuits leaves fossils unsatisfied” in *The Energy Mix* (June 19).

“Business leaders welcome pipeline approval but fear it may not be completed” in *The National Observer*. The article states: “Mark Scholz, CEO of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, who said in a statement the pipeline approval is “trivial” and will do little to help a suffering western Canadian drilling sector. Approval doesn’t make up for the federal government’s pursuit of Bills C-69 and C-48, bills reviled by the industry to revamp the regulatory system for resource projects and impose an oil tanker ban on the B.C. coast, he said.”

“Minister Morneau in Calgary to talk about the Trans Mountain Expansion project and the future of Canada’s Energy Sector” (June 19) a press release that lays out the government’s best case for Albertans, and states that: “Every dollar the federal government earns from the project will be invested in Canada’s clean energy transition. The Department of Finance estimates that additional corporate tax revenues could be around \$500 million per year once the project is online. These funds and any profits earned from the sale of the pipeline will be invested in the clean energy projects that power our homes, businesses and communities for years to come.”



A substantial analysis from a different viewpoint, [*Billion Dollar Buyout: How Canadian taxpayers bought a climate-killing pipeline*](#) was just published by the Council of Canadians. Written by Gordon Laxer, professor emeritus at the University of Alberta, the report summarizes the long history of the Trans Mountain project, with a special interest in how it fits in to the United States Mexico Canada trade agreement (USMCA) and the energy goal of integrating Canadian oil and natural gas into the U.S. market. Laxer also authored an OpEd in the *Toronto Star* on June 12, [*Don't waste any more money on the Trans Mountain pipeline*](#) .

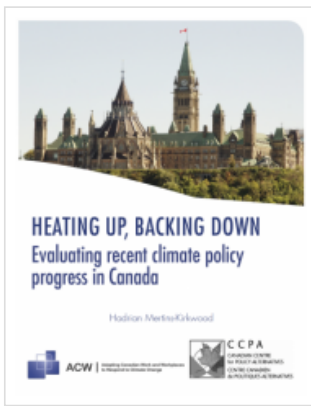
Not all First Nations Oppose the Trans Mountain pipeline: The *National Observer* summarizes First Nations opposition in [*As Trans Mountain gets shovels ready for pipeline, First Nations vow to protect territory*](#) (June 19), which states that the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Squamish Nation will use “all legal tools” available to challenge the TMX approval. The Tsleil-Waututh Nation has commissioned an independent [*environmental assessment*](#) and an economic study which estimates that TMX expansion will cost Canada \$11.8 billion, in addition to the environmental costs. It also predicts lower demand than the government has anticipated and unused capacity. The 127-page economic study, [*Public Interest Evaluation of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project*](#) is dated June 2019 and was written by Thomas Gunton, a professor at the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University, and by Chris Joseph, a B.C. consultant.

Project Reconciliation is an Indigenous-led coalition which aims to buy part of the pipeline and direct any profits to a Sovereign Wealth and Reconciliation Fund. Their [*press release*](#) on June 18 applauds the government’s TMX decision. A January 2019 [*article by CBC*](#) gives background on the group. The Indian Resource Council is another group, composed of 134 First Nations bands most of whom are also interested in the economic benefits of pipelines. CBC describes their meeting in [*More than 100 First Nations could purchase the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline*](#) (Jan. 2019). More recently, in June, the **Iron Coalition** launched – “an Alberta-based Indigenous-driven organization with the sole purpose of achieving ownership in the Trans Mountain Pipeline (TMX).” Iron Coalition leaders are from the Nakota Sioux Nation, the Papaschase First Nation and the Fort McKay Métis, and state that “all profits generated by Iron Coalition will be directed back to each member community to bring lasting economic benefit to Métis and First Nations in Alberta.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [climate emergency](#), [First Nations](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate policy progress in Canada suffers from an overemphasis on carbon pricing, an absence of supply-side energy policies

Posted on [June 27, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Heating up, Backing Down by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood was released on June 13, updating the author's previous 2017 report ***Tracking Progress: Evaluating government plans and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada***. It analyzes emissions data and policy announcements in the last two years to assess federal, provincial and territorial governments' progress toward Canada's domestic and international greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets. The report identifies and discusses two new important issues in the Canadian climate policy discussion: an overemphasis on carbon pricing and an absence of supply-side energy policies. These are in addition to the three key obstacles to effective climate policy identified in the 2017 report, and still considered relevant: (1) an ambition gap between government policies and official targets; (2) Canada's deep economic dependence on fossil fuels, and; (3) an under-appreciation of the need to support workers in the transition to a cleaner economy.

Following a succinct overview of policy developments and emissions statistics for each province, the author concludes that positive progress in British Columbia and Quebec is outweighed by backsliding in the rest of Canada, and future progress is further threatened by the legislative reversals enacted by the recently-elected conservative governments in Alberta and Ontario, which are Canada's two biggest carbon polluting provinces.

Heating up, Backing Down is co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change research program (ACW).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Infrastructure](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Brunswick launches consultation on industrial emissions – updated

Posted on **June 26, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Government of New Brunswick opposes the federal government carbon tax and maintains a **"We can't afford a carbon tax"** page on the government website – which estimates the costs (but none of the benefits) of the federal carbon backstop in effect in the province. On June 13, New Brunswick introduced its own ***Made-in-New Brunswick Regulatory Approach for Large Emitters***, an output-based pricing system which will cover roughly 50 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in the province and will require large industrial emitters, including electricity generators, to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 10 per cent by 2030.

The CBC summarized the plan and reaction in **"Province proposes carbon tax on tiny fraction of emissions from big industrial polluters"** (June 13). CBC states that the proposed system would tax only 0.84 percent of greenhouse gas emissions from the province's biggest emitters, such as Irving Oil, far below the 20 per cent in the existing federal system. However, it covers the same industrial sectors, applies to the same gases and applies the same price scale of \$20 per tonne this year, rising to \$50 per tonne in 2022.

A Discussion paper , ***Holding Large Emitters Accountable: New Brunswick's Output-Based Pricing System*** forms the basis of a public comment period about the proposed system, which runs from June 13 to July 12. One public response has been published by the Ecofiscal Commission in ***Exception to the Rule: Why New Brunswick's Industrial Carbon Pricing System is Problematic*** (June 19) , which contends that under the proposed regulations, "firms can very easily achieve their emissions intensity benchmark, because it will be essentially set to current levels."

The **Conservation Council of New Brunswick** reaction was quoted **by the CBC**, and also states that the proposed regulations are too weak. Emphasizing the importance of the issue, on June 25 the Council released ***Healthy Climate, Healthy New Brunswickers: A proposal for New Brunswick that cuts pollution and protects health***, by Louise Comeau and Daniel Nunes. The Council characterizes the report as "the first comprehensive look at how climate change will affect the physical and mental health of all New Brunswickers, but particularly the very young, seniors, the isolated, and those living on low incomes." The report combines climate projections and existing community health profiles for 16 New Brunswick communities, emphasizing the risks of more intense precipitation, flooding and heat waves. It includes recommendations for action and attempts to end on a hopeful note. The report is available in English and French versions from **this link** .

Updates on New Brunswick's carbon tax: On July 8, CBC reported "**New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs abandons planned carbon tax court fight**" , which explains that the province will save taxpayers' money by supporting Saskatchewan's Supreme Court of Canada challenge to the carbon tax as an intervenor, since Saskatchewan's arguments are the same as New Brunswick's. Also in July, an historical and political analysis appeared in *Policy Options*, "**New Brunswick's timid foray into carbon pricing**", as part of the week-long series , **The Evolution of Carbon Pricing in the Provinces** .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Tax, climate change and health, Extreme Weather Events, Flooding, New Brunswick, provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

A standard to measure party platforms in Canada's upcoming climate change election

Posted on **June 26, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

In the lead-up to the autumn federal election, climate change platforms have now been released by the Green Party: ***Mission Possible: The Green Climate Action Plan***; the federal New Democratic Party: ***Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs***, and most recently, on June 20, by the Conservative Party: ***A Real Plan to Protect Our Environment*** . The WCR has summarized these platforms as they were released, **here** and **here** .

Advocates are also releasing their own views about these climate proposals. On June 14, Climate Action Network Canada **released a report** intended as "a baseline against which we can assess federal parties' climate plans." ***Getting Real about Canada's Climate Plan*** calls for a plan which is comprehensive, effective and accountable and which will legislate new, more ambitious, GHG reduction targets for "politically-relevant short-term periods, such as interim 2025 targets, or create carbon budgets to define needed progress between 2020 and 2030." Other policies called for: eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, and "Leave no community, group, or worker behind. Canada needs to offer real assistance to communities and workers grappling with the inevitable decline of fossil-fuel-dependent sectors, and improve consultation of Indigenous groups by integrating the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into future climate policy." The more detailed policy discussion appears in the Appendix, which calls for the recommendations of the Just Transition Task Force to be implemented fully and swiftly, and expanded beyond coal workers and communities to include all GHG intensive sectors where employment impacts from environmental regulations are anticipated.

Climate Action Network-Canada also issued a statement on June 5, on behalf of itself and the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, the David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Environmental Defence, Équiterre, and Greenpeace Canada. The press release, ***All Federal Parties Must Reject CAPP's Election Demands on Energy Development and***

[Climate Change Say Environmental Groups](#) , summarizes and rejects the election proposals from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), as outlined in [Oil and Natural Gas Priorities: Putting Canada On The World Stage: An Energy Platform for Canada](#) . Catherine Abreu, Executive Director at Climate Action Network-Canada states: “Any party that borrows from such a proposal is a party with no sincere interest in the future of Canadian society.” Notably, in [“Scheer touts industry friendly climate plan”](#) (June 20) in the *National Observer* the Conservative Party platform is linked to the CAPP demands.

Although not focused on election platforms, a thoughtful and related overview of Canadian climate change policies appears in [Heating Up, Backing Down: Evaluating recent climate policy progress in Canada](#). The report is written by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood and was co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change research program (ACW) on June 13.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Conservative Party climate change platform released to strong criticism

Posted on **June 26, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 20, Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada released the party's long-promised climate change policy document: [A Real Plan to Protect Our Environment](#) . The plan is organized and presented around three guiding principles: 1. Green Technology, Not Taxes; 2. A Cleaner and Greener Natural Environment; and 3. Taking the Climate Change Fight Global.

“Green Technology, Not Taxes” relies on the established Conservative criticism that carbon taxes make life more expensive for all, but not all Canadians have cleaner alternatives available to them. The document asks “how high will your carbon tax go?”, and cites the discredited June 13 study by the Parliamentary Budget Office, [Closing the Gap: Carbon pricing for the Paris target](#) to predict that the carbon tax would need to be \$102 per tonne to reach Canada's emissions reductions targets under the Paris Agreement. The Conservatives advocate a number of general measures, including a Green Investment Standard instead of a carbon tax, by which companies will be required to reduce their emissions to the government's emission standards, and those which exceed that Green Investment Standard (not specified) will be required to invest in research, development, and adoption of emissions-reducing technology related to their industry. The [National Observer analysis](#) points out the similarities of the Green Investment Standard to proposals made by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers in its recent election-related release: [Oil and Natural Gas Priorities: Putting Canada On The World Stage: An Energy Platform for Canada](#) .

Other proposals in the Conservative party platform: a two-year Green Homes Tax Credit for homeowners who make energy-saving renovations which cost more than \$1000, to a limit of \$20,000; a Green Patent Credit that will reduce the business tax rate from 15% to 5% on income that is generated from green technology developed and patented in Canada;

consultation with government and industry stakeholders to encourage innovation in the transition to cleaner personal transportation, and for heavy-duty fleets; support for the strategic interconnection of electricity grids, on a project by project basis to connect regions, or through the creation of a national energy corridor. Also, the plan promises to ban plastics waste exports unless there are recycling commitments, and “work with producers to minimize the plastic packaging of products.” And as for oil and gas, it states that Canada should export more oil and gas in order to replace “dirtier foreign energy sources.”

The *National Observer* reaction in “[Scheer touts industry friendly climate plan](#)” (June 20), in addition to pointing out the similarities with the CAPP proposals, states that Scheer refused to provide estimates of the emissions reductions that would result from his plan, and his staff did not provide any academic studies or background documents to support any of the proposals. “Several environmental groups, including Greenpeace Canada, Stand.Earth, and Clean Energy Canada, decried the Conservative announcement, saying it would not do enough to address the climate crisis, possibly making it worse.” Even the mainstream press are shrugging off the Conservative plan, with such headlines as “[Andrew Scheer’s climate plan leaves a lot to voters’ imaginations](#)” by Aaron Wheery at the CBC (June 20); “[The Scheer Climate Plan, whatever](#)” by Paul Wells in *Macleans*; and a *Globe and Mail* [Opinion piece by Gary Mason](#) which calls the plan a “sad joke”. Even John Ivison, a columnist with the *Calgary Herald*, states in [his opinion piece](#) that the platform document is “a missed opportunity”, and “It should come as no surprise that the new Conservative climate plan is a Potemkin village of a policy, designed to give the impression of solidity to a fake, precarious construction.”

In “[How real is Andrew Scheer’s ‘real plan’ to tackle climate change](#)” in *The Narwhal*, author Sarah Cox provides detailed discussion of key issues in the plan, including input from experts Kathryn Harrison and Laura Coristine. Kathryn Harrison provides this assessment: “I think it is a plan that is designed to appeal to a subset of voters who want to be convinced that Canada can step up and do its part without actually doing anything. It is devoid of detail.”

And *The Tyee* on June 26 combined the results of two interviews with two experts: Isabelle Turcotte, the director of federal policy for the Pembina Institute, and Cam Fenton, communications and strategy manager for 350 Canada. Each weighs in on aspects of the climate plans from the Conservatives, Liberals, NDP, and Green Party.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Conservative Party](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

USW Workshop Guide – and other climate change training resources

Posted on **June 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The United Steelworkers Union in Canada produced a workshop guide, [Climate Change and Just Transition: What will workers need?](#). The guide was piloted at the United Steelworkers National Health, Safety, Environment and Human Rights Conference in 2017, and released to the public in May 2019 by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW), which was a partner on the project. The 47-page guide is designed to lead union members through discussion topics and activities, including general introduction to climate change concepts and vocabulary, and how climate change contributes to the world of work, particularly in the forestry, mining, and transportation industries where USW membership is concentrated. The Guide also discusses Just Transition and the Canadian

experience, as well as areas of action for unions: Collective Agreements; Political Lobbying; Green Procurement; Training; and Employment Insurance.

A 2018 resource, [Communicating Climate Change and Energy in Alberta](#), focuses on how to talk to people effectively, and gives specifics about vocabulary and themes that are participative and non-confrontational. Some highlights are cited in [“Lessons in talking climate with Albertan Oil Workers”](#) (Feb. 21), including:

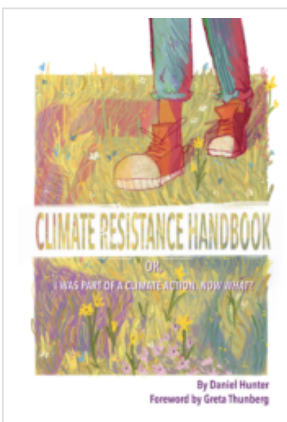
“In Alberta, recognising the role that oil and gas has played in securing local livelihoods proved crucial. Most environmentalists would balk at a narrative of ‘gratitude’ towards oil, but co-producing an equitable path out of fossil fuel dependency means making oil sands workers feel valued, not attacked. Empathetic language that acknowledges oil’s place in local history could therefore be the key to cultivating support for decarbonisation.

.....This project was also one of the first to test language specifically on energy transitions. While participants were generally receptive to the concept, the word ‘just’, with its social justice connotations, proved to be anything but politically neutral. In an environment where attitudes towards climate are bound to political identities, many interviewees showed a reluctance to the idea of government handouts, even where an unjust transition would likely put them out of a job. Rather, the report recommends a narrative of ‘diversification’ rather than ‘transition’, stressing positive future opportunities instead of moving away from a negative past.”

The report was produced by the [Alberta Narratives Project](#), whose lead partners are The Pembina Institute and Alberta Ecotrust. It is part of the global [Climate Outreach Initiative](#), whose goal is to understand and train communicators to deliver effective communications which lead to cooperative approaches.



The ACW also partnered with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists to produce the training materials used for an Environmental Racism and Work workshop at the Indigenous and Workers of Colour Conference organized by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council on June 1st. The 2-hour workshop was co-delivered by Patricia Chong (Asian Canadian Labour Alliance) and Chris Wilson (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists) – the Facilitator’s notes for the 2-hour workshop are [here](#). Related training materials on environmental racism are described, with links, [here](#).



The [Climate Resistance Handbook](#) was released by 350.org in May 2019, and meant to be used with their [library of free training resources](#). This handbook is directed at a general audience, especially young climate strikers, with very basic principles of building relationships, tactics, and moving from actions to strategic campaigns. It includes the example of an organized action in 2014 at the National Energy Board against TransCanada’s Energy East pipeline.

Canada's new plastics initiatives and their impacts on jobs and emissions

Posted on **June 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



As widely reported, Canada announced plans on June 10 to enact a ban on single-use plastics starting in 2021. No list of specific products was released, but the [Government Backgrounder](#) suggests shopping bags, straws, cutlery, plates, and stir sticks will be included, and states that the full list of “harmful products” will be identified through a “science-based approach”. Although most news reports zeroed in on the “banning plastic straws” angle, the initiative covers much more, as set out in the government’s [Backgrounder](#):

1. Ensuring that companies that manufacture plastic products or sell items with plastic packaging are responsible for managing the collection and recycling of their plastic waste
2. Working with industry to prevent and retrieve abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear, known as ghost fishing gear – a major contributor to marine plastic debris
3. Investing in new Canadian technologies (through Innovation Challenges)
4. Mobilizing international support to address plastic pollution (continuing the work of the international [Oceans Plastics Charter](#) launched in 2018 at the G7 Summit)
5. Reducing plastic waste from federal operations (strengthening government procurement policies and a plastics diversion goal of 75 per cent of plastic waste from federal operations by 2030)
6. Reducing plastic microbeads in freshwater marine ecosystems (a ban on the manufacture or import of cosmetics with microbeads takes effect July 1 2019)
7. Launching Canada’s Plastics Science Agenda

What are the Job Impacts of the Plastics Ban? Consultants Deloitte and ChemInfo prepared an [Economic Study of the Canadian Plastic Industry, Markets and Waste](#) (2018), commissioned by Environment and Climate Change Canada. The report valued the plastics-manufacturing industry in Canada at \$35 billion in 2017 and estimated that it supported approximately 93,000 jobs – compared to the recycling industry, which they valued at \$350 million, with employment of about 500). According to the National Observer, in “[Bottle makers could pay under federal plastics plan](#)”, the federal government claims that the combination of its proposed actions will create approximately 42,000 jobs, reduce 1.8 million tonnes of carbon pollution and “generate billions of dollars in revenue.” The [CBC](#) quotes the executive vice-president of the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada, who says that the proposed ban “likely won’t affect billions of dollars in new petrochemical projects coming on stream in Alberta and Ontario”, and cites examples: “in Alberta, Inter Pipeline Ltd. and Pembina Pipeline Ltd. are building polypropylene projects to turn propane into plastic at a cost of \$3.5 billion and \$4.5 billion, respectively. Nova Chemicals Corp. in Ontario is in the midst of a \$2 billion expansion of its Sarnia polyethylene plant.” Nevertheless, as stated in *The Energy Mix*, “[Fossils See Circular Economy, Backlash Against Plastics Cutting Demand For Oil And Gas](#)”, which summarizes some of the news from the Global Plastics Summit in Houston in June, and *Inside Climate News* reports on “[What’s worrying the plastics industry?](#)” .



GHG Impacts of Plastic: Ultimately, reducing single use plastics is about more than marine litter and recycling challenges. **The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet** (May 2019) calculates the climate costs through the life cycle of extraction and transport of fossil fuels; refining and manufacturing; managing waste; and plastic pollution in the environment. It concludes that in 2019, producing and incinerating plastic will emit an estimated 850 million metric tons of greenhouse gases, the equivalent of 189 coal-fired power plants. If production continues at the same pace, plastic-related greenhouse gas emissions will reach 1.34 gigatons per year by 2030 (equivalent to 295 coal plants) and 2.8 gigatons per year by 2050 (equivalent to 615 coal plants). *The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet* was produced by the Center for International Environmental Law, the Environmental Integrity Project, FracTracker Alliance, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, 5Gyres, and #BreakFreeFromPlastic; it is summarized by *Environmental Health News* in "**From making it to managing it, plastic is a major contributor to climate change**" (May 15) .

Discussion of Waste Management and Extended Producer Responsibility has been an active issue in Canada, described in "**Extended Producer Responsibility reduces waste and impacts the workplace**" (2018) in the *WCR*, which includes highlights of the Ecofiscal Commission report, *Cutting the Waste* . In the summer of 2018, environmental groups and labour unions sent a joint letter to the Prime Minister and Minister of Environment and Climate Change – *Towards a Zero Plastic Waste Canada* , including detailed demands for a national waste reduction strategy by 2025. The Ford government in Ontario published *Ontario's Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario: Building the Circular Economy* in March 2019 and conducted a public consultation built around a discussion paper, *Reducing Litter and Waste in Our Communities* . Most recently, the *Globe and Mail* published a detailed national summary in "**Reduce, reuse, recycle: why Canada's recycling industry is in crisis mode**" (May 14) . The New Democratic Party's platform document, *Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs* was released on May 31 and includes a call for a national ban on single use plastic by 2022, as well as extended producer responsibility.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Extended Producer Responsibility](#), [ocean pollution](#), [Plastics Industry](#), [single-use plastic](#), [Waste management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Youth continue their slow battle through the courts for a livable climate: Updates for Environnement Jeunesse and Juliana

Posted on **June 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 6, [lawyers](#) presented an application to the Superior Court of Quebec on behalf of [ENvironnement JEUnesse](#) . The application seeks authorization to bring a class action against the Canadian government on behalf of Quebecers

aged 35 and under, on the grounds that the government is infringing on their rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms by inadequate action to prevent climate change .

ENvironnement JEUnesse is asking the Court to order the government to implement a greenhouse gas reduction target and the measures necessary to respect the group members' fundamental rights, and to pay an amount equivalent to \$100 per member of the class action. The application suggests that the money, an estimated \$340 million, could be invested in measures to address the climate crisis. The Court is now considering the application, with no date given for an expected decision.

"The path to climate justice is intergenerational" is an Opinion piece co-authored by a member of ENvironnement JEUnesse, appearing in the *Montreal Gazette*. It puts the ENvironnement JEUnesse case in the context of the worldwide Fridays for Future movement, and the Intergenerational Climate Coalition in Canada. The **ENvironnement JEUnesse website** provides French and English documentation and a timeline, as well as a summary of related cases, such as the Urgenda case of the Netherlands and the Juliana case in the U.S. . The **best summary** appears in the *National Observer*. A Canadian Press article, **"Young Quebecers present arguments seeking class action against Ottawa"** appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* on June 6 and incorrectly states that this is the first such case in the world by young people – an error which coincides with the latest court appearance on June 4 by the most famous young people's suit, the Juliana case.

Juliana vs. United States Government: In the case **Juliana vs. United States**, lawyers for children and young adults in the U.S. rely on the public trust doctrine, accusing the federal government of violating their constitutional rights by failing to take action on climate change and continuing to promote and subsidize fossil fuels. The case originated in 2015 against the Obama government, and continues under the more hostile Trump administration, which argues that court doesn't have the authority to order the political branches of government to act. Juliana has been called "the trial of the century" and is expected to be precedent-setting – accordingly, it is moving glacially and judges are being cautious, with no date set for a decision. On June 4, one of the three judges, Judge Andrew Hurwitz stated, "You present compelling evidence that we have a real problem. You present compelling evidence that we have inaction by the other two branches of government. It may even rise to the level of criminal neglect. But the tough question for me is do we get to act because of that."

Reports of the June 4 appearance are in the *New York Times* in **"Judges give both sides a grilling in Youth Climate Case Against the Government"** (June 4); **"Ninth Circuit judges seem skeptical of role in kids climate suit vs U.S. government"** in *Climate Liability News*; and **"Kids Face Rising Health Risks from Climate Change, Doctors Warn as Juliana Case Returns to Court"** in *Inside Climate News* (June 4) . An historical summary appears in **"Question of the century: do we have a right to a livable climate?"** in *Resilience*.

The case is being argued by **Our Children's Trust** , which has compiled **news and detailed documentation** over the four years spent so far.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Climate litigation, Environnement Jeunesse, Juliana vs United States, Quebec, Urgenda Climate Case, Youth and climate** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian nurses' unions issue a call for action on the climate health emergency

Posted on **June 10, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



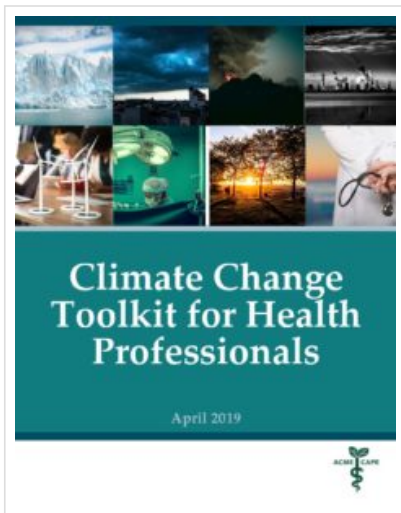
The **Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU)** is the umbrella organization representing approximately 200,000 nursing and front-line health professionals in unions across Canada. At their Biennial Convention in Fredricton in June, representatives passed **Resolution #3**, calling on the CFNU and its Member Organizations: ... to recognize within their position statements that climate change is “a global crisis and health emergency”; ...to support sustainable health care practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in health care settings; ...to “engage with community stakeholders, such as the Canadian Labour Congress, in initiatives and campaigns that raise the public’s awareness about the serious health implications of climate change”; and to call on the federal and provincial governments to undertake the necessary policies to meet Canada’s obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Paris Agreement)....”

Also at the convention, the CFNU released a discussion paper: ***Climate Change and Health: It's Time for Nurses to Act***. It is described as “a starting point for for advocacy and leadership”. It summarizes the well-established health impacts related to climate change in the Canadian environment – for example, heat stress, increased allergies and asthma, cardiorespiratory distress from air pollution due to wildfires, Lyme disease. It includes a special focus on mental health and anxiety impacts. It also highlights three practical examples from 2018 : wildfire smoke exposure in B.C., flooding in Atlantic Canada, and heat waves in Ontario and Quebec.

The report concludes with these six recommendations for nurses:

1. Work with your employers, unions and associations to reduce emissions and to “green” your workplace. (sub-recommendations include “Promote the divestment of pension plans from high-emission sectors and the investment in clean technologies and low-emission sectors;”)
2. Know about climate change science, and help educate patients and the general public about it. (sub-recommendations include “Campaign for the ecological determinants of health to be included in nursing education to prepare future generations of nurses, who will see the greatest effects of climate change. Nursing education should support a basic level of climate change literacy.”)
3. Call for meaningful federal and provincial actions to reduce and eliminate climate change-causing emissions to ensure Canada leads the world in implementing its obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (The Paris Accord). (Sub-recommendation: Promote transitioning away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy. By investing in renewal energy rather than in fossil fuels we are committing to a healthier future.)
4. Be aware and plan for the emerging needs of patients resulting from climate change and help them take action to support a healthy planet. (Sub-recommendation: “ Be aware and prepare your workplaces for future influxes of climate refugees coming to Canada. This population may have experienced trauma or extreme environmental conditions and taken risks to enter this country.”)
5. Be prepared for extreme weather events.

6. Promote active transportation and local healthy agriculture and food systems to reduce emissions.

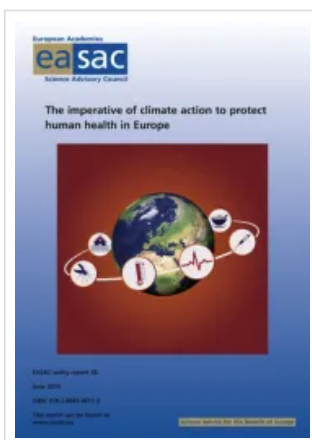


The Discussion paper was launched as part of a panel which included Dr. Courtney Howard, president of the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment**. CAPE issued their latest **Call to Action** in February 2019 , in collaboration with the Canadian Medical Association , the Canadian Nurses Association, the Urban Public Health Network , and the Canadian Public Health Association. On April 30, CAPE released a **Climate Change Toolkit for Health Professionals**, which is available for download in either **English** or **French** , and offers eight stand-alone modules with seven factsheets. Topics include Climate Change Health Impacts Globally and Across Canada; **Taking Climate Change Action at Health Facilities** ; Preparing for Climate Change in our Communities; and **Engaging in Climate Change as Health Professionals**, which highlights, for example, CAPE's role in the campaign to phase-out coal in Alberta. As part of their active advocacy campaign, CAPE makes frequent media statements and was part of the health delegation which **met with the federal Minister of Health** on June 7 .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and health, health care professionals, health effects of climate change, Hospitals, labour union policies, nurses** | **2 Replies**

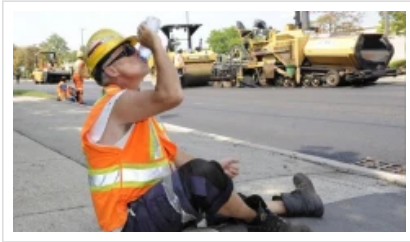
Climate change and health: more evidence of the dangers of extreme heat for workers

Posted on **June 5, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



The Imperative of Climate Action to Protect Human health in Europe was released on June 3 by the European Academies Science Advisory Council, urging that adaptation and mitigation policies give health effects a greater

emphasis, as well as proposing priorities for health policy research and data coordination in the EU. The report also acts as a comprehensive literature review of the research on the present and future health impacts of climate change in EU countries. It documents studies of direct and indirect health effects of extreme heat, forest fires, flooding, pollution, and impacts on food and nutrition. Some of these impacts include communicable infectious diseases, mental illness, injuries, labour productivity, violence and conflict, and migration. It identifies the most vulnerable groups as the elderly, the sick, children, and migrating and marginalized populations, with city dwellers at greater risk of heat stress than rural populations.



Heat as a Health risk for workers: Although the report doesn't highlight outdoor workers such as farmers and construction workers as a high risk group, it does weigh in on heat effects on labour productivity for indoor and outdoor workers. For example, "Even small increases in temperature may reduce cognitive and physical performance and hence impair labour productivity and earning power, with further consequences for health. Earlier analyses had concentrated on the effects of heat on rural labour capacity, but now it is appreciated that many occupations may be affected. For example, **recent analysis** by the French Agency for Food, Environmental, Occupational Health and Safety (**ANSES 2018**) concludes that productivity and health of workers in most business sectors will be affected in European countries by 2050. The effects of indoor high temperatures in terms of altered circadian rhythms were recently reported (**Zheng et al. 2019**) as part of a broader discussion of the literature on indoor high temperatures and human work efficiency. For temperature rises greater than 2°C, labour productivity could drop by 10–15% in some southern European countries (Ciscar et al. 2018). Meta-analysis of the global literature confirms that occupational heat strain has important health and productivity outcomes."



Also: "with 1.5°C global temperature change, about 350 million people worldwide would be exposed to extreme heat stress sufficient to reduce greatly the ability to undertake physical labour for at least the hottest month in the year; this increases to about one billion people with 2.5°C global temperature change ."

And also: Hot and humid indoor environments may result in "mould and higher concentrations of chemical substances. Health risks include respiratory diseases such as allergy, asthma and rhinitis as well as more unspecific symptoms such as eye and respiratory irritation. Asthma and respiratory symptoms have been reported to be 30–50% more common in humid houses."

Calls to improve heat standards for U.S. workers : A report in 2018, ***Extreme Heat and Unprotected Workers*** , stated that heat killed 783 workers in the U.S. and seriously injured nearly 70,000 between 1992 and 2017. The report was published by Public Citizen, a coalition of social justice groups and labour unions. They continue to campaign for a dedicated federal standard regarding heat exposure – most recently with a **letter to the U.S. Department of Labor** on April 26, 2019 which states: we "call on you to take swift action to protect workers from the growing dangers of climate change and rising temperatures in the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has an obligation to prevent future heat-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities by issuing a heat stress standard for outdoor and indoor workers." The campaign is described in **"Worker advocates burned up over lack of federal heat protections"** in *FairWarning* (May 9), with examples of some U.S. fatalities. Notably, the death of a 63-year-old postal worker in her mail truck in Los Angeles in July 2018 resulted in **H.R. 1299, the Peggy Frank Memorial Act**, which was introduced in the House of Representatives in February 2019 and would require any Postal Service delivery vehicle to include air conditioning within three years. (It has languished in the House Standing Committee on Oversight and Reform since.)

The article also reports that in April, California released a draft standard: [Heat Illness Prevention in Indoor Places of Employment](#) which, if approved, would make California the first U.S. jurisdiction to cover both indoor and outdoor job sites. The proposed standard would require water and rest breaks for workers when indoor temperatures reach 82 F degrees, with additional requirements when temperatures hit 87 F. It is noteworthy that this is a slow process – even in progressive California, which has had heat protection for farm workers on the books since 2006, the Advisory Committee leading this initiative has been meeting since 2017, and the draft standard still under consideration has been revised numerous times .

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [European Union](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Heat Stress](#), [indoor air quality](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [outdoor workers](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: U.S. Labour views on climate strikes and the Green New Deal

Posted on **June 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Speakers, listed [here](#), addressed the issues of Just Transition, the Green New Deal, public ownership of energy production, and an appropriate role for labour in climate activism at the New York Labor History Association Annual Spring Conference on May 11, under the banner “Taking the Lead: Labor and Global Warming: Our History, Activism and Challenge”. [“New Calls for a General Strike in the Face of Coming Climate Catastrophe”](#) appeared in the *Labor Press* (May 13) ([re-posted to Portside](#) on May 22) , summarizing some of the discussion, especially the statement by Bruce Hamilton, VP of the Amalgamated Transit Union, that a general strike “should never be taken off the table”. The article notes that “A general strike, however, requires a level of unity around the question of climate change and the Green New Deal that presently does not exist inside organized labor.” On May 30, *Portside* published a lengthy compilation of [“Reader Responses”](#) , both pro and con, about using a general strike as a tactic. (Note that the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is calling for “a day of global action on climate change” on June 26 as part of their [Climate Proof our Work campaign](#) , and the Fridays for Future student strike movement has called for a [worldwide general strike](#) by adults and youth for September 20).

Union differences around the Green New Deal have been noted before in the WCR: in [“Labor’s voice in support of the Green New Deal”](#) (May 14) , and [“AFL-CIO Energy Committee releases letter opposing the Green New Deal”](#) (Mar 14). On May 22, [“The Green New Deal is fracturing a critical base for Democrats: unions”](#) appeared in Vox, providing a broad overview of national and state-level examples.

Service Employees International Union endorses GND: On June 6, the Service Employees International Union issued a [press release](#) announcing that the International Executive Board had passed a [resolution in support of the Green New Deal](#) , which states in part: “the Green New Deal supports the right of all workers to have unions, no matter where they work; makes unions central to accomplishing the ambitious goal of an environmentally responsible and economically just society; and commits to providing universal healthcare and a good, union job with family-sustaining wages and benefits for everyone who wants one.” The [Resolution](#) affirms the goals of the GND, commits to political action, and to cooperation with other advocacy partners in environmental, immigrant, health care, and economic justice movements.

On the issue of transitions, it states:

4. *“SEIU stands in solidarity with all in the labor movement who share our desire to create family-sustaining union jobs and a healthy and safe environment. Workers who have built and are dependent upon the fossil fuel industry must have:*

- *a. Access to good union jobs, training and advancement if their current jobs cease to exist;*
- *b. Guaranteed pensions and a bridge of wage support and healthcare until impacted workers find comparable employment or reach retirement;*
- *c. Financial support for local community public services during a transition period*

Green New Deal and Labour in California: There is support for the Green New Deal in



California – as evidenced by “[Packed Bay Area Convergence on Climate Plans for Green New Deal](#)” and other articles in the Green New Deal compilation by the [Labor Network for Sustainability](#). Yet “[Labor anger over Green New Deal greets 2020 contenders in California](#)” appeared in *Politico*, focusing on the opposition to the [Los Angeles Green New Deal](#) announced on April 29, chiefly by California’s building trades unions. Those unions fear job loss and the costs members may face from higher gas taxes, as well as congestion pricing for tolls on freeways during rush hour. They have differed with environmentalists in the past over environmental justice and pollution regulation at the State level . In “[The Green New Deal- Be-labored?](#)” in *Resilience* (May 11) and originally in *Civil Notion*, author Joel Stronberg describes the California divide in even greater detail and quotes a professor from Loyola Law School, who assesses that “the Green New Deal...divides the Democrats on a fault line, which is more of the elites against the working class Democrats who are concerned about losing their jobs.” Stronberg also states that the [Association of Flight Attendants is a second union which has endorsed the Green New Deal](#), and cites a [recent survey](#) by Data for Progress between March 30 and April 7, 2019 which measured [union members’ \(not leadership\) attitudes](#). According to Stronberg, it shows 52 percent of current union members approve of the Green New Deal, 22 percent were opposed, 21 percent didn’t know about it, and five percent were neutral.

Canadian unions: In Canada, unions have not yet been as vocal about the Green New Deal – although “[Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s Green New Deal: The Canadian Connection](#)” in *The Tyee* (June 3) describes the close ties between the U.S. GND and Canadians Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein of The Leap. [Some unions have endorsed](#) the uniquely-[Canadian Pact for a Green New Deal](#) – and the [United Steelworkers](#) have endorsed the New Democratic Party’s newly announced climate change platform – [Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs](#) .

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [California](#), [climate change and politics](#), [climate strikes](#), [Green New Deal - U.S.](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Service Employees International Union](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Green Party and NDP prepare to fight the October election with newly-released Climate Change plans

Posted on [June 3, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

With unprecedented importance of climate change in the upcoming October 2019 election, and the weakness of the governing Liberal party on the issue, the NDP and Green Party are keenly competing for votes, as described in Aaron Wherry’s analysis for the CBC, “[With Singh’s environment plan, the left-centre climate change bidding war begins](#)” (June 1) . On May 16, Canada’s Green Party released a five-page plan called [Mission Possible: The Green Climate Action Plan](#) , built on the foundation of the Green Party’s overall policy [Vision](#) . On May 31, the leader of the New Democratic Party released [Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs](#) .



Green Party Proposal: The Green Party’s *Mission Possible Plan* (press release is [here](#)), “incorporates all the requirements for economic justice, just transition, the guarantee of meaningful work, while also respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.” It endorses the *Pact for a Green New Deal*, and promises to go beyond it, stating: “Canadian Greens applaud their commitment and enthusiasm and wholeheartedly endorse their demands for decisive action on the climate emergency, mainly because we have been describing and promoting this exact thing sometime past forever.”

Specifically, *Mission Possible* calls for Step #1 to “Declare a Climate Emergency: Accept, at every level of government, that climate is not an environmental issue. It is the gravest security threat the world has ever seen.” The 20 action items in *Mission Possible* include: double the country’s 2030 emissions reduction target to 60%; maintain carbon pricing; abolish fracking; green and modernize the east-west electricity grid; complete a national building retrofit; ensure that all new vehicles are electric by 2030 and address emissions from international shipping, aviation and the military. Without using the term “Just Transition”, the recommended actions reflect a recognition of the need for jobs in the new greener economy, the role of re-skilling, and the need for a gradual transition for workers in the fossil fuel sector. The controversial bit: Although the Greens oppose new fossil fuel projects and fracking in Canada and propose to end all foreign oil imports, the plan supports new pipelines to transport Alberta’s oil. They call for a shift for all Canadian bitumen from fuel to feedstock for the petrochemical industry by 2050, and state that “pipelines would be needed to transport refined product (gasoline, propane, diesel) instead of diluted bitumen.”

The *National Observer* summary of the plan is [here](#), and CBC summarizes it in “[Greens call for a doubling of Canada’s carbon emissions reduction target](#)”. CBC also discusses the most controversial elements in “[Elizabeth May wants to only use Canadian oil — a plan Quebec’s Green Party leader can’t support](#)”.



New Democratic Party: *Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs* was released by the NDP on May 31 – a plan which aims to reduce Canada’s emissions to 38 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, achieve net carbon-free electricity by 2030, and create at least 300,000 good jobs. Proposals to reach the targets include: Immediate elimination of fossil fuel subsidies (valued at \$3.3 billion, which would be reinvested in clean strategies); a Low Carbon Industrial Strategy which would, for example, use Buy Canadian procurement; establishment of a new Canadian Climate Bank, capitalized with \$3 billion from the federal government to invest in clean technologies; a Clean Communities Fund to support investments in innovative community-owned and operated clean energy projects; make all new buildings in Canada “net-zero ready” by 2030 and retrofit existing buildings by 2050; continuation of the federal electric vehicle purchase subsidies with \$5,000 federal purchase incentive (rising in time to \$15,000 for made-in-Canada vehicles), plus

exemption on the federal sales tax for working families; electrification of Canada's transit fleets by 2030, and a commitment to work with municipalities towards establishing fare-free transit. Other important proposals: enact an Environmental Bill of Rights guaranteeing clean air, land, and water for Canadians, and tackle pollution with a ban on single-use plastics by 2022, and develop extended producer responsibility legislation to hold companies responsible for the entire lifecycle of their plastics products and packaging. The platform is [summarized](#) in the *Toronto Star* and in the *National Observer* in "[NDP climate plan hinges on electrification, helping workers impacted by climate change](#)".

The NDP tries to differentiate itself from the Green Party chiefly by its emphasis on jobs and workers, promising to create at least 300,000 good jobs in energy efficiency retrofits, affordable housing, renewable energy, infrastructure, and transit. Specifically, it pledges to make the Employment Insurance system more responsive to the realities of transition by making easier to qualify for EI, and giving workers the option of taking EI-based training before being laid off, and to receive EI if they leave a job to go back to school. The plan further promises to address injustice for Indigenous communities in training opportunities and education, as well as injustice for women, racialized Canadians, Indigenous peoples, and other under-represented groups for apprenticeships. The plan also pledges to create a framework for enshrining Community Benefits Agreements in federally-funded infrastructure projects. The controversial position for the NDP occurred before the release of *Power to Change*, and is described by *The Energy Mix* in "[Singh discovers new interest in climate, declares against oil and gas fracking in wake of B.C. byelection loss](#)" (May 14). As a result of the NDP's position opposing the LNG terminal in Kitimat and the Coastal Gas pipeline project, [some union leaders in B.C.](#) are "not happy with Jagmeet Singh, according to *The Toronto Star* (May 15).

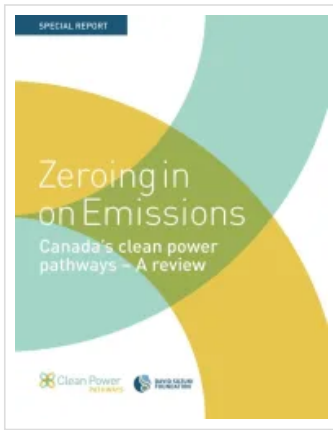
"[NDP Reveals 'Ambitious' Climate Change Plan](#)" in *Vice* (May 31) quotes positive reaction from spokespersons from Environmental Defence and 350.org, but includes the criticism of the Liberal Minister of Environment and Climate Change: "The NDP would do almost as much harm to the economy as the Conservatives want to do to the planet," ... "The NDP want to do some of the things we are already doing to fight climate change, but their approach would threaten jobs and hurt workers." Similarly, the *Toronto Star* published "[NDP's \\$15-billion climate plan greeted with mixed reviews](#)", which gives voice to the criticisms of the Green Party and Liberal political leaders, as well as Chris Ragan of the Ecofiscal Commission. From the *Globe and Mail*, "[NDP Climate Policy is serious but not radical](#)".

In contrast, the United Steelworkers issued a [press release](#) calling the NDP plan "the most comprehensive environmental platform of any of the parties"... "This climate plan is worker-oriented and jobs-centred. ... this plan specifically mentions working with labour and refers to the recommendations of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [climate change policies](#), [Green Party](#), [New Democratic Party \(NDP\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Deep decarbonization is possible: Suzuki Foundation presents a litmus test for climate change policies in Canada's 2019 election

Posted on [June 3, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



If, as a new article in *The Conversation* argues, “**To really engage people, the media should talk about solutions**” (May 30) , then the report published by the David Suzuki Foundation on May 29 is right on target. ***Zeroing in on Emissions: Charting Canada's Clean Power Pathways*** argues: “Responding to the urgency of climate change can feel overwhelming, but our research confirms we have the solutions and strategies needed to drive national actions and innovations to meet our climate commitments.” It is important to note that the commitment under consideration is reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent or more by 2050, and the study focuses only on energy policy, not all sectors of the economy.

The report examines academic, government and business models and studies related to deep decarbonization for Canada, with special reference to the **Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project** , the **Trotter Energy Futures Project** and the **Perspectives Énergétiques Canadiennes** . The full list of referenced publications takes up 15 pages of the report. Based on this review of expert research, recommendations are presented, in ten essential policy priorities: 1. Accelerate clean power 2. Do more with less energy 3. Electrify just about everything 4. Free industry from emissions 5. Switch to renewable fuels 6. Mobilize money 7. Level the playing field 8. Reimagine our communities 9. Focus on what really matters and # 10. Bring everyone along, which opens with a quote from Canada's 2018 **Task Force on Just Transition Report**. The section states: “If well-managed, the clean-energy transition can be a strong driver of job creation, job upgrading, good jobs and reducing inequality. Conversely, a poorly managed transition risks causing unnecessary economic hardship and undermining public support for needed emission-reduction policies. Transition should be seen as part of a broader green economic development strategy that supports community economic development and diversification.” The discussion includes the issues of justice and equality, and Indigenous rights.

According to the **press release**, this report is meant to influence the discourse in the upcoming election: “These 10 strategies are a litmus test that all climate plans during the 2019 federal election should be held accountable to.... “Actions such as pricing and limiting carbon pollution, prioritizing electrification with clean energy sources and accelerating industry investment in zero carbon solutions must be part of any credible climate plan in 2019.” In addition, it lays the foundation for a three-year project called **Clean Power Pathways**, “to transition Canada's energy system at a scope, scale and speed in line with the scientific consensus to avoid climate breakdown.” The report has grown out of collaborative research sponsored by the **Trotter Family Foundation**, which remains involved in the upcoming Clean Power Pathways research.

Zeroing in on Emissions: Charting Canada's Clean Power Pathways is accompanied by a 4-page **Executive Summary** and was also summarized by *The Energy Mix* **here** (June 2).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Clean Energy, Climate change policy, Decarbonization, Energy policy** | **Leave a reply**

International clean energy experts discuss investment levels, zero emissions vehicles,

building emissions, gender equality in Vancouver meetings

Posted on **May 31, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In the week of May 27, representatives from global government, industry, and NGO's met as Canada hosted the **10th Clean Energy Ministerial** in Vancouver. Several announcements were made against that backdrop:

Investment support for clean energy: The federal government **announced** it will contribute up to \$30 million to Breakthrough Energy Solutions Canada (BESC), a public-private initiative to support “cutting-edge companies to deliver game-changing clean energy innovations to the market.” This **Canadian program** will be administered by Natural Resources Canada – in collaboration with **Breakthrough Energy Ventures**, a \$1 billion investment fund launched in 2016 by billionaires such as Bill Gates and Michael Bloomberg. The **Canadian press release** quotes Gates: “ We are hopeful that this Breakthrough Energy partnership with Canada will be a model for developing more collaborations...” A summary appears in “**Canada launches homegrown version of Bill Gates-led clean energy fund**” in the *National Observer* (May 27).

The *National Observer* hosted a panel discussion on clean energy investment on May 28. The panel included the Vice-President of the European Investment Bank, the European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources, and Céline Bak, president of Analytica Advisors and author of the 2019 report, **Leveraging Sustainable Finance Leadership in Canada**. A summary and video of the panel's discussion is **here**. The discussion revealed that, unbeknownst to Canada, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank have also reached agreement with Breakthrough Energy Ventures on a new €100 million fund to support clean energy investments – **described in a May 29 press release**.

Clean energy investment trends are worrying, as reported by the International Energy Agency in **World Energy Investment 2019** (May 14) : “Global energy investment stabilised in 2018, ending three consecutive years of decline, as capital spending on oil, gas and coal supply bounced back while investment stalled for energy efficiency and renewables.” In May, BankTrack and others published **Fool's Gold – the Financial Institutions Bankrolling Europe's Most Coal-dependent Utilities**, naming the financial institutions behind almost €16 billion in support to the coal industry since the Paris Agreement was signed in December 2015.



Zero emissions vehicles: The International Energy Agency released the 2019 edition of one of their flagship publications, **Global EV Outlook**, which provides historical analysis, projections to 2030, and insights on electric vehicle and charging infrastructure deployment, ownership cost, energy use, carbon dioxide emissions and battery material demand. As part of the discussions on electrification of transportation at the CEM10, Canada became the first national government to endorse the **Global Commercial Vehicle Drive to Zero (Drive to Zero)** campaign, with British Columbia and the City of Vancouver also signing on . A **press release** explains “Drive to Zero is a strategic international initiative designed to catalyze the growth of the zero-emission (ZE) and near-zero-emission (NZ) medium- and heavy-duty vehicle sector (MHDV), which includes everything from transit buses to eighteen wheelers to box trucks to school buses. Pledge partners promise to collaboratively put in place supporting mechanisms to speed the early market for these vehicles and

equipment.” Drive to Zero is a program of **CALSTART**, a nonprofit consortium with offices in New York, Michigan, Colorado and California, and international partners which include Clean Energy Canada. As Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources stated in the [press release](#), this is in line with Canadian priorities: the [Final Report of the Advisory Council on Climate Action](#) (May 28) recommends policies concerning zero-emissions vehicles, including “The Government of Canada, working with partners and stakeholders, should develop an integrated strategy to reduce emissions across modes of transportation, including actions to support modal shifts.” Related: on May 2, the Pembina Institute published [Fuel Savings and Emissions Reductions in Heavy-Duty Trucking : A blueprint for further action in Canada](#) .

Gender Equality in Clean Tech: Over 100 organizations have now signed onto the **Equal by 30 initiative**, an international campaign begun in 2018. It “ encourages companies and government to adopt gender-equal principles, advance the participation of women in the clean energy transition and take concrete actions to support women in the sector.” A summary of the Gender Diversity participants and events is [here](#) .

Hydrogen as a source of clean energy: A new “**Hydrogen Initiative**” was announced under the leadership of Canada, the United States, Japan, the Netherlands and the European Commission, with the International Energy Agency as co-ordinating body. The initiative is intended to drive international collaboration on policies, programs and projects to accelerate the commercial deployment of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies across all sectors of the economy, especially industrial and transportation applications.

Building efficiency: Heating and cooling strategies in the clean energy transition: Outlooks and lessons from Canada’s provinces and territories is a report released at the Clean Energy Ministerial meetings on May 27. It is the result of collaborative research between the International Energy Agency and the National Energy Board of Canada. Using Canadian provincial data, it examines energy demand patterns and energy policies regarding heating and cooling services in buildings, urging policies to move from natural gas to existing, cleaner technologies. The *National Observer* summarizes the report in “[Cutting fossil fuels could save Canadians \\$24 billion a year by 2050](#)” .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Gender Equality](#), [Green Building](#), [Trucking Industry](#), [zero emissions vehicles](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Alberta government all-in for oil and gas, beginning with repeal of carbon tax

Posted on **May 30, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The new UCP government of Alberta, led by Premier Jason Kenney, kicked off its legislative session agenda on May 22 with a **Throne Speech** promising to “show the world that Alberta is open for business by restoring investor confidence and re-establishing the province as a job-creating investment magnet.” That “open for business” approach, applied to the oil and gas sector, includes some ominous statements : ...”Protect and maximize the value of Alberta’s resources – including using, as necessary, the **Preserving Canada’s Economic Prosperity Act**” (Rachel Notley’s law which gives Alberta the right to restrict oil and gas exports to British Columbia)... “Challenge those who misrepresent our industry and launch a public inquiry into campaigns to landlock Alberta’s energy”...and “Make life more affordable for Albertans by repealing the carbon tax and focusing climate change action on large emitters.” More positively, “Be transparent and honest about how Alberta produces energy to the highest environmental, labour and human rights standards on earth””Take action on climate change by introducing the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Fund through

regulation targeting large emitters.” Columnist Chris Varcoe provides one Alberta viewpoint in “[Throne speech ‘roadmap’ to revive oilpatch hinges on pipelines](#)” in the *Edmonton Journal* (May 23) .

The first legislation to be introduced, on May 22, was Bill 1, [An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax](#) . The government [press release](#) claims that “Scrapping the carbon tax will free up nearly \$1.4 billion of tax burden, create 6,000 jobs, save the average small business \$4,500 annually and save Alberta families up to \$1,150 a year.” Even before the Bill was passed in the legislature, the Kenney government [ended collection of the tax](#), on May 30. In a press release titled “[Albertans lose more than they gain with carbon tax repeal](#)”, the Pembina Institute disagrees: “With the tabling of Bill 1 to repeal the Climate Leadership Act, the Alberta government is cutting existing jobs, stunting innovation, removing financial benefits for small- and medium-size businesses, families and communities, and is allowing greenhouse gas emissions to continue to increase. The government has yet to produce a plan that will make up for these losses and build on previous progress.” The National Observer summary is [here](#) . And of course, there is also the issue that, by repealing Alberta’s own carbon tax, the government has made [the province subject to the federal backstop carbon levy](#).

Without the revenue stream of the carbon tax, energy efficiency programs initiated by the NDP government are in jeopardy. On May 24, the *Calgary Herald* reported “[UCP steps back from scrapping NDP’s Energy Efficiency Alberta; will look at programs ‘with an open mind’](#)” . Although Jason Kenney derides the [Energy Efficiency Alberta](#) programs as “subsidizing showerheads and lightbulbs”, in fact, the agency supports major economic programs, including those encouraging the growth of Alberta’s solar industry. Efficiency Canada [documents the benefits for Alberta](#) and points out that Alberta would be the only jurisdiction in North America not to have an energy efficiency program if it is scrapped .

On May 23, the Alberta legislature gave unanimous [approval of a motion](#) condemning federal bills C-69 , [An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act](#), and C-48, the [Oil Tanker Moratorium Act](#) . The Alberta government claims that the legislation “poses a very real threat to hundreds of thousands of jobs in Alberta and across Canada, and the \$16 trillion in economic potential within Alberta’s oilsands that could be lost if they proceed.” After the Senate Committee tabled its controversial amendments to C-69, the Alberta party leaders sent a joint letter to Prime Minister Trudeau on May 28, stating: “While we remain concerned about the overall spirit of Bill C-69, we believe that with the inclusion of all these amendments, that the bill would be acceptable to the interests of Albertans” . The letter is summarized by Energy Mix in “[Alberta Party Leaders Unanimously Back C-69 Amendments from Unelected Senate Committee](#)” . The [marked-up version of Bill-69](#) with the Senate Committee amendments is dismaying to environmentalists; a 2018 analysis of the original Bill-69 by Environmental Defence is [here](#) . (The complicated issue of the unelected Senate’s hearings and recommendations regarding Bill C-69 will be the subject of a future WCR report.)

Other new Alberta legislation in the “Open for Business” agenda: On May 27, [Bill 2, the Open for Business Act](#), promises to “reduce unfair burdens on businesses and give workers more rights in unionized workplaces. Recent changes to employment rules, such as requiring employers to provide holiday pay even if they are not open that day, created an unfair cost burden on job creators.” The [Alberta Federation of Labour](#) reacted, as did The Parkland Institute in a blog: “[Bill 2 grinds wages, complicates payroll, and impedes union drives](#)” . On May 28, [Bill 3: the Job Creation Tax Cut \(Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment\) Act](#) was introduced, promising to lower the corporate tax rate from 12% to 8% over the next 4 years. The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees calls the tax cuts “corporate welfare” in [Bill 3 Is UCP’s Second Gift In As Many Days To Wealthy Corporations](#) . And on May 29, [Bill 4, The Red Tape Reduction Act](#) was introduced.

None of these Bills have been passed or enacted as of May 30, although Premier Kenney announced that Albertans were “liberated” from the carbon tax as of May 30, according to a [CBC report](#) , and retailers were forbidden from collecting it.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Bill C-69](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Energy policy](#), [Environmental Assessment](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Proposals to “Electrify Quebec” will bring cleaner transportation; Montreal proposes

standards for heating buildings

Posted on **May 28, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On May 26, at the party conference of the Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ), Premier Francois Legault announced intentions to “electrify Quebec”, reduce oil consumption by 40 per cent by 2030, and reduce the province’s greenhouse gas emissions by 37.5 per cent by 2030. According to [a report from iPolitics](#), Legault stated “The greatest contribution Quebec can make to save the planet is by helping our neighbours replace their coal-fired, gas fired generators with clean hydroelectricity,” and he is working to increase hydro-electric exports to New York State. Regarding electrification of transportation, he proposed to extend Montreal’s electrified light rail network already under construction to the off-island suburbs; to complete a proposed extension of the Montreal’s subway; new tramways for Montreal and Quebec City; a commuter train link in Gatineau; and greater use of electric buses. He noted that two Quebec companies, Bombardier and Alstom, have the capacity to supply the rolling stock for new rail cars and electric buses. He also announced that Quebec’s electric vehicle subsidies will continue, benefitting rural Quebecers without access to transit options. Although plans are far from specific, Legault promised to finance his green plans from the proceeds from Quebec’s Green Fund, with the revenues from its cap and trade auctions.

In response to the recent proposal for an “energy corridor” from Alberta’s new Premier Jason Kenney to bring western crude oil across Canada, Legault stated “There is no social acceptability for an oil pipeline in Quebec.”

Montreal announces 2030 targets to phase out oil heating in buildings: The city of Montreal is one of hundreds of Canadian municipalities which has [declared a climate emergency](#) – and has been under [flood emergency warnings throughout May](#). On May 6, in a [press release](#), Montreal Mayor Valerie Plante announced that the city is developing a plan to reach carbon neutrality for all municipal buildings by 2030, for all new buildings by 2030, as well as for all existing buildings, by 2050, and have earmarked \$4 million by 2021 for the effort. A [CBC report](#) states that environmentalists are disappointed at the slow pace and weak level of ambition, and one of the key city councillors resigned, calling for stronger “war measures” against climate change, including a tax on meat, no airport expansion, and planting a half-million trees. The tree-planting proposal seems particularly urgent, given the heat wave deaths in Montreal in 2018 – 42 officially attributed to heat [by Quebec’s chief coroner](#), but with that number still under investigation, and the possibility of a public inquiry. [“Life and Death under the Dome”](#) (May 23) in the *Toronto Star* quotes Montreal Public Health official estimates of 66 heat-related deaths that summer. It also explains what the city’s public health officials have done to analyse the causes and patterns – identifying vulnerable populations and areas – and calling for a greening of the city on a massive scale, including trees, roofs and architecture.

Update: On May 22, the Government of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities [announced](#) an investment of \$2,777,960 in four green infrastructure projects in the Greater Montreal Area, including Laval. Most of the investment will go to infrastructure and re-naturalization through tree planting, to mitigate the heat island effect and flooding in the city.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [heat waves](#), [Montreal](#), [Municipal Government](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Are the media getting the message? Mainstream media begin to cover the climate emergency –

updated

Posted on **May 27, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Re-written on May 28 to include an article appearing in *The Tyee*: "**Dear Journalists of Canada: Start Reporting Climate Change as an Emergency**".

The traditional media have been criticized for their indifference to the climate change issue – recently, in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, "**The media are complacent while the world burns**", and in *The Tyee*, "**Dear Journalists of Canada: Start Reporting Climate Change as an Emergency**".

Both article refer to a **Media Matters report** that only 22 of the 50 largest newspapers in the U.S. even bothered to cover the landmark IPCC Report in October 2018. The article in *The Tyee* is presented as an open letter to media owners and journalists, and reports the author's own search of **Canadian Newsstream** — a database which covers 569 different English language news sources – mostly newspapers, as well as national evening news broadcasts by CBC and CTV television. Giving examples, he identifies problems of lack of climate change coverage, failure to provide local context about international stories, and failure to seek accountability in story coverage. Finally, he calls upon Canadian journalists "to do these five things: properly *place*, *cover*, *contextualize*, and *localize* the biggest story of our time, and *hold public and private institutions to account* for their actions and inactions on climate change."

Improvements are on the way: *The Guardian* newspaper in the U.K. has been called "one of the best-respected and most widely used international sources of information on the crises of the climate and the natural world" by **Climate Home News**. In April 2019, *The Guardian* became the first newspaper to **publish global carbon dioxide levels** on its daily weather pages, and on May 17, it **announced** that it has updated its **internal Style Guide** to better reflect the reality and depth of the climate emergency. Now, instead of using the term "climate change" in its reports, the preferred terms will be "climate emergency, crisis or breakdown". Other changes: "global heating" rather than "global warming" and "climate science denier" rather than "climate sceptic". In its explanation, Editor-in-chief, Katharine Viner is quoted as saying: "The phrase 'climate change', for example, sounds rather passive and gentle when what scientists are talking about is a catastrophe for humanity."

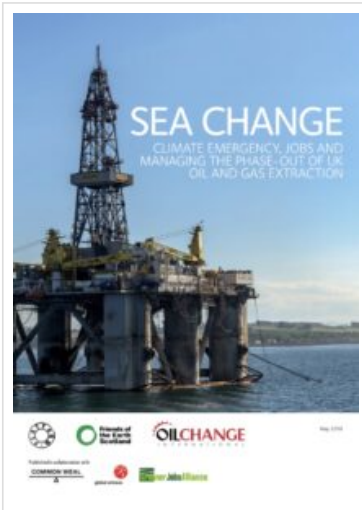
In a **follow-up report by The Guardian**, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is cited as the furthest along amongst traditional news outlets (including the New York Times and Washington Post) in adopting *The Guardian's* language: "Senior CBC management told staff they were able to use the terms "climate crisis" and "climate emergency" when covering the wide-ranging impacts of temperature rises around the world." On CBC Radio, the host of Metro Morning interviewed a spokesperson from *The Guardian* on this issue **here** (9:34 minutes audio). Although the CBC guidance is permissive rather than prescriptive, it hardly seems possible to avoid the term "climate emergency", when the parliaments of both the federal and the Ontario government formally **debated declaring a "climate emergency"** in May, and **municipalities across the country** have already done so (over 300 municipalities in Quebec alone).

Most recently, the *Toronto Star* began a new newsletter series in May, **Undeniable: Canada's Changing Climate**. So far, topics have included: "**Toronto's Ninja Storm**" (re the 2018 flooding) (May 21); "**Life and Death Under the Dome**" (when 66 Montrealers died in a heat wave) (May 23); and "**Open for Business**" (May 27) (re mining in Ontario's North). Much more to come from *The Star*, which has previously collaborated with the *National Observer*, Global News, the Michener Awards Foundation, the Corporate Mapping Project and four journalism schools on a special investigative series, **The Price of Oil**, regarding the impacts of the oil and gas industry on Canadian communities.

Finally, the *Columbia Journalism Review* and *The Nation* announced a new international initiative in late April, the **Covering Climate Now project**, which aims to improve the media's coverage of "the most urgent story of our time". The project "will provide substantial resource guides for journalists, tutorials, source lists, and web briefings; we'll gather the best of climate coverage in an online blog, and provide commentary on how other reporters can replicate it; and we will increase our own reporting on how news outlets are covering the climate crisis, highlighting what is working and calling out what isn't." The first big goal: to organize a week of concentrated climate coverage beginning September 16, in the lead-up to the UN climate Summit in New York City on September 23. They'll have lots to cover, now that 350.org is also organizing a **one-day global strike** for September 20.

Are there lessons for Newfoundland in a Just Transition strategy for the U.K. Offshore oil industry?

Posted on **May 23, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Sea Change: Climate Emergency, Jobs and Managing the Phase-Out of UK Oil and Gas Extraction was released on May 15 by Oil Change International, in partnership with Platform and Friends of the Earth Scotland. The press release summary is [here](#). The report examines the offshore oil and gas industry in the U.K., with special attention to the transition for workers and communities currently dependent on oil – making it highly relevant to Canadians, especially Newfoundlanders. ***Sea Change*** argues that with the right transition policies, clean industries could create more than three jobs for every North Sea oil job at risk, which can enable an “equivalent job guarantee” for every oil worker.

The report contrasts two pathways available for the U.K. and Scotland to stay within Paris climate limits: 1. Deferred collapse, in which the countries “continue to pursue maximum extraction by subsidising companies and encouraging them to shed workers, until worsening climate impacts force rapid action to cut emissions globally; the UK oil industry collapses, pushing many workers out of work in a short space of time.” Or 2. Managed transition: in which countries “stop approving and licensing new oil and gas projects, begin a phase-out of extraction and a Just Transition for workers and communities, negotiated with trade unions and local leaders, and in line with climate change goals, while building quality jobs in a clean energy economy.”

To achieve the clearly superior “managed transition” pathway, the report recommends that the U.K. and Scottish Governments:

- Stop issuing licenses and permits for new oil and gas exploration and development, and revoke undeveloped licenses;
- Rapidly phase out all subsidies for oil and gas extraction, including tax breaks, and redirect them to fund a Just Transition;
- Enable rapid building of the clean energy industry through fiscal and policy support to at least the extent they have provided to the oil industry, including inward investment in affected regions and communities;
- Open formal consultations with trade unions to develop and implement a Just Transition strategy for oil-dependent regions and communities.



Offshore Oil and Gas in Newfoundland: In Newfoundland, the importance of the offshore oil industry is evidenced by the fact that a snap election was called shortly after the province reached agreement with the federal government on royalty payments on April 1. The two governments **announced agreement** on a “renewed Atlantic Accord” – including the “Hibernia Dividend Backed Annuity”, valued at \$2.5 billion for the province, according to **a CBC report** . This is new money that comes from Ottawa’s 8.5 per cent stake in the **Hibernia offshore** project, and will be paid out in annual installments over 38 years. According to the **Q1 2019 Company Benefits Report** , Hibernia operations employ 1,458 workers, of which 90.8% are Newfoundlanders.

The federal and provincial governments are also closely intertwined in a new consultation process which was launched for the **Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador** in April, along with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board. The provincial Minister is quoted in the **federal press release**: “Our government is committed to working collaboratively with our federal partners to ensure responsible development of our oil and gas industry. The Regional Assessment is an important step towards exempting routine, low impact activities, such as exploration wells, where potential impacts and standard mitigations are well known, from federal assessment. This is another step we are taking to achieve the vision we set out in Advance 2030 to benefit all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.”

The **Advance 2030** document, released in 2018, is subtitled: *A Plan for growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador Oil and Gas Industry*, and is based on the government’s commitment “to resource development as a key economic driver and to positioning the industry for continued growth.” In **releasing the Advance 2030 report**, the government announced some long-term targets, including the direct employment of at least 7,500 people in operations, drilling of over 100 new exploration wells by 2030, and doubling oil production by 2030. That same Liberal government was returned to power as a minority government on May 16, and compiles news of oil and gas development **here** .

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Environmental Assessment, Newfoundland, North Sea, offshore oil and gas industry, Oil and gas industry, Scotland, United Kingdom** | **1 Reply**

298,000 workers in Canada’s clean energy sector in 2017 according to new Navius report

Posted on **May 23, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Released on May 23, ***Missing the Bigger Picture: Tracking the Energy Revolution 2019*** summarizes research commissioned by Clean Energy Canada and conducted by Navius Research. The report emphasizes the healthy growth of Canada's clean energy sector – which employed 298,000 people in 2017, representing 2% of Canadian employment. Between 2010 and 2017, the number of clean energy jobs grew by 2.2% a year, economic value grew by 4.8% per year (compared to 3.6% for the economy as a whole), and investment in the sector went up by 70%. The 15-page report calls the clean energy sector “the mountain in our midst”, emphasizing that it includes many industries, all provinces, and defining it broadly as “companies and jobs that help to reduce carbon pollution— whether by creating clean energy, helping move it, reducing energy consumption, or making low-carbon technologies.” The findings report includes “sector spotlights” for: electric vehicles, batteries and energy storage, wind power, and building control and HVAC systems.

The accompanying, 118-page report by Navius Consulting explains the methodology and presents the details of employment, economic value, and investment. ***Quantifying Canada's Clean Energy Economy: An assessment of clean energy investment, value added and jobs*** ranks “Clean transport” as the largest employer, with 171,000 jobs in 2017 – 111,000 of those in transit. Jobs in renewable and alternative energy supply grew from 54,000 to 60,000 between 2010 and 2017. The report also states that the clean buildings sector employed only 19,000 people in 2017, mostly in green architecture and construction services.



Definitions are clearly important to this issue. The **Navius technical report** provides details about its definitions and methodology, including the use of the gTech energy economy model. This will no doubt be required reading in order to compare these findings with those of ***Energy Efficiency Employment in Canada***, the April report from Eco Canada, which estimated that Canada's energy efficiency goods and services sector directly employed an estimated 436,000 permanent workers in 2018 (summarized by [WCR here](#)).

Amazon Employees for Climate Justice vow to persist despite defeat of their resolution and snub by Jeff Bezos

Posted on **May 23, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the end, approximately 7,700 Amazon employees publicly signed their names to an **employee-shareholder resolution calling for stronger climate change action** by the company, as well as worker protection in situations related to extreme weather disasters. The entire Board opposed the resolution (and all other shareholder resolutions presented at the meeting), despite the strong employee support and the endorsement by two of the largest proxy advisory firms in the U.S., which cited the financial and reputational risks from being heavily dependent on cheap fossil fuels. **“Amazon and CEO Jeff Bezos challenged on climate change. Here’s how shareholders voted on it and other issues”** in the *Seattle Times* is full, business-like news account of the meeting, including that Amazon intends to release its carbon footprint later in 2019, and that it intends to meet the net zero carbon emissions goals of the **Shipment Zero initiative** largely through direct emission cuts, not through buying carbon offsets. However, according to **“Jeff Bezos Wouldn’t Even Come On Stage to Listen to His Employees Who Want Amazon to Address Climate Change”** in Gizmodo, Bezos and other executives dodged most climate-related questions in the Q&A at the end of the meeting.



The group leading the climate resolution, **Amazon Employees for Climate Justice**, issued their own **press release** about the meeting, which states: “Because the Board still does not understand the severity of the climate crisis, we will file this resolution again next year. And we will announce other actions in the coming months. We – Amazon’s employees – have the talent and experience to remake entire industries with incredible speed. This is work we want to do.” Follow further developments at the Amazon Employees for Climate Justice **Twitter feed** .

Tellingly, Jeff Bezos declined the direct invitation of one of the leaders to join her on stage as **she introduced the resolution**, a fact which has been widely reported, not only **by Gizmodo** , but also in **“World’s Richest Man Jeff Bezos Hides Backstage as Amazon Workers Demand ‘Bold, Rapid’ Climate Action”** in *Common Dreams* and even in **“Jeff Bezos blew off Amazon employees’ proposal at the shareholder’s meeting and they were miffed: ‘This is not the kind of leadership we need’”** in *Business Insider*.

Other, briefer reports of the meeting appeared in *The Guardian* , *Los Angeles Times* and in *Vox* .

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Amazon, Corporate Climate Policy, employee activism, employee initiatives, Shareholder Activism** | [Leave a reply](#)

Labor’s voice in support of the Green New Deal

Posted on **May 14, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Joe Uehlein of **Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS)** was interviewed by Counterspin Radio on May 3 concerning his views on the Green New Deal; a transcript was published by FAIR on May 8 as “**Climate Change is the Real Job Killer**” . Uehlein and colleague Jeremy Brecher have written numerous articles on this theme – including “**12 reasons why labor should support a Green New Deal**”, which appeared in *Working In These Times* in 2018. LNS monitors the situation and posts new GND endorsements by U.S. labour unions in a dedicated “**Green New Deal**” section of its website, building a compilation of documents. Labor Network for Sustainability co-hosted a **Labor Convergence on Climate** on April 13, along with the Alameda Labor Council in California; the next Labor Convergence will take place in Chicago at the end June, with the theme *Strengthening Labor’s Voice to Help Shape the Green New Deal*. Details are [here](#) .

For those interested in the issue of how the Green New Deal is being communicated in mainstream media, “**Establishment Media and the Green New Deal: New Wine in Old Bottles**” appeared on May 1 in FAIR . The article tracks mainstream U.S. newspaper and network coverage of the announcement by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ed Markey on February 7 (and 8th), and a subsequent snapshot of coverage two weeks later. It documents the chronology with sample headlines and quotes, with some analysis. While none of it is surprising, taken together it condenses the tone and atmosphere of the GND launch. The conclusion: “To meet that level of public concern, the mainstream media should be covering how to leverage climate action quickly and broadly enough to make a dent in the crisis, as well as probing how and if solutions can also bring a clean and just energy economy into existence.”

One might also add that mainstream media should be seeking out the voices outside of political and academic circles – such as Joe Uehlein’s and those of other labour leaders. One such article, “**Labor Unions are skeptical of the Green New Deal, and they want activists to hear them out**” appeared in *The Intercept* in February, and describes the complex conflict within the labour movement – a topic also addressed by Naomi Klein in “**The Battle lines have been drawn on the Green New Deal**” , which appeared in *The Intercept* (Feb. 13).

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Climate change in the Media](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Labor Network for Sustainability \(LNS\)](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Parliament declares climate emergency; Government committee calls for Net Zero Emissions by 2050

Posted on **May 13, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The government of the United Kingdom became the **first national government to declare an environment and climate emergency**. on May 1 when it passed a motion by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn (and **Ireland followed suit** with its own vote in Parliament on May 10) . Many agree with the headline from *Common Dreams*, “**Activism works: UK Parliament makes history in declaring climate emergency**”, reflecting on the huge impact made by the April demonstrations of the School Strikes and **Extinction Rebellion** in the U.K.



On the heels of the symbolic victory of the climate emergency declaration, on May 2 the U.K. government's [Committee on Climate Change](#) delivered its long-awaited landmark report, requested by the U.K., Scottish and Welsh Governments in 2018. ***Net Zero: the U.K.'s contribution to stopping Global Warming*** calls for net zero emissions by 2050, with Scotland to target net-zero by 2045 and Wales to target a 95 per cent reduction by 2050 relative to 1990. The net-zero target would cover all greenhouse gases, including international aviation and shipping, and allow for the use of emissions credits. The Committee estimates the cost at equivalent to 1-2% of GDP each year, made possible by the rapidly falling cost of new technologies – and balanced by the benefits of a cleaner environment and improved health. In calling for more ambitious targets than the existing one of 80% emissions cut by 2050 (set out in the 2008 *Climate Change Act*), the Committee states that “Current policy is insufficient for even the existing targets”, and calls for “clear, stable and well-designed policies to reduce emissions ... across the economy without delay”.

Links to the research reports supporting the Committee's report are [here](#) . *The Guardian* released a brief overview in “**This report will change your life: what zero emissions means for UK** . More substantial reactions come from: Carbon Brief, with a [detailed summary](#); and from The Grantham Institute “**What is Net Zero?**” , and a political wish list in “**Urgent response needed from U.K. government on Net Zero Emissions**” .

The **Greener Jobs Alliance** , a coalition of U.K. unionists and environmentalists, also summarizes what the new report may mean, acknowledging that “The 2050 target date for zero emissions will disappoint many demonstrating across the UK.”, but focusing especially on the breakthrough of the Committee's call for Just Transition. The GJA states: “It should now reinforce this message by setting up a Just Transition Advisory Group, with union representation from the industrial, energy, public and voluntary sectors....” and “...the absence of a strategic advisory role for unions in the work of the committee is no longer tenable.”

Below is the GJA overview of what the Net Zero report will mean for workers, as published in their [news release](#):

- Up to one in five jobs across the UK will be affected by a Zero Carbon Britain strategy.
- Major moves away from fossil fuels – with job losses across oil and gas extraction, power and heating industries, as well as job losses in supply chains for these sectors.
- Some gas fired power stations could be needed, but they will need to run using hydrogen or Carbon Capture & Storage. All coal-fired stations close.
- Huge job growth is expected in sectors like renewables, electric vehicles, home insulation and domestic heating.
- Employment in offshore wind, for example, is predicted to quadruple to 27,000 jobs by 2030. The big prize comes when all three main parts of a wind turbine – the tower, the cell at the top and the blades – are made in the UK. The UK is currently a big importer of renewable technology. The UK has to develop full supply chains across the renewable energy sector.
- By 2025 at the latest all new cars and vans should be electric, or use a low- carbon alternative such as hydrogen. The automotive industry must transition to electric vehicles, with major implications for jobs, skills and investment.
- No new homes should be connected to the gas grid after 2025.
- Retrofitting homes with energy efficiency measures and installing low-carbon heat into new and existing homes will require new skills. This programme could generate many more high-skilled jobs in the installation and construction industries.

FTQ shareholder resolution calls for GHG targets aligned with the Paris Agreement; corporations respond with a charge of “micromanagement”

Posted on **May 13, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As part of its stated **Action Plan for Engaging in a Just Energy Transition**, the **Fonds de Solidarité des Travailleurs du Québec** (FTQ) (an investment fund controlled by Quebec trade unions) put forward the following shareholder’s resolution at the Cenovus Energy Annual Meeting in Calgary in April. (The **text of the resolution** appears on page 51, as Appendix A in the company’s Information Circular):

Resolved: That Cenovus Energy Inc. (“Cenovus”) set and publish science-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets that are aligned with the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit global average temperature increase to well below 2 degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels. These targets should cover the direct and indirect methane and other GHG emissions of Cenovus’ operations over medium and long-term time horizons. Such targets should be quantitative, subject to regular review, and progress against such targets should be reported to shareholders on an annual basis.

The Board’s written response and recommendation states “.....Cenovus has always and will continue to assess our approach to climate change risk management with a view to maximizing shareholder value.Achieving the level of commitment contemplated by the Paris Agreement requires an integrated plan at a national and global level, with policies to guide the actions of governments, individuals and corporations to collectively work together toward the desired outcome. Our view is that it is an overly demanding request, and contrary to the best interests of shareholder value, to require an individual company to unilaterally set targets.... As such, we recommend voting against the proposal.” And sure enough, as expected, the FTQ proposal was defeated by an 89% vote against. The news is summarized and in [The Energy Mix](#) and by the [CBC](#).

The Fonds de Solidarité des Travailleurs du Québec (FTQ), along with the Canadian shareholders’ non-profit SHARE, was also part of the recent resolution to Exxon. That resolution, filed in the U.S. by a group of investors led by the New York State Common Retirement Fund and the Church Commissioners for England, proposed that the company develop “short-, medium- and long-term greenhouse gas targets aligned with the goals established by the Paris Climate Agreement to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C.” In response, ExxonMobil applied for and received permission from the U.S. Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), allowing it to exclude the resolution from its Proxy Circular. In retaliation, SHARE states in a blog, [Why we’ll vote against Exxon’s entire board of directors](#), that it is “recommending to our proxy voting clients that they withhold their support for all Exxon directors at the upcoming annual general meeting on May 29th.”

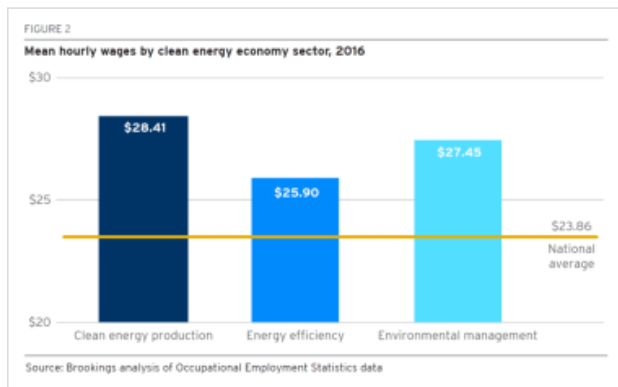
The “Micromanaging” argument: [“Investors Worried About Climate Change Run Into New SEC Roadblocks”](#) from *Inside Climate News* (May 3), in addition to providing a good overview of shareholder actions, explains: “The term “micromanage” has become the linchpin to objections by companies seeking to block these resolutions. The precedent was set last year when the SEC agreed with EOG Resources, a Texas-based oil and gas exploration company, that a resolution asking the company to adopt emissions goals had sought to “micromanage” the company.” More in [“Exxon Shareholders want action on climate change: SEC calls it micromanagement”](#) in the *Washington Post* (May 8). According to the [CBC report](#) about the FTQ resolution at Cenovus, the corporate CEO called the proposal “overly demanding”, and said “we had challenges with the prescriptive nature of the proposal”, echoing the industry’s language and strategy.

To stay up to date: The U.S. non-profit [As you Sow](#) monitors corporate environmental and social responsibility, including climate change and the energy transition – through [press releases](#) , reports, and an up-to-date [database of resolutions](#) .

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Cenovus Energy](#), [Corporate Climate Policy](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [ExxonMobil](#), [Fonds de Solidarite](#), [Green Investment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Shareholder Activism](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The clean economy workforce in the U.S. and proposals to make it more inclusive

Posted on **May 13, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



[Advancing inclusion through clean energy jobs](#) is a report released by the Brookings Institution in April 2019, with a goal to determine “the degree to which the clean energy economy provides labor market opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups, with a particular focus on equity”. It examines a range of occupations, not just the traditionally-identified “green jobs”, identifying approximately 320 unique occupations in three major industrial sectors: clean energy production, energy efficiency, and environmental management. The report includes detailed discussion of its methodology and data sources, and emphasizes the size of the clean energy economy and its potential to make an impact on the equity of the U.S. labour market.

Some highlights about the “nature” and “quality” of clean energy economy jobs:

- Workers in clean energy earn higher and more equitable wages when compared to all workers nationally. Mean hourly wages exceed national averages by 8 to 19 percent.
- Roughly 50 percent of workers in the clean energy economy have a high school diploma yet earn higher wages than similarly-educated peers in other industries – for example, plumbers, electricians, and carpenters.
- Some occupations within the clean energy production and energy efficiency sectors require greater scientific knowledge and technical skills than the average American job.
- The clean energy economy workforce is older, dominated by male workers, and lacks racial diversity when compared to all occupations nationally. Fewer than 20 percent of workers in the clean energy production and energy efficiency sectors are women, while black workers fill less than ten percent of these sector’s jobs.

In the accompanying [press release](#) , first author Mark Muro states: “Clean energy occupations are varied, accessible to workers without a bachelor’s degree, and good paying, but they are not yet as inclusive as they should be. To deliver on the sectors’ full promise for economic inclusion, more work needs to be done in front-line communities to ensure under-represented communities and women are more widely included.” The report concludes with proposals directed at state and local policy makers, education and training sector leaders, and community organizations. Broadly, the policy proposals include: “modernizing and emphasizing energy science curricula, improving the alignment of education and training offerings, and reaching underrepresented workers and students.”

Activists are mobilizing to push for a Canadian Green New Deal in the 2019 elections

Posted on **May 9, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The push for a Canadian Green New Deal is a rising tide with **strong public support**, and a number of different activist groups are gathering in different coalitions to push our politicians to action. “**Canadian Coalitions’ Election Platforms Call For Faster Action On Climate**” (May 7) in *The Energy Mix* summarizes three prominent initiatives that launched in early May. Here are a few more details:



The Pact for a Green New Deal launched on May 6 with a very high profile campaign in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. An Executive summary called **10 Questions** states: “it is a non-partisan, grassroots initiative supported by individuals, scientists, unions, Indigenous and civil society organizations and youth from across the country.” It has been endorsed by over 67 organizations, including many of Canada’s largest environmental advocacy groups, and the following labour unions: CUPE Ontario, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec, London and District Labour Council, and Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation. Amongst youth, endorsers include: Climate Strike Canada, PowerShift: Young and Rising, ENvironnement JEUnesse (ENJEU), iMatter Halifax, and Students for Direct Action. It also includes a number of influential celebrities, including David Suzuki, Naomi Klein, Stephen Lewis, Michelle Landsberg, and dozens of musicians and artists – even K.D. Laing, but not Margaret Atwood! The full list of endorsers is [here](#).

The **10 Questions document** also states that the The Pact for a Green New Deal (P4GND) is NOT a copy of the U.S. campaign so widely identified with the Sunrise Movement and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. This Canadian initiative was inspired by **Le Pacte** that was started in Quebec in November 2018 by Dominic Champagne (who endorses this new initiative). The Pacte has attracted over 270,000 signatories who pledge to make personal lifestyle changes to address the climate emergency, including citizen engagement, and who endorse a definite list of priorities. In contrast, **The Pact for a Green New Deal** is a visionary process, as set out in a **3-page statement**:

“We Invite All Sectors of Society to Launch The Year of The Green New Deal: We call on workers, Indigenous communities, students, trade unions, migrants, community organizations and people across the country to gather, define and design a plan for a safe future and more prosperous present. The conversation about a Green New Deal for Canada must be led from the ground up. We call on all politicians and political parties to respond to the demands of the people with a Green New Deal that rests on two fundamental principles: 1. It must meet the demands of Indigenous knowledge and science and cut Canada’s emissions in half in 11 years while protecting cultural and biological diversity. 2. It must leave no one behind and build a better present and future for all of us.”

An interactive map [here](#) shows all the planned locations for the Pact for a Green New Deal cross-country tour, starting in Toronto in May.

Environmental Asks for the October 2019 Election: Many of the endorsers of the Pact for a Green New Deal are also endorsing another initiative, [announced](#) on May 7, presenting 20 **“asks” for Party Platforms** . “These platform recommendations represent the collective priorities of all of the organizations listed below and will form the basis of joint-venture communication concerning each political parties’ commitments in the lead-up to the 2019 Federal election.” The group will also evaluate and compare the party platforms once they are announced. There are 14 groups involved are: Canadian Environmental Law Association, CPAWS, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, ecojustice, équiterre, Environmental Defence, Greenpeace, Nature Canada, Pembina Institute, Sierra Club Canada Foundation, West Coast Environmental Law Association, Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, and WWF-Canada. In addition, the United Steelworkers have announced their support via an article in the *Toronto Star*, **“Labour a key partner in a Green New Deal”** (May 6) , also issued as a USW press release.

Younger Canadians launched their own political initiative to fight for a Green New Deal on April 17. The group, **Our Time**, states its goal is “to organize and mobilize a generational alliance of young and millennial voters that’s big enough and bold enough to push politicians to support a Green New Deal in the lead up to the 2019 election.”

And without using the term “Green New Deal”, the youth organization **Climate Strike Canada**, inspired by the Fridays for Future movement, has set out a list of political demands in an [Open Letter and online petition](#) :

“We, as citizens, therefore call upon all political parties and politicians to create and commit to a science-based and human rights focused Emergency Plan for Climate Justice that limits global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We, as citizens, pledge to vote only for political parties and politicians that include the following demands in their Emergency Plan for Climate Justice.

- Bold Emissions Reductions Targets
- Separation of Oil and State
- A Just Transition
- Environmental rights
- Indigenous rights
- Conservation of Biodiversity
- Protection for Vulnerable Groups

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change activism](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Green New Deal Canada](#), [labour union policies](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian youth continue climate strikes and join the political push for a Canadian Green New Deal

Posted on **May 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Fridays For Future - Climate Strikes May 3, 2019

Whitehorse, YT	Sechelt, BC	Toronto, ON (x2)	Montreal, QC (x2)
Inuvik, NT	Powell River, BC	Pickering ON	Quebec City, QC
Yellowknife, NT	Calgary, AB	Hamilton, ON	Vaudreuil-Soulanges QC
Tofino, BC	Edmonton, AB	Georgetown, ON	Magdalen Is, QC
Mill Bay BC	Letbridge, AB	Milton, ON	Charlottetown PEI
Ucluelet, BC	Canmore, AB	Vaughan, ON	Moncton, NB
Courtenay, BC	Regina, SK	Richmond Hill, ON	Sackville, NB
Nanaimo, BC	Melfort, SK (x2)	Orangeville, ON	Saint John NB
Gabriola, BC	Saskatoon SK	Stratford, ON	Rothesay, NB
Victoria, BC	Winnipeg, MB	Kitchener/Waterloo	Fredericton NB
Vancouver, BC	FlinFlon, MB	Guelph, ON	Edmundston, NB
Whistler, BC	Brandon, MB	London, ON (x2)	Wolfville NS
Kamloops, BC	Sudbury, ON	Sarnia, ON	Halifax, NS
Revelstoke, BC	North Bay, ON	Mississauga, ON	Antigonish, NS
Lumby, BC	Owen Sound, ON	Whitby, ON	Sydney, NS
Nelson, BC	North Bay, ON	Port Hope, ON	Truro, NS
Castlegar, BC	Lindsay, ON	Cobourg, ON	Kentville, NS
Trail, BC	Peterborough, ON	Belleville, ON	Wolfville, NS
Surrey BC	Bradford, ON	Rockland, ON	Bridgewater, NS
Prince George, BC	Barrie, ON	Bancroft, ON	Shelburne, NS
Langley, BC	Orillia, ON	Kingston, ON	St John's, NL
Abbotsford, BC	Burlington, ON	Almonte, ON	Cornerbrook, NL
Campbell River, BC	Thornhill, ON	Ottawa, ON (x2)	Port aux Basques, NL
Vernon, BC			Eastport NL

As of May 6, 2019 we know that on May 3 there were **669 cities in 77 countries globally** with Fridays For Future Climate Strike events. **In Canada, we have counted 98 events - making Canada the most active country on May 3** as defined by number of events. Currently, we don't have a good tally of the number people who took part because only 5% of organizers have submitted their reports online at fridaysforfuture.org. Please look for instructions attached to this graphic and fill in your reports for your strikes. Thank you CANADA

Students in approximately 95 towns and cities across Canada went on strike from school on May 3, continuing their **Fridays for Future campaign**. As was the case after the huge **March 15 demonstrations**, mainstream press coverage was limited, but included a **front-page story in the *Sudbury Star***. Other coverage: **Corner Brook Newfoundland**; **Regina Saskatchewan**, **Edmonton**, and Vancouver, where **an article** in *The Straight* (May 3) summarizes the strike in Vancouver and notes others across Canada and the world. In **Halifax**, CBC News reported that 400 students marched, despite threats of suspension from at least one high school. In **"Thousands march for action on climate change in Montreal as city braces for flooding"**, the CBC reports that intergenerational demonstrations were held in Quebec on April 27, and states "Quebec's largest unions took part in similar marches in Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, Rimouski, Rouyn-Noranda, Alma, Gaspé, Mont-Laurier and Ottawa."

Youth are driven by fear: The *National Observer* has launched a new series on Youth, Parents and the Climate Crisis with **"Climate strikes and the youth mental health crisis"** (May 2). Similarly, **"Meet the millennials grieving for the future of planet Earth"** describes ecological grief circles in Montreal. The words of a sampling of youth leaders are revealing in the interviews from **"Canadian Teens Told Us Why They're Striking Over Climate Change"** (May 2) in *Vice*.

What's Next? The Federal Election and a Green New Deal: Students say they will continue their school strikes, and in addition, some are now joining the political fight, despite being too young to vote in many cases. Climate Strike Canada has posted an **Open Letter and online petition** which lists their demands:

“We, as citizens, therefore call upon all political parties and politicians to create and commit to a science-based and human rights focused Emergency Plan for Climate Justice that limits global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

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- Bold Emissions Reductions Targets
- Separation of Oil and State
- A Just Transition
- Environmental rights
- Indigenous rights
- Conservation of Biodiversity
- Protection for Vulnerable Groups



Several youth organizations are among the 67 groups who announced for a **Green New Deal for Canada** on May 6, launching another political movement to fight for climate change action in the coming election. *The Energy Mix* provides a summary of these new political campaigns in "**Canadian Coalitions' Election Platforms Call For Faster Action On Climate**" (May 7). *Common Dreams* also describes the new group in "**The Pact for a Green New Deal': Visionary Roadmap From Canadian Coalition Launched**" (May 6).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and politics](#), [fridays for future](#), [Green New Deal Canada](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

GM Oshawa investment will save 300 jobs; Toyota announces new production in Cambridge

Posted on **May 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On May 8, General Motors Canada and Unifor held a joint press conference and issued a [statement](#) announcing that GM will invest \$170 million to save approximately 300 of the 2,600 union jobs at the Oshawa Ontario manufacturing facility, slated for closure by the end of 2019 as part of the North American [restructuring announced in November 2018](#).

After a vigorous and high profile union campaign against the closure, an “[Oshawa Transformation Agreement](#)” has been reached, including:

- A \$170 million investment by GM to convert the plant from vehicle assembly to stamping, related sub-assembly, and “other miscellaneous activities for GM and other auto industry customers.”
- Part of the Oshawa Plant property will be converted into a test track for autonomous and advanced technology vehicles, to support GM Canada’s existing Canadian Technical Centre, in particular its Oshawa and Markham campuses where the company develops software and hardware for Autonomous Vehicle Systems, Embedded Controls, Active Safety Systems and Infotainment.
- The company will also donate the three-acre Fenelon Park and the 87-acre McLaughlin Bay wildlife preserve to the City of Oshawa “for the permanent benefit of all its citizens.”

But what about the workers?

A separate [Jobs Transition Backgrounder](#) states:

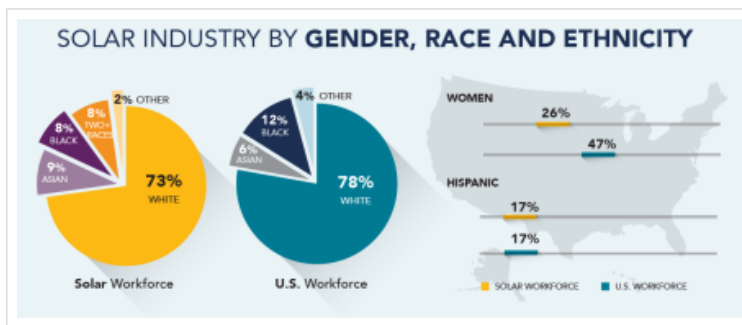
- GM Canada will offer special relocations to Oshawa employees for jobs at the St. Catharines propulsion plant or the Woodstock Distribution Centre;
- GM will offer enhanced retirement packages to retirement-eligible Oshawa Assembly employees “including vouchers toward the purchase of new GM vehicles, a benefit that will support both retiring employees and GM dealerships in Durham Region and surrounding areas.”
- In June 2019, GM Canada, Unifor and the Ontario government will open a Jobs Action Centre in Oshawa, offering personalized transition counselling, a skills / jobs matching database and “other supports.” Durham College, the local community college, will support the Job Action Centre with a dedicated jobs portal and several job fairs planned for 2019.
- Durham College, Centennial College, and Trent University Durham will offer training tailored to regional and GTA-based partner employers.
- “GM Canada will offer training support for qualified Oshawa Assembly hourly employees.” (no further details stated in the public release).

Unifor Local 222, which represents the workers at the Oshawa plant, have [called](#) a meeting on May 9 to inform the membership about the resolution of their grievance against the company, which sought to increase incentives and severance packages.

In better news for Ontario’s auto industry: Starting in 2022, Toyota will begin to produce the luxury Lexus NX at its Cambridge plant, in both gasoline and hybrid versions. (Cambridge currently produces the mid-size luxury Lexus RX and RX hybrid). According to a [report in the Hamilton Spectator](#): “Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Deputy Ontario Premier Christine Elliott, and a host of local mayors and dignitaries were at the Fountain Street facility Monday afternoon to announce the plant had secured the right to make the company’s Lexus NX gas and hybrid compact SUVs starting in 2022. The news came almost a year after the federal government partnered with the province — at the time led by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals — to each invest \$110 million in the company as part of an overall investment of \$1.4 billion by Toyota.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [GM Oshawa](#), [Oshawa](#), [plant closings](#), [Retraining](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Women and minorities still at a disadvantage in U.S. solar industry



The ***U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study 2019*** was released by **The Solar Foundation**, in partnership with the **Solar Energy Industries Association** on May 6, reflecting a growing industry awareness of the need to promote inclusion. The 2019 study is based on survey responses from 377 employers and 398 employees in the winter of 2018, and reports on job satisfaction, career paths and progression, and wages.

Some highlights:

- Among the senior executives reported in the survey, 88% are white and 80% are men.
- Three of the top five recruitment methods rely on professional and personal networks – putting minority applicants at a disadvantage to be hired (Only 28% of Hispanic, Latino, and African American respondents reported that they found their jobs through a referral or by word of mouth, compared to 44% of white respondents).
- There is a 26% gender wage gap across all position levels. 37% of men earn in the range of \$31 to \$74 per hour, compared to only 28% of women. The median wage reported for men was \$29.19, and for women it was only \$21.62.

The full report is available [here](#) (registration required). This is the second Diversity Report, but the first, in 2017, is no longer available online. An accompanying ***Best Practices Guide*** is a brief guide aimed at HR managers to encourage diversity and inclusion programs. A summary of the report appears in ***Think Progress***.

Other reports which confirm the need for more diversity in the solar industry:

Solar Empowers Some (February 2019) focused on the state of diversity and inclusion in Baltimore and Washington D.C.

Advancing inclusion through clean energy jobs (April 2019) by the Brookings Institution goes beyond just the solar industry to include all clean energy and energy efficiency occupations. It reports that fewer than 20 percent of workers are women, and less than 10 percent are black, confirming that the clean energy economy workforce is older, dominated by male workers, and lacks racial diversity compared to all occupations nationally. This report, importantly, also documents skills and educational requirements, and is written in the context of labour market issues for a transition to a clean economy.

We have little comparable research in Canada. As reported in the ***WCR previously***, Bipasha Baruah at Western University in London researches the gender issue in the renewable energy industry, and in 2016 presented a report, ***Creating and Optimizing Employment Opportunities for Women in the Clean Energy Sector in Canada***, at Imagining Canada's Future, an SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Symposium at the University of Calgary.

Posted in **Green Economy, United States** | Tagged **disadvantaged workers, Gender Equality, hiring practices, Job Quality, renewable energy, Solar energy industry, United States, Wage gap** | [Leave a reply](#)

Saskatchewan Court of Appeal rules for federal carbon tax program

Posted on **May 6, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With implications across the country, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal handed down a 3-2 **decision** on May 3, ruling that the federal Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act (GGPPA) falls within federal government's "National Concern" constitutional power. The Saskatchewan Association for Environmental Law has compiled all the legal submission documents [here](#) ; the EcoFiscal Commission provides a summary of the 155-page Decision [here](#) .

Local coverage and reaction appeared in the *Regina Leader Post* (May 3) in "**Court of Appeal: Saskatchewan government loses carbon tax challenge** , and the Premier of Saskatchewan immediately declared that the province will appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, which it must do within 30 days. As the *Globe and Mail* points out, "**Saskatchewan court rules federal carbon tax constitutional in first of several legal challenges**" . According to a **CBC report**, the Premier of New Brunswick is still considering his options, but newly-elected Premier Jason Kenny of Alberta will join the Saskatchewan Supreme Court action. The Premier of Manitoba announced that his government **will not abandon its own court challenge**, which it **launched on April 3**. In Ontario, the Ford government is **aggressively promoting** its own battle over the carbon tax: four days of **hearings ended** on April 18th, and the Ontario Court of Appeal is expected to render its own decision on the constitutionality of the carbon tax in several months – possibly not until after the federal election in October 2019.

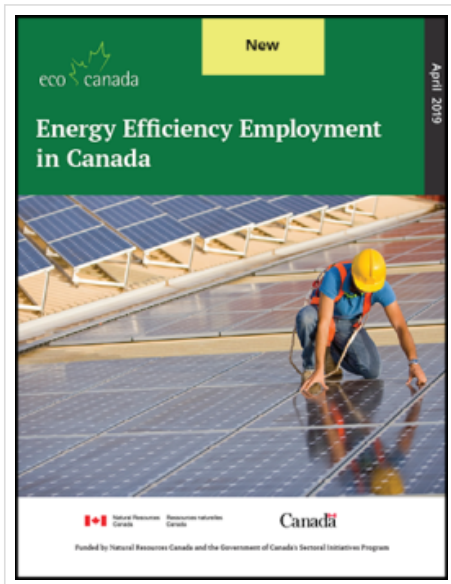
The political significance of the Saskatchewan decision: Aaron Wherry at CBC summarizes the general situation in "**The carbon tax survived Saskatchewan. That was the easy part**" (May 4). The *Globe and Mail* states what is a widely accepted opinion in its editorial, "**Why conservatives secretly love the carbon tax**": "Round One goes to Ottawa. But the courtroom war against the federal carbon tax continues – waged by a fraternity of conservative provincial governments with more of an eye on immediate political returns than ultimate legal outcomes."

Update: Three law professors- Jason MacLean (University of Saskatchewan), Nathalie Chalifour (University of Ottawa) and Sharon Mascher (University of Calgary) published a reaction to the Saskatchewan Court's decision on May 7 in *The Conversation*. "**Work on Climate not weaponizing the constitution**" takes issue with some of the finer legal points of the decision, but welcomes the Court's recognition of the urgency and scale of the climate emergency, and concludes: "We have to stop weaponizing the Constitution and start working together, across party lines at all levels of government, on urgent and ambitious climate action."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [Political parties and policies](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

436,000 workers in energy efficiency jobs in Canada in 2018 – more than twice oil and gas industry

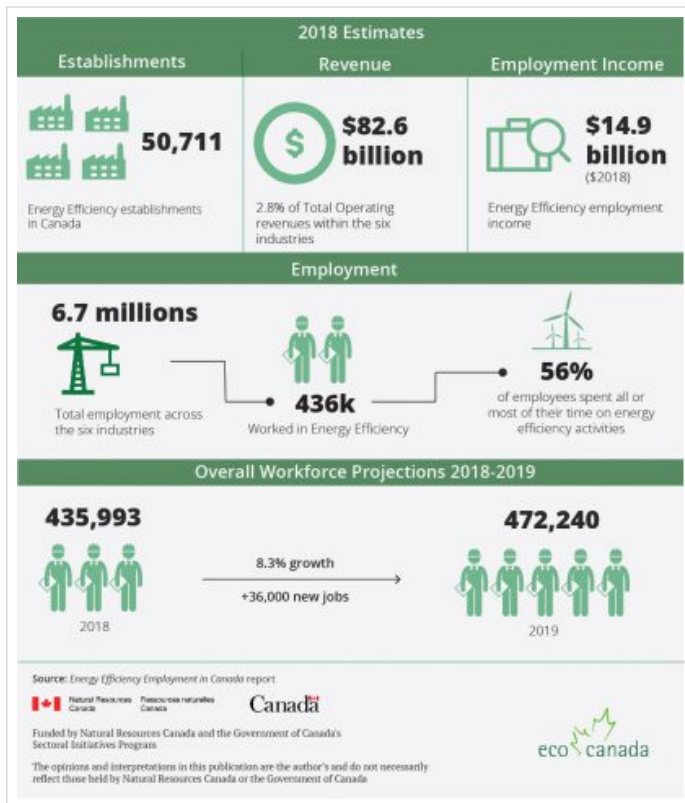
Posted on **May 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On April 29, Eco Canada released a new report, *Energy Efficiency Employment in Canada*, stating that “Canada’s energy efficiency goods and services sector directly employed an estimated 436,000 permanent workers in 2018 and is poised to grow by 8.3% this year, creating over 36,000 jobs.” According to the agency’s [press release](#), this is the first report of its kind in Canada to offer a comprehensive breakdown of revenue, employment figures, and hiring challenges. One of the key takeaways of the report is highlighted in an article in *The Energy Mix*: “**Energy Efficiency employs 436,000 Canadians – more than twice the total in oil and gas**”

Some highlights from *Energy Efficiency Employment in Canada*:

- Energy efficiency workers in 2018 were employed across approximately 51,000 business establishments across six industries: construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, professional and business services, utilities, and other services.
- Construction is by far the largest employer with 287,000 jobs across 39,000 establishments – 66% of the energy efficiency workforce. The next largest industry is wholesale trade, with 47,836 jobs (11%).
- Among the direct and permanent energy efficiency workforce across all industries, approximately 29% spent all their time, 27% spent most of their time, and 44% spent a portion of their time on energy efficiency activities.
- Just under one-fifth or 18% of workers were female, and 2% were Indigenous, (both figures lower than national workforce averages).
- Approximately 58% of energy efficiency workers were 35 or older.
- 42% of energy efficiency workers were between ages 18 and 34 (compared to 33% in the national workforce).
- Energy efficiency employment grew by almost 2.8% from 2017 to 2018, compared to 1.0% for all jobs nationally.
- At 2.3% of Canada’s economy, Canadian energy efficiency employment makes up a greater share of the economy than it does in the United States, at 1.9% .



The report is a result of a comprehensive survey conducted in the Fall 2018 with 1,853 business establishments, and also relies on Statistics Canada data. It tracks the methodology of the United States Energy Employment Report (USEER), to make comparisons consistent. The research is funded by Natural Resources Canada and the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiatives Program.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Construction Industry](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Green Jobs](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Job shifting effects of carbon pricing policy, with a focus on the Canadian construction industry

Posted on **May 1, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Construction and Carbon: The Impact of Climate Policy on Building in Canada in 2025 is a report released on May 1 by the Smart Prosperity Institute, with a title that doesn't reflect the full range of the study. The report actually models the effect of carbon pricing on GDP and employment in six sectors, although construction is the focal point since the research was financed by the **Canadian Building Trades Unions**. Author Mike Moffatt uses the general equilibrium model **gTech** to project two scenarios for the medium term (2025) : a "business as usual" case (which assumes federal and provincial carbon policies as they existed in 2018) and an "aggressive" case, which assumes carbon prices increasing over time so that Canada would achieve its Paris Agreement commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030.

Smart Prosperity emphasizes that "the construction sector is one of the 'winners' of carbon pricing, as escalating carbon prices unleash a wave of business and household investment." Specifically, raising the stringency of carbon prices (the aggressive scenario) shows that the total number of jobs in Canada would increase by an 39,500 – 19,000 of which would

be in construction, and 55,000 of which would be in services. These gains are offset by job losses in the other sectors: utilities, resources, manufacturing, and transportation.



Projections are broken down by province: showing that for construction jobs, Saskatchewan would see the greatest growth, followed by Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, Alberta, and British Columbia.

The report also provides forecasts for: Investment by sector; Impact of Higher Carbon Policies on Business Investment by Type (e.g. renewable energy, CCS, public transit); and Impact of Higher Carbon Policies on Household Investment by Type (building efficiency, low-carbon vehicles).

The differentiated effect of carbon taxes by sector is a theme explored in an earlier Smart Prosperity working paper [Do Carbon Taxes Kill Jobs? Firm-Level Evidence from British Columbia](#), released in March 2019 as part of the [Clean Economy Working Paper series](#). The Smart Prosperity Institute is based at the University of Ottawa.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [Construction Industry](#), [employment impacts](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The potential of worker ownership to finance Just Transition – and other inspiring Canadian examples

Posted on [April 30, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Saskatchewan's *Briarpatch* magazine has published a [Special Issue on Just Transition](#). It is a treasure trove of inspiring on-the-ground perspectives and information from Canadians working for an economic Just Transition.

All the articles are worth reading, but here are some highlights:

[“How will we pay for a Just Transition”](#) expresses doubt that we can rely on the usual government policies to finance meaningful transition – for example, it reviews the One Million Climate Jobs campaign of the Green Economy Network and

the inadequate response by the Trudeau government. Instead, the article provides examples of more innovative models of worker ownership and cooperation which support redistribution of wealth and financial capital. First, [The Working World](#), which launched in 2015 in Buenos Aires to finance employee ownership of non-extractive businesses, and now administers a “financial commons” [Peer Network](#). The Working World has inspired other projects, such as the Just Transition Loan Fund and Incubator and the [Reinvest in Our Power projects](#), being launched by the [U.S. Climate Justice Alliance](#). The article discusses the role of philanthropy, specifically the U.S. [Chorus Foundation](#), which states that it “works for a just transition to a regenerative economy in the United States.” In Canada, a much smaller similar philanthropic initiative is the [Resource Movement](#), a project of Tides Canada, which gathers “young people with wealth and class privilege working towards the equitable distribution of wealth, land and power.”

Other articles:

- [“What’s in a Just Transition”](#), which reports on a roundtable of social justice activists from different movements (immigrant, first nations, climate justice, and BlueGreen Canada). Speakers provide their own definitions of Just Transition, and cite examples, including: Canada’s [Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities](#); [Lubicon Solar](#), a renewable energy project on First Nations territory in Alberta’s Peace River; the [Black Mesa Coalition](#) of the Navajo Nation; and [Souladarity](#), an energy democracy coalition in Highland Park, near Detroit.
- [“This is what Indigenous energy sovereignty looks like”](#) which profiles Indigenous Climate Action and Lubicon Solar;
- [“Decentralizing climate justice in Halifax”](#), which describes the climate justice community of the city, including the Imagining 2030 Network;
- [“Bridging the gap with Saskatchewan’s coal communities: A just transition case study”](#) a brief description of the interaction between climate activists and 17 people in the coal mining communities of Estevan and Coronach (the full report, [The Future of Coal in Saskatchewan](#), was published by Climate Justice Saskatoon in late 2018);
- [“Confronting economic barriers to a Just Transition”](#), a conversation amongst six economists from Concordia, McGill, York, and St.-Paul University, as well as the Co-Executive Director of The Leap. It ends with this quote: “A just transition in Canada may seem like a huge, insurmountable task,” “But actually, if you look, there are so many stories of deindustrialization, of reinvention, of shifting economies, of redistributions, of land reform. Our imagination can be fuelled by sharing these stories. We need to recuperate these histories of transformation to help us remember what’s possible.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Justice](#), [cooperative enterprises](#), [First Nations](#), [Green Finance](#), [Just Transition](#), [worker ownership](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations for Just Transition coal phase-out in Europe

Posted on [April 30, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Phasing out coal – a just transition approach was released as a Working Paper by the European Trade Union Institute in April – the latest of several publications on the topic by ETUI Senior Researcher and ACW associate Béla Galgóczi . Following a summary of the role of coal in the European economy and the current employment structure of the broader coal sector, the paper provides an up-to-date summary of energy policies and just transition policies in France, Germany, Poland and Spain, and also looks at lessons learned from past phase-out experiences in the Ruhr Valley of Germany, Hazelwood coal plant in Australia, and ENEL, Italy. He notes that a clear distinction should be made between hard coal regions, like the German Ruhr or Silesia in Poland, which are strongly-industrialized regions with a high level of urbanization and a greater economic diversity, and brown coal regions such as German Lusatia or the Polish Lodzkie region, which are rural areas with low population densities and employment concentrated in the mining and energy sectors. The paper concludes that successful just transition requires, amongst other things: specific and targeted just coal transition policies with government involvement at the central and regional level; a properly-funded, specific mine closure agency, or a specialized agency for employment transitions for several years; individualized active labour market policies and personal coaching; and active EU-level financial support.

The author has made similar arguments in a 5-page ETUI Policy Brief, **From Paris to Katowice: the EU needs to step up its game on climate change and set its own just transition framework** (2018), and in his detailed report published by the ILO in October 2018 : **Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All**, previously **summarized in the WCR**.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Australia, coal phase-out, Germany, Just Transition, Poland** | [Leave a reply](#)

Our Time launches youth Campaign for a Green New Deal in Canada

Posted on **April 26, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On April 17, young people and millennials **launched** a new national campaign to work for a Green New Deal for Canada, in a “massive economic and social mobilization”. The stated goal of the group, **Our Time**, is “to organize and mobilize a generational alliance of young and millennial voters that’s big enough and bold enough to push politicians to support a Green New Deal in the lead up to the 2019 election.”

Our Time is supported by 350.org and launches with “hub groups” already established in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, and Halifax. (A brief article by the Halifax organizer is [here](#)). It aims to form a national network from across different communities, causes, movements, and generations –it states clearly that older people are welcome in a supporting role.

“**What do we mean when we say we want a “Green New Deal for Canada?”** traces the growth of the priorities, from the Good Work Guarantee outlined in December 2018 to the policies under consideration as of March 2019. These include four pillars for a GND for Canada: “it meets the scale and urgency of the climate crisis; it creates millions of good jobs; it enshrines dignity, justice, and equity for all, ensuring climate solutions lift up all communities and reflect the reality that frontline, marginalized and Indigenous communities are bearing the brunt of fossil fuel and climate impacts; it works in service of real reconciliation — respecting the rights, title and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples.”

The Our Time campaign has been described in “**As Youth-Led Campaign Kicks Off, Poll Shows Majority of Canadians Want a Green New Deal, Too**” in *Common Dreams* (citing a North99 poll on Canadian attitudes to Green New Deal in early April 2019, [here](#)). Another recent poll, by Ipsos was reported in “**Climate And Environment Emerge As Top**

Public Concerns Before Canadian, Australian Elections” in *The Energy Mix* (April 24) , and shows the timeliness of the Our Time focus on political action. Ipsos reports that Canadian concern about climate change at 48% is higher than the global average (37%), and Canadians ranked their top five policy issues as: health care, the economy, housing, taxes, and climate change (in that order).

Climate activism in Quebec: An update on activism in **Quebec’s social contract for the climate** comes in **“Quebec’s ‘Climate Spring’ speaks to broad support for environmental action”** published in *iPolitics* on April 17. “In the span of a few months, 317 Quebec municipalities, representing almost 74 per cent of the population of Quebec, have endorsed a Declaration of Climate Emergency; close to 268,000 individuals have **signed a pact** to individually and collectively minimize their footprint and pushing for the adoption of a climate law; and **a class action on behalf of all Quebecers 35** and under has been filed against the federal government for inaction on the climate file. Thousands marched twice in the bitter cold of late 2018 to demand climate action.” And as the **WCR reported**, the greatest turnout in Canada’s Fridays for Future demonstrations on March 15 was in Montreal, with 150,000 marchers . The presence of the Extinction Rebellion in Quebec is reported by the Montreal Gazette in **“The clock is ticking and environmentalists aren’t going to take it anymore”** (April 22). Extinction Rebellion held its first meetings in Montreal in January, held workshops on civil disobedience and on the psychological toll of climate change, and demonstrated in Montreal on April 17. The article also profiles Sara Montpetit, a 17-year-old student who “has emerged as Montreal’s answer to Greta Thunberg” and has been **leading weekly strikes** as part of the Fridays for Future movement. Finally, the article highlights the French-language website **Chantiers de la Duc** which proposes 11 action plans, related to the **Citizens’ Declaration of Climate Emergency**.



Youth climate activism across Canada keeps growing: WCR covered Canadian youth climate activism for the March 15th global Fridays for Future strike [here](#) . Some more recent articles have appeared in advance of the **Canada-wide Fridays for Future strike scheduled for May 3** :

“Meet the youth climate strikers leading Canada’s Fridays for Future movement” from Ecojustice (April 24)

“Student organizers report back on March 15 climate strike” in *Rabble.ca* (March 21)

“2019 is the year young people rise for climate justice” in *Medium* (April 9) – which describes the **Powershift: Young and Rising** event in Ottawa in February 2019.

“Young people banding together to demand more action on climate change” in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* (April 22) – which includes the Halifax activities of the global youth climate group **iMatter**.

Amazon employees use their power as shareholders to request corporate policies on climate change

Posted on [April 25, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



In what a [New York Times article](#) characterizes as “the largest employee-driven movement on climate change to take place in the influential tech industry”, almost 7,000 employees of tech giant Amazon have now signed their names to an [Open Letter](#) to Jeff Bezos and the Amazon Board of Directors, released on April 10. The Letter states: “we ask that you adopt the climate plan shareholder resolution and release a company-wide climate plan that incorporates the principles outlined in this letter.” It then outlines a thorough list of desired actions, including: a complete transition away from fossil fuels rather than relying on carbon offsets; prioritization of climate impact when making business decisions; prioritizing the most vulnerable communities in pollution reduction initiatives related to Amazon locations; and “fair treatment of all employees during climate disruptions and extreme weather events. Unsafe or inaccessible workplaces should not be a reason to withhold pay, terminate, or otherwise penalize employees—including hourly and contract workers.” Amazon Employees for Climate Justice provides updates at their [Twitter account here](#).

According to [an article in Gizmodo](#): “Employees from seemingly every background and department have signed on, from UX designers to biz dev managers to systems development engineers and beyond. A number of senior employees are on board, too—in addition to the VP, at the time of writing, I counted at least eight directors on the list. It's part of [a growing trend towards worker advocacy in the tech industry](#), coming on the heels of the Google Walkout for Change and the We Won't Build It effort, also at Amazon.” The culture of empowerment behind the Open Letter is evident in an interview published in Gizmodo, [“One of the Amazon Workers Behind the Push to Get Jeff Bezos to Address Climate Change Speaks Out”](#). [Wired](#) also describes the culture of shareholder activism in [“Amazon Employees Try A New Form Of Activism, As Shareholders”](#).

Amazon has more than 65,000 corporate and tech employees in the United States, who are awarded shares as part of their compensation program. In late November and early December, 2018, 16 current and former Amazon employees exercised their rights as shareholders by tabling a shareholder resolution – which has been seen as the trigger for Amazon's Shipment Zero initiative, a vision to make all Amazon shipments net-zero carbon, with 50 percent of all shipments net zero by 2030. Amazon's response to the latest Open Letter is partly reproduced in the Gizmodo article, and states: “We have a long history of commitment to sustainability through innovative programs such as [Frustration Free Packaging](#), [Ship in Own Container](#), our [network of solar and wind farms](#), [solar on our fulfillment center rooftops](#), [investments in the circular economy](#) with the Closed Loop Fund, and numerous other initiatives happening every day by teams across Amazon. In operations alone, we have over 200 scientists, engineers, and product designers dedicated exclusively to inventing new ways to leverage our scale for the good of customers and the planet. We have a long term commitment to powering our global infrastructure using 100% renewable energy.” Amazon's [corporate website](#) details all its sustainability efforts – and on April 8th, just before the Open Letter was published, a [press release](#)

announced 3 new wind energy projects, to augment the current level of 50% renewable energy power for the Automated Web Services part of the business.

Posted in [Business Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Amazon](#), [attitudes to climate change](#), [employee initiatives](#), [Information Technology](#), [Shareholder Activism](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New York City announces its Green New Deal – including innovative building efficiency requirements and job creation

Posted on **April 24, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a [press release on April 22](#), New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced “New York City’s Green New Deal, a bold and audacious plan to attack global warming on all fronts....The City is going after the largest source of emissions in New York by mandating that all large existing buildings cut their emissions – a global first. In addition, the Administration will convert government operations to 100 percent clean electricity, implement a plan to ban inefficient all-glass buildings that waste energy and reduce vehicle emissions.” The full range of Green New Deal policies are laid out in [OneNYC 2050: Building a Strong and Fair City](#), which commits to carbon neutrality by 2050, and 100% clean electricity. The full One NYC strategic plan is comprised of 9 volumes, including Volume 3: [An Inclusive Economy](#), which acknowledges the shifting, precarious labour market and envisions green jobs in a fairer, more equitable environment.



— Photo by Anthony Quintano, from Flickr

A global first – Energy Efficiency mandates for existing buildings: The *Climate Mobilization Act*, passed by New York City Council on April 18, lays out the “global first” of regulation of the energy efficiency of existing buildings. Officially called **Introduction 1253-C** (unofficially called the “Dirty Buildings Bill”), 1253-C governs approximately 50,000 existing large and mid-sized buildings- those over 25,000 sq feet- which are estimated to account for 50% of building emissions. The bill categorizes these buildings by size and use (with exemptions for non-profits, hospitals, religious buildings, rent-controlled housing and low-rise residential buildings) and sets emissions caps for each category. Buildings which exceed their caps will be subject to substantial fines, beginning in 2024. The goal is to cut emissions by 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050.

Seen as historic and innovative, the energy efficiency provisions have been highlighted and summarized in many outlets: “**New York City Sets Ambitious Climate Rules for Its Biggest Emitters: Buildings**” in *Inside Climate News*; “**Big Buildings Hurt the Climate. New York City Hopes to Change That**” in the *New York Times* (April 17); “**A New Day in New York’: City Council Passes Sweeping Climate Bill**” in *Common Dreams*; and best of all, “**New York City’s newly passed Green New Deal, explained**” (April 23) in *Resilience*, (originally [posted in Grist](#) on April 18).

Job Creation in Retrofitting and Energy Efficiency: The [New York City Central Labor Council](#) strongly supports [Introduction 1253-C](#) and cites job creation estimates drawn from [Constructing a Greener New York, Building By Building](#), a new report commissioned by Climate Works for All. The report found that 1253-C would create 23,627 direct construction jobs per year in retrofitting, and 16,995 indirect jobs per year in building operation and maintenance, manufacturing and professional services. The report includes a technical appendix which details how it calculated the job estimates, based on the job multipliers developed by Robert Pollin and Jeanette Wicks-Lam at the University of Massachusetts Political Economy Research Institute.

The Mayor's [Green New Deal press release](#) also states "The City, working with partners, will pursue 100 percent carbon-free electricity supply for City government operations with the building of a new connection linking New York City to zero-emission Canadian hydropower. Negotiations will begin right away, with the goal of striking a deal by the end of 2020 and powering city operations entirely with renewable sources of electricity within five years." *The National Observer* describes reaction from Quebec and Hydro Quebec in "[New York City's Green New Deal music to Quebec's Ears](#)" (April 23).

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [energy efficiency](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Job Creation](#), [New York City](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta elects United Conservative Party, promising a new climate policy, and to fight for the oil and gas industry

Posted on [April 17, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Citizens of the province of Alberta woke up to a new government on April 17th, with the election of the United Conservative Party (UCP), led by Jason Kenney. After what *Macleans* magazine called "[The most visceral Alberta election campaign in memory](#)" and CBC called "[toxic](#)" and "[divisive](#)", the UCP election platform, [Alberta Strong and Free](#) will begin to unfold, based on the promise to "fight without relent to build pipelines. We will stand up for Alberta and demand a fair deal in Canada. We will fight back against the foreign funded special interests who are trying to landlock our energy."

Ontarians will recognize much of the same rhetoric as that of the Doug Ford Conservative government, including cancellation of the "[job-killing carbon tax](#)"; an "[open for business](#)" approach to "cut red tape", including worker protection; and [creating jobs](#) – in Alberta's case, oil and gas jobs.

The CBC analysis of the election outlines further implications for the rest of Canada in "[Jason Kenney won big — and the Ottawa-Alberta relationship is about to get unruly](#)", which highlights Kenney's combative style, his antipathy to the current Liberal government of Justin Trudeau, and his close connections with the federal Conservative party (having served in Stephen Harper's government). *The National Observer*, on the morning after, sums up what to expect: "[Jason Kenney's United Conservatives issue warning to Suzuki Foundation after winning Alberta majority](#)", which also touches on what progressives can expect: "... the premier-designate delivered a warning to environmentalists, accusing them of being funded by foreign interests who are trying to shut down the Alberta oil and gas industry. He pledged to

launch a public inquiry into their activities, singling out several charitable organizations including the [David Suzuki Foundation](#) and the [Tides Foundation](#) ...”

From Alberta: [Calgary Herald election coverage](#) is triumphant, including Columnist Chris Varcoe with “[Expectations are high as Kenney gives voice to Alberta’s angst](#)”; Lucia Corbella with “[Kenney the Ironman performs miracle on the Prairies](#)”. In “[Jason Kenney’s united right wins big, dashing NDP dreams of a Rachel Notley repeat](#)”, David Staples from the *Edmonton Journal* acknowledges that growing the oil industry is “a difficult, complex, multi-dimensional battle” but “when it comes to oil and gas policy Alberta hasn’t been this united in a generation.” The majority of his Opinion piece discusses “the malignant force that helped to divide us, the “Tar Sands campaign” which saw tens of millions in funding coming from U.S. foundations dedicated to demonizing the oilsands and landlocking Alberta oil.” He calls on the NDP to support the UCP plan for a public inquiry into “foreign interference” and states that the NDP, the federal Liberals, and groups such as the Pembina Institute and Greenpeace are tarnished by association with that “Tar Sands Campaign”.

Union voices were strong in the Alberta Election: The Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) was extremely active in support of the NDP, with a “[Next Alberta](#)” campaign built around the AFL [12 Point Plan](#). With a very pragmatic orientation, the Plan makes no mention of “Just Transition” or coal phase-out, and emissions reduction is proposed in these terms: “Reduce carbon emissions, as much as possible, from each barrel of oil produced in Alberta so, we can continue to access markets with increasingly stringent emission standards. ...Our goal should be to make sure that Alberta is last heavy oil producer standing in an increasingly carbon constrained world.” The AFL also commissioned a report by Hugh Mackenzie: [The Employment Impact of Election Promises: Analysis of budgetary scenarios of UCP and NDP platforms](#), which concluded: “Under the Notley budget plan, 5500 jobs would be lost. Under the Kenny budget plan between 58,000-85,000 jobs would be lost – more than were lost in the recession of 2015-16.” President of the AFL, Gil McGowan, discussed the report in an Opinion Piece, “[How NOT to fix Alberta’s hurting jobs economy](#)” in *The Tye*.

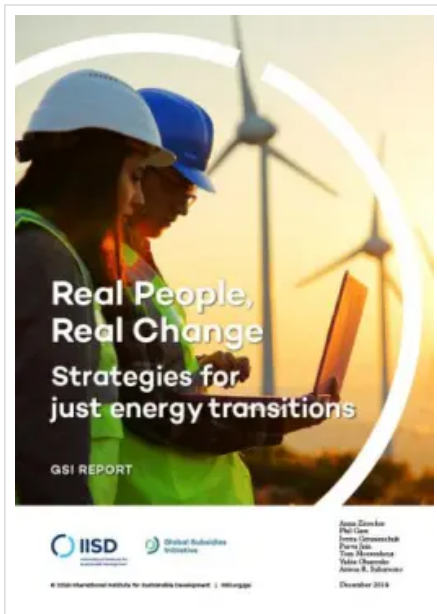
Unifor, the union which represents thousands of workers at oil producers Suncor, Imperial, Husky and Shell, also mounted an active [Unifor Votes](#) campaign which acknowledges that “in oil and gas, our biggest customer has become our biggest competitor”. Unifor calls for policies for “Next Generation Energy Jobs” to invest in new pipeline infrastructure ; diversify and upgrade in the oil and gas sector and “ Use our resource wealth as a springboard to the future.”

Stepping back, here are some of the articles which appeared during the election campaign, and which summarize the environmental and economic issues: “[Eleven Ignored Issues that Albertans Should Think about Before They Vote](#)” (April 12), by Andrew Nikoforuk, outlining : the risks of global oil price volatility; the need for economic diversification; the growing fiscal pressure on oil-producing states; the cost of climate change; the need to promote a leaner and more local economy as opposed to the boom-and-bust one; Alberta’s failure to collect its fair share of profits from bitumen production; and, hanging over them all, the risk of economic collapse.” In “[Analysis: Alberta Misses Out On Grown-Up Conversation About Fossil Transition](#)”, Mitchell Beer of *The Energy Mix* compiles the statements from Nikoforuk, as well as economists Mark Jaccard, Vaclav Smil, and columnist Gary Mason, concluding with: “ Smart, resourceful, and tech-enabled a place as it is, “too many in Alberta want to believe that a new pipeline will fix all that ails the province,” Mason writes . “That’s a fantasy, one that even the political leaders running to govern the province understand (but won’t admit publicly).” And [several blogs from the Parkland Institute](#) examine the implications for workers, including “[UCP Platform will drive down wages](#)” .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Alberta Federation of Labour](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Political parties and policies](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition guidebook includes case studies, methods of measuring employment impacts

Posted on [April 16, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Called both a strategy document and a guidebook, *Real People Real Change: Strategies for Just Energy Transitions* was officially launched at the Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue event on April 10, although published by The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in December 2018. The IISD says “it is intended to support governments of both developed and developing countries in their efforts to make energy transitions just. It brings together political and communications strategies for a just transition, building on research and case studies of energy transitions that have happened or that are happening in Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Poland and Ukraine.” The report highlights what it calls “a common “4C” framework that has been critical to several successful transitions: understanding the local context; identifying champions that can drive transition with various groups; making the case through transparent and effective stakeholder engagement; and developing complementary policies that support those who will be directly impacted by transition.

The report also includes *Annex 1: Quantitative approaches for estimating employment impacts*, which provides a brief overview and critical analysis of the unique challenges of measuring the transition pathway through its stages.

The **5th Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue (BETD)** included a side event, *Shifting to Below 2°C Economies: Strategies for just energy transitions*, summarized [here](#). Amongst the speakers: Hassan Youssef, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, and Samantha Smith, Director of the Just Transition Centre.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **case studies, employment impacts, employment modelling, Just Transition** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian banks still investing in yesterday's economy – fossil fuels

Posted on **April 11, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Banking on Climate Change – Fossil Fuel Finance Report Card 2019, the 10th annual report by BankTrack and a coalition of advocacy groups, has been expanded to include coal and gas investors, as well as oil, as it ranks and exposes the investment practices of 33 of the world's largest banks. The newly-released report for this year reveals that \$1.9 trillion has been invested in these fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement, with the four biggest investors all U.S. banks – JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citi and Bank of America. But Canadian banks rank high: RBC ranks fifth, TD ranks 8th, Scotiabank ranks 9th, and Bank of Montreal ranks 15th. Among those investing in tar sands oil: “five of the top six tar sands bankers between 2016 and 2018 are Canadian, with RBC and TD by far the two worst.”

In addition to the investment tallies, the report analyzes the banks' performance on human rights, particularly Indigenous rights, as it relates to the impacts of specific fossil fuel projects, and climate change in general. The report also describes key themes, such as tar sands investment, Arctic oil, and fracking.

In response to the Banking on Climate Change report, SumofUs has mounted an online petition ***It's time for TD, RBC and Scotiabank stop funding climate chaos***. An Opinion piece in *The Tyee*, **“How Citizens can stop the big five”** calls for a citizens strike on Canadian banks – particularly by young people and future mortgage investors, and points out the alternatives: credit unions, non-bank mortgage brokers, and ethical investment funds, (such as **Genus Capital** of Vancouver). But while individual Canadians can make ethical choices, that doesn't seem to be the path of our public pension plan, the **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board**, which manages \$356.1 billion of our savings. On March 19, **Reuters reported** that the CPPIB will invest \$1.34 billion to obtain a 35% share in a \$3.8 billion joint venture with U.S. energy firm Williams to finance gas pipeline assets in the Marcellus and Utica shale basins.

Investment attitudes are shifting away from fossils: The Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund continues to lead the way: In March, **it announced** it would divest almost \$8 billion in investments in 134 companies that explore for oil and gas; in April, it announced it will invest in renewable energy projects that are not listed on stock markets – a huge market and a significant signal to the investment community, as described in **“Historic breakthrough’: Norway's giant oil fund dives into renewables”** in *The Guardian* (April 5).

In Canada, with **the Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance** scheduled to report shortly, the Bank of Canada **announced** on March 27 that it has joined the **Central Banks' and Supervisors' Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS)**, an international body established in December 2017 to promote best practices in climate risk management for the financial sector. (This is despite the fact that Bank of Canada Governor Stephen Poloz discussed the vulnerabilities and risks in Canada's financial system in his **year-end progress report** in December 2018 – without ever mentioning climate change.) In the U.S., on March 25, the head of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco released **Climate Change and the Federal Reserve**, which states: “In this century, three key forces are transforming the economy: a demographic shift toward an older population, rapid advances in technology, and climate change.” A discussion of both these developments appears in **“Bank of Canada commits to probing climate liabilities”** in *The National Observer* (March 27).

And if we needed more proof that coal is a dying industry: The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis released **Over 100 Global Financial Institutions Are Exiting Coal, With More to Come** in February, drawing on the ongoing and growing **list of banks** which have stopped investing in new coal development, as maintained by BankTrack. The detailed IEEFA report states that “34 coal divestment/restriction policy announcements have been made by globally significant financial institutions since the start of 2018. In the first nine weeks of 2019, there have been five new

announcements of banks and insurers divesting from coal. Global capital is fleeing the thermal coal sector.” Proof: global mining giant Glencore announced on February 20 that it would cap its coal production at current levels in “[Furthering Our Commitment to the Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy](#).”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Energy Investment](#), [Green Investment](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [2 Replies](#)

English language version of Germany’s Coal Transition Report now available, with independent analysis of employment impacts

Posted on [April 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The final [report of the German Commission for Growth, Structural Change and Employment \(Coal Exit Commission\)](#) was delivered in January 2019, and is now available in [an English language version](#). The [Clean Energy Wire](#) is a German news service written in English, and updates the implementation of the Report’s recommendations. For example, [an article from April 4](#) states that Germany’s federal government and coal mining states have agreed on a programme worth 260 million euros to provide fast support to regions affected by the coal exit – a first step in the estimated 40 billion euros needed over the next 20 years. On April 8, it published “[Mining union wants more efforts to unleash energy transition’s job potentials](#)”, providing an English language summary of German statements by the leader of IG BCE.

The Wuppertal Institute commented on the Commission’s findings and made its own recommendations in [Assessment of the Results of the Commission on Structural Change](#). The report commends the Commission for finding a consensus path forward amidst very strong competing interests, but looking ahead, it calls for public education and acceptance, as well as policy tools “to push ahead vigorously with the expansion of renewable energies, to create the necessary framework conditions with the expansion of the electricity grid and to implement a holistic approach to the energy transition which, above all, takes the potential of energy efficiency into account to a much greater extent than before.”



Also in the wake of the Coal Exit Commission report, researchers at the [German Institute for Economic Research](#), the [Wuppertal Institute](#) and the [Ecologic Institute](#) released a detailed joint report explaining why the coal phase-out is needed and how it can become a success. It also provides facts and figures on the German coal industry, including a list of all large coal plants. The summary press release is [here](#). [Phasing Out Coal in the German Energy Sector: Interdependencies, Challenges And Potential Solutions](#) argues that the benefits of phasing out coal exceed the costs and will provide new economic opportunities, with jobs in demand-management, storage, “power-to-x applications”, and efficiency technologies. Of particular interest is Section 4 of the report, which includes statistics and discussion of employment effects. Approximately 18,500 persons are employed directly in lignite-fired power plants and lignite mining, with another 4,000 to 8,000 in coal-fired power plants. The report finds that, by 2030, approximately two thirds of the direct employees would be eligible for normal retirement, and another 10% would be eligible for early retirement schemes at the age of 55. For younger employees, some jobs will be created in dismantling power plants and for remediation. For others who will need to find new jobs, the report holds up the example of Vattenfall in Berlin, where trainees under a rotation scheme can learn different skills in various functions. The report acknowledges that the wage level in the lignite industry is far higher than comparable new employment. It also discusses the availability of EU, German Government and Federal

State funds to finance structural change in the lignite regions. EU support includes policy support under the [Platform for Coal Regions in Transition](#), established in December 2017, as well as [EU funds](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Germany](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta election on April 16: economy and the environment face a better future with an NDP win

Posted on [April 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Alberta provincial election](#) takes place on April 16 – in an atmosphere of economic anxiety, as summarized by [“Albertans prepare to elect a government in a climate of deep anxiety”](#) and [“No pedal to floor: Experts say no government can bring back Alberta bitumen boom”](#). And [Macleans](#) sums up election coverage in [“The most visceral Alberta election campaign in memory”](#).



Given the radically different policies and futures at stake, the Alberta Federation of Labour has been active in this election campaign, with a [“Next Alberta”](#) campaign and an information rich website. Most recently, the AFL commissioned and released a report by Hugh Mackenzie: [The Employment Impact of Election Promises: Analysis of budgetary scenarios of UCP and NDP platforms](#). The report compares the economic and employment impacts over the next four years of the fiscal scenarios implied by the strategy of the Rachel Notley NDP government, as set out in its [2018 Budget](#), and the election platform of Jason Kenney’s United Conservative Party (UCP), [Getting Alberta Back to Work](#). Mackenzie’s conclusion: “Under the Notley budget plan, 5500 jobs would be lost. Under the Kenny budget plan between 58,000-85,000 jobs would be lost – more than were lost in the recession of 2015-16.”

President of the AFL, Gil McGowan, discusses the report in an Opinion Piece, [“How NOT to fix Alberta’s hurting jobs economy”](#) in The Tyee. He states: “The UCP plan, which hollows out government revenue with a large corporate tax cut, requires more than \$7 billion in annual program spending to be cut by the fourth year of the UCP’s plan, in order to meet their goal of eliminating the deficit by 2023. The fiscal strategy proposed by Jason Kenney would cut employment in Alberta by nearly 60,000 over a four-year period, with 27,700 job losses in the public sector and 30,600 job losses in the private sector.

The UCP’s stated longer-term objective of reducing Alberta’s per capita public services investment to the level in B.C. would push job losses even higher, to a total of nearly 85,000.

Looking at the likely bottom-line impacts, it is clear that the point of the UCP's fiscal strategy is not to address the deficit or debt, since the UCP's stated debt load after four years of \$86 billion is not far off from the NDP projection of \$95 billion. The big difference between the NDP and the UCP is that the NDP will spend on people, while the UCP will spend on tax breaks for corporations."

From an environmental perspective, *The Narwhal* has published thoughtful discussions of the issues at stake in the Alberta election: "[Notley vs. Kenney on how to deal with Alberta's 167,000 inactive and abandoned oil and gas wells](#)" (April 3) and "[Eight environmental issues at stake in the Alberta election \(that are not pipelines\)](#)" (April 11) – including reclamation and oil and gas liabilities, carbon taxes, methane regulation, energy efficiency, and the oilsands emissions cap.

Another substantial discussion comes from the Pembina Institute blog, "[Climate policy is economic policy: party platforms must address climate action](#)", which states, "Both parties need to commit to more to protect the current and future interests of Albertans, and prepare the province for a 21st-century economy." The Pembina outlined its preferred vision in March, "[Energy Policy Leadership in Alberta](#)."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [jobs vs environment](#), [Political parties and policies](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Amnesty International campaign calls for better mining, manufacture, and disposal of electric vehicle batteries

Posted on [April 10, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

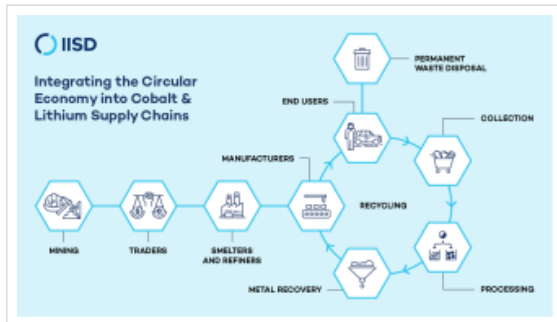


While the [Nordic EV Summit](#) in March 2019 showcased progress on the adoption of electric vehicles, Amnesty International used that backdrop to [issue a challenge](#) to leaders in the electric vehicle industry – to produce the world's first completely ethical battery, free of human rights abuses within its supply chain, within five years.

It is not news that the mining of cobalt and lithium, the two key minerals in batteries, has been linked to human rights abuses, environmental pollution, ecosystem destruction and indigenous rights violations. Amnesty was amongst the first to document the child labour and human rights abuses with a report [This is what we die for](#) in 2016, updated in 2017 by an article, "[The Dark Side of Electric Cars: Exploitative Labor Practices](#)". More recently, "[Indigenous people's livelihoods at risk in scramble for lithium, the new white gold](#)" appeared in *The Ethical Corporation* (April 9), describing the human rights situation in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, which hold 60% of the world's lithium reserves. The environmental impacts of deep-sea mining are also of concern.

In addition to the mining of raw materials, battery manufacturing has a high carbon footprint, with most of the current manufacturing concentrated in China, South Korea and Japan, where electricity generation remains dependent on coal and other polluting sources of power.

Finally, the issue of electronic waste, including batteries, has been the subject of several reports: From the International Labour Organization : in 2012, [Global Impact of E-waste: Addressing the Challenge](#) and more recently, [Decent work in the management of electrical and electronic waste \(e-waste\)](#) , an Issues paper produced for a Global Dialogue Forum on Decent Work in the Management of Electrical and Electronic Waste in April 2019. The 2019 report provides estimates of the workforce involved in some countries – led by China, with an estimated 690,000 workers in 2007, followed by up to 100,000 in Nigeria , followed by 60,000 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The report deals mainly with occupational health and safety issues and includes an overview of international e-waste regulation, as well as case studies of the U.S., Argentina, China, India, Japan, Nigeria. Similar discussions appear in [A New Circular Vision for Electronics Time for a Global Reboot](#) , released by the E-waste Coalition at the 2019 World Economic Forum, and in a blog, [Dead Batteries deserve a Second Life](#) published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development on April 9.



Clearly, there are labour and environmental problems related to lithium-ion batteries and the green vehicles and electronic devices they power. Recognizing all these concerns, the new Amnesty International campaign is calling for: improvement in human rights practices in mining, and a prohibition on commercial deep-sea mining; disclosure and accounting for carbon in manufacturing, and for legal protection and enforcement of workplace rights such as health, equality and non-discrimination; finally for products to be designed and regulated to encourage re-use and penalize waste, with prevention of illegal or dangerous export and dumping of batteries.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [e-waste](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [electronic waste](#), [electronics industry](#), [Labour Rights](#), [Lithium Ion Batteries](#), [mining industry](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Recycling](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian government funds new Climate Change research network

Posted on [April 10, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Environment and Climate Change Canada announced a new consortium on April 9, to be called the [Pan-Canadian Expert Collaboration](#), and to be chaired by [Blair Feltmate](#) , Head of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo. The Collaboration brings together fifteen Canadian research institutes, to provide independent, informed advice to policy-makers, mainly on the issues of clean energy, carbon pricing and adaptation. The researchers were chosen after an extensive competition, begun in October 2018, and the project will be eligible to receive up to \$20 million over five years – assuming the Liberal government remains in power in Ottawa after the 2019 election.

The real nitty-gritty about the goals of the initiative are contained in the [Discussion Paper](#) issued to solicit interest in the competition . The briefer government [Backgrounder](#) on April 9 sets out the goals of the Collaboration, and lists the fifteen research organizations chosen to participate. **The goals:** “provide credible and authoritative advice to Canadians and their governments; develop and provide independent and expert-driven analysis to help Canada move toward clean growth in all sectors and regions of the country; develop advice and analysis spanning climate change mitigation, adaptation, and clean growth; set its own agenda and operate independently from government; and fill existing information gaps and help translate research into useful information for policy decision-making.”

The membership:

- [Adaptation to Climate Change Team, Simon Fraser University](#) ;
- [Alberta Innovates](#) ;
- [Canada's Ecofiscal Commission](#) ;
- [Canadian Energy Systems Analysis Research, University of Calgary](#) ;
- [Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources](#)
- [Evergreen and Future Cities Canada](#) ;
- [Foundation for Environmental Stewardship](#) ;
- [Institut de l'énergie Trottier, Polytechnique Montréal](#)
- [Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation and the Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change, University of Waterloo](#)
- [Ivey Foundation](#) (no active website)
- [Labrador Institute, Memorial University](#)
- [MaRS Discovery District](#)
- [National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development, University of Victoria](#)
- [Ouranos](#)
- [Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, University of Victoria](#)
- [Prairie Climate Centre, University of Winnipeg](#)
- [Smart Prosperity Institute](#)
- [Switch \(l'Alliance pour une économie verte au Québec\)](#) (English website [here](#))
- [Trottier Family Foundation](#)
- [World Resources Institute](#)
- [Yukon College](#)



So far, the media have taken little notice of the group, despite the fact that it was announced only a week after the release of the landmark and alarming government report, *Canada's Changing Climate*, which showed that Canada is warming at twice the global rate. As of April 10, the only item published comes from *The National Observer*, "[Skeptical of Trudeau's carbon pricing? There's an institute for that](#)" (April 9) , which focuses on the reaction from Ontario's Ford government – attempting to brand the group as elite academics with no understanding of the costs of climate change policies.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C.'s Energy Step Code estimated to generate 1,700 jobs by 2032 while improving energy efficiency

Posted on **April 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The **B.C. Energy Step Code**, enacted in April 2017, is a voluntary standard which outlines an incremental approach to achieving more energy-efficient buildings in the province of British Columbia, over and above the requirements of the B.C. Building Code. According to a report **released** on March 7 by the Vancouver Economic Commission, the Energy Step Code has created a local market of \$3.3 billion for green building products and the potential to create over 1,700 manufacturing and installation jobs between 2019–2032.

Green Buildings Market Forecast : Demand for Building Products, Metro Vancouver, 2019–2032 was written for “manufacturers, suppliers, investment partners and other industry professionals to help them understand and prepare for changes in building product demand and performance requirements ...” Along with a companion technical report , **BC Energy Step Code Supply Chain Study – Final Report** (March 2019), it describes the basics of the Energy Step Code, and provides regional data and demand estimates for various products such as high-performance windows, lighting, heat pumps and renewable energy systems. Employment impacts are not the main focus, but the report also estimates the potential job creation impact to be 925 sustainable manufacturing jobs throughout B.C., as well as 770 ongoing installation jobs in Metro Vancouver. The Market Demand Forecasting Tool which underlies the report was developed by Vancouver Economic Commission in consultation with real estate and construction industry experts over eight months in 2018; modelling for the report was done by The Delphi Group. The details of the forecasting tool are documented in Appendix One of the report.

Two related, earlier reports: 1. **Energy Step Code Training and Capacity** , a consultants report from 2017, discusses the competencies required by professions (including architects and engineers) and trades, and provides an extensive inventory of training agents in the province.

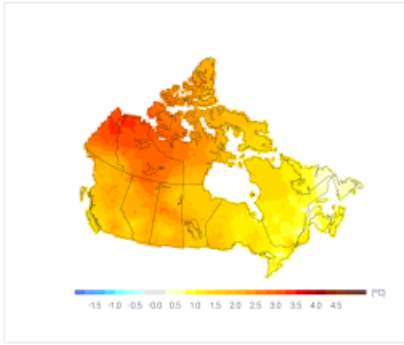
The State of Vancouver’s Green Economy (June 2018) by the Vancouver Economic Commission, which states that the largest segment of jobs in Vancouver in 2016 were in the Green Building sector, with 7,689 jobs. The total Green Economy job count, encompassing Green Building; Clean Tech; Green Mobility; Materials Management; and Local Food was estimated at 25,000 jobs.

The B.C. Energy Step Code launched **a new website** in 2019.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Building Codes, energy efficiency, Green Building, Green Job Creation, Green Jobs, Job Creation, retrofitting, Vancouver** | [Leave a reply](#)

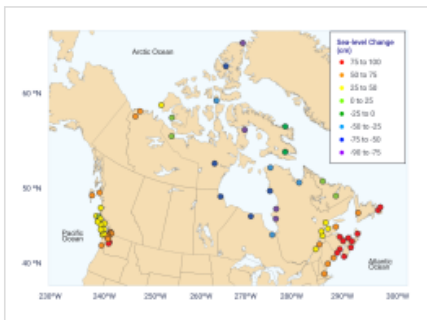
Canada is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world – what should we do?

Posted on **April 3, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— **Observed temperature changes
1948 -2016**

Canada's Changing Climate Report (CCCR), was released on April 2, documenting the consensus of scientific experts from the federal government and academia, about how and why Canada's climate has changed to date, with projections for the future. The main message is tipped by the title of the government's press release: "**Canada's climate is warming twice as fast as global average**". Canada's annual temperature over land has warmed on average 1.7 degrees Celsius between 1948 and 2016 (compared with the the IPCC assessment of average global warming between 0.8 C and 1.2 C). Worse, in the Arctic, temperatures have risen by 2.3C – about three times the global average. In some parts of the Northwest Territories, temperatures have risen by between 4 C and 5 C .



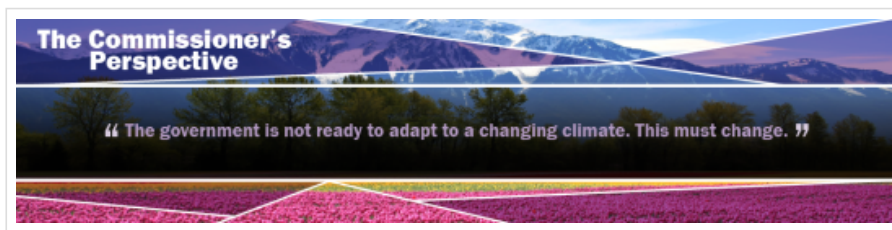
Like the careful scientific style of the **IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C** (Oct. 2018), the Canadian report offers two different scenarios, based on low and high emissions futures. The general statement about the future, however, states: "The effects of widespread warming are already evident in many parts of Canada and are projected to intensify in the near future. A warmer climate will affect the frequency and intensity of forest fires, the extent and duration of snow and ice cover, precipitation, permafrost temperatures, and other extremes of weather and climate, as well as freshwater availability, rising of sea level, and other properties of the oceans surrounding Canada." "Scenarios with limited warming will only occur if Canada and the rest of the world reduce carbon emissions to near zero early in the second half of the century and reduce emissions of other greenhouse gases substantially."

The report is available in **English** and in **French** , with a 17-page **Executive Summary** in **English** and in **French** . This is the first in a series of National Assessment reports to be rolled out until 2021, including a National Issues report on climate change impacts and adaptation; a Regional Perspectives report about impacts and adaptation in six regions, and a Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate report, assessing risks to health and to the health care system.

Are Canadians panicking? Sorry Greta, not yet anyway: Summaries of the **Changing Climate Report** include: "**Canada says global carbon pollution must be reduced to 'near zero' to limit harsh impacts**" in *The National Observer* ; "**Environmentalists hope for action in wake of 'shocking and utterly unsurprising' climate-change report**" (consisting mostly of embedded audio interviews); CBC's "**What you need to know about the new climate report**" ; an **Energy Mix summary** by Mitchell Beer ; and Crawford Kilian in *The Tyee*, "**New Climate change report should be a wake-up call**" which focuses on British Columbia.

Two Opinion Pieces may explain the lack of panic with which this report has been greeted : Thomas Walkom in the *Toronto Star*, “**Canadian politicians are obsessed with the wrong crisis**” and Neil Macdonald at CBC “**Report on devastating Canadian climate change a far bigger issue than Jody Wilson-Raybould**” .

Reaction from the Council of Canadians Blog is constructive: “**Canada is warming faster than we thought. What can we do about it?**” –urging readers to take individual action, including support for a Canadian Green New Deal. Such political action will be necessary, according to Julie Gelfand, Canada’s Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, who tabled her Spring 2019 audit reports in Parliament on April 2. The **environmental audits** cover the topics of aquatic invasive species, the protection of fish and their habitat from mining effluent, and subsidies to the fossil fuels sector. In the accompanying “**Perspective**” statement as she leaves her position after five years, she reflects on lessons learned and concludes: “it’s the slow action on climate change that is disturbing. Many of my reports focused on climate change from various angles. We looked at federal support for sustainable municipal infrastructure, mitigating the impacts of severe weather, marine navigation in the Canadian Arctic, environmental monitoring of oil sands, oversight of federally regulated pipelines, funding clean energy technologies, fossil fuel subsidies, and progress on reducing greenhouse gases. For decades, successive federal governments have failed to reach their targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the government is not ready to adapt to a changing climate. This must change.”



Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Arctic](#), [Canada](#), [climate change impacts](#), [Climate Science](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [forest fires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Environmental Commissioner report falls on deaf ears as Ford government slashes energy efficiency programs, attacks carbon pricing (again)

Posted on **March 29, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A Healthy, Happy, Prosperous Ontario: Why we need more energy conservation is the final report of Ontario's Environmental Commissioner Dianne Saxe, released on March 27. The report documents the province's energy use, argues for the value of energy conservation, and makes recommendations: for improving utility conservation programs and energy efficiency programs for homeowners, and for urban planning policies to promote greater population density in "compact, complete communities" with jobs, transit and housing. The official summary of the report is [here](#) ; a [summary](#) was published by *The National Observer* on March 27.

This is the final report of the Environmental Commissioner because the **ECO Office** has fallen to the pro-business agenda of the Doug Ford government: after April 1, it no longer acts as an independent agency reporting directly to the Legislature, but will be merged into the Office of the Auditor General. The Commissioner has been critical of government policies – for example, in the annual Greenhouse Gas Reduction Progress Report for 2018, ***Climate Action in Ontario: What's next?*** (September 2018). With the 2019 Energy Conservation Progress report, ***The Happy Health report***, she states that current government policies encourage the use of fossil fuels in the province and will result in higher energy costs for consumers, higher greenhouse gas emissions, and increased air pollution, with associated adverse health impacts.

The "Government of the People" slashes energy efficiency, promotes P3's: Despite the blunt criticism and recommendations of the Environment Commissioner (**and many others**), the Ford government continues to implement its "pro-business" agenda. It is planning cancellations to consumer energy efficiency programs, as reported by *The National Observer* on March 20, **"Exclusive: Doug Ford's government slashing programs designed to save energy in buildings"** (March 20) and in **"Ontario Slashes Energy Efficiency Programs, Delays Promise to Cut Hydro Rates"** in the *Energy Mix* (March 25), which summarizes the *Globe and Mail* article, **"Ontario Pulls the plug on energy conservation programs"** (subscription required). A day later, the *Globe and Mail* said the cutbacks will include "subsidies for modern lighting, such as LED bulbs, more efficient air conditioners and furnaces, and upgrades to commercial refrigeration equipment. The government will also centralize the delivery of eight programs aimed at businesses, low-income seniors, and First Nations communities..."

On March 19, the government posted **"Ontario Moving to Increase Innovation and Competition in Infrastructure Market"** (March 19), stating that it is "working for the people to make the province a leading destination for investment and job creation by increasing innovation and competition in its public-private partnership (P3) market." This will include action to "Open P3 projects to greater innovation by making output specifications less prescriptive and rebalancing the Infrastructure Ontario bid evaluation criteria to better reward design innovation." Incidentally, the Ontario's government is also willing to take credit for federal infrastructure programs: as described in the March 12 press release, **Ontario Launches \$30 Billion Infrastructure Funding Program**. In fact, the \$30 billion refers to combined federal, provincial,

and local funding over the next 10 years through the federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The provincial share is a maximum of 33% .

And finally, the Ford government continues its attacks on carbon pricing: A March 25 press release, **“Ontario closes the book on cap and trade carbon tax era”** announces that “the total compensation amount is \$5,090,000 for a total of 27 participants” as a result of the the **Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018** (Oct. 2018) . The press release continues: “But in one week, the federal government will impose a brand-new job-killing carbon tax, punishing the hardworking people of Ontario... Our government remains part of a growing coalition of provinces across Canada that oppose this cash-grab, which raises the cost of essentials like home heating and gasoline.” The reality is that as of April 1st, the federal carbon pricing backstop will take effect in Ontario and the three other provinces that failed to design their own carbon pricing system under the Pan-Canadian Framework — Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick.

10 CARBON PRICING MYTHS DEBUNKED

<p>MYTH PUTTING A PRICE ON POLLUTION IS A NEW, UNTESTED IDEA</p> 	<p>FACT Pollution pricing and carbon pricing are proven ideas that have worked for decades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The U.S. reduced pollution that causes acid rain by 30% in 10 years by putting a price on it. Carbon pricing has worked in Alberta since 2001 and B.C. since 2008. The new federal carbon price will rise to \$50 per tonne by 2022.
<p>MYTH ONLY VERY HIGH CARBON PRICES ARE EFFECTIVE</p> 	<p>FACT People and businesses respond to price changes—even low ones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.C.'s carbon tax, which grew from \$30 to \$35 per tonne over 10 years, has lowered both per-capita gasoline and natural gas use by at least 7%. B.C.'s emissions would be up to 30% higher without its carbon tax.
<p>MYTH CARBON PRICING WILL COST CANADIAN FAMILIES</p> 	<p>FACT The carbon price is only half the story. Governments are returning revenue to families to ensure carbon pricing is affordable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of families will receive rebates larger than their carbon costs under the federal system. 60% of households receive carbon pricing rebates under the Alberta system. Provinces such as Quebec and Alberta also fund infrastructure and public transit, making it easier to avoid the carbon price.
<p>MYTH CARBON PRICING HURTS JOBS</p> 	<p>FACT Carbon pricing will change the kind of work we do, not the number of jobs we have.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The B.C. carbon tax shifted jobs to cleaner sectors such as health care. There is even evidence to suggest that it led to a small increase in the overall number of jobs. Governments are helping train people to work in this cleaner economy, as Alberta has done with coal communities.
<p>MYTH BIG POLLUTERS ARE GETTING A BREAK</p> 	<p>FACT Industry pays a carbon price, like households. They also get support, like households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every province is taking a similar approach to carbon pricing for big polluters, though they go by different names: performance standards, output-based allocations, industrial incentives. This approach protects jobs and investment, while maintaining incentives to shrink emissions.
<p>MYTH CARBON PRICING IS A CASH GRAB</p> 	<p>FACT The federal government is returning all carbon pricing revenues to the provinces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The federal government is returning 90% of the money to households. They receive the remainder as a credit when they file their income taxes. The remaining 10% will fund efficiency projects for small businesses, schools, and hospitals in each province. All revenue stays in the province in which it is generated.
<p>MYTH PEOPLE CANNOT CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOURS IN RESPONSE TO CARBON PRICING</p> 	<p>FACT Many Canadians have more options than they realize. Over time, carbon pricing drives innovation, making cleaner options more affordable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In B.C., carbon pricing affected vehicle choices: the carbon tax improved fuel economy by 4%. The European Union's carbon price increased patents for clean technologies by 1% and overall innovation by 18%.
<p>MYTH THERE IS NO POINT TO CARBON PRICING IF GOVERNMENTS RENEGE THE REVENUES.</p> 	<p>FACT Rebates help with affordability, but they don't change the incentives the price provides to pollute less.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing pollution means saving money. The more you cut your emissions, the less carbon price you pay. You get the same rebate no matter what. The federal rebates will cover the carbon costs for 80% of households.
<p>MYTH WE CAN USE OTHER, BETTER POLICIES TO REDUCE EMISSIONS</p> 	<p>FACT Carbon pricing is the fastest and cheapest way to fight climate change. It should be a key part of any mix of policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations and subsidies usually cost more to reduce emissions. For example, Quebec's electric vehicle subsidies are very expensive—about \$200 per tonne of carbon pollution reduced.
<p>MYTH THERE IS NO NEED TO REDUCE CANADA'S EMISSIONS</p> 	<p>FACT The world is feeling the effects of climate change. Canada produces a lot of pollution, our emissions matter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canada is one of the world's top 22 emitters. The average Canadian emits three times the global average. The rest of the world is moving: 40 jurisdictions now have a price on carbon, including China. Our example can help spur the collective action required to effectively tackle climate change.

LEARN MORE: ECOFISCAL.CA/MYTHS


CANADA'S ECOFISCAL COMMISSION
 Practical solutions for growing prosperity

The EcoFiscal Commission is the latest to defend carbon pricing, with **10 Myths about Carbon Pricing in Canada** – saying “Myths and misleading statements, however, continue to damage the debate over carbon pricing. A debate based

on poor information does a disservice to Canadians....this new report will improve the quality of the debate by drawing on the best available evidence to debunk ten common myths. The report aims to serve as a resource for Canadians who want to learn what the evidence says about carbon pricing and its impacts on emissions, the economy, affordability, and jobs.”

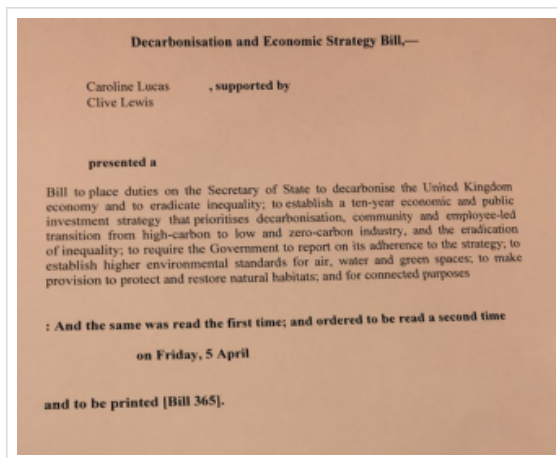
The constitutional challenge to the carbon backstop is awaiting the court's decision in Saskatchewan, and in Ontario, the court case will begin in late April. All related court documents are [here](#) . Also in April, the Ontario government [releases its budget](#) on the 11th.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [energy conservation](#), [Energy policy](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Ontario](#), [P3's](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. makes progress on a Green New Deal amid the chaos of Brexit

Posted on **March 27, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Understandably, the Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom are preoccupied with the chaos of the Brexit crisis – which in itself, has huge implications for environmental policy in the country. [“How Brexit will impact the UK’s environmental policy”](#) provides a good summary of the specifics, and an [active website](#) publishes analysis by “a network of impartial academic experts analysing the implications of Brexit for UK and EU environmental policy and governance” . [Greener UK](#), a network of 14 environmental NGOs, is also focused on Brexit “in the belief that leaving the EU is a pivotal moment to restore and enhance the UK’s environment. ”



Progress on a Green New Deal amidst the chaos: But while Brexit rages, and the country awaits the May 2 publication of recommendations on long term net zero emission targets by the [Committee on Climate Change](#) (CCC), the **Decarbonisation and Economic Strategy Bill** was tabled in the House of Commons by two members of Parliament – Green Party member [Caroline Lucas](#) and Labour Party member [Clive Lewis](#) . Although the bill doesn’t use the term “Green New Deal”, Caroline Lucas does in her Opinion piece in *The Guardian*, [“The answer to climate breakdown and austerity? A green new deal”](#) (March 27). She states: “Our bill would introduce a “green new deal” – an unprecedented mobilisation of resources invested to prevent climate breakdown, reverse inequality, and heal our communities. It demands major structural changes in our approach to the ecosystem, coupled with a radical transformation of the finance sector and the economy, to deliver both social justice and a livable planet... This is purposely radical territory. We must push the boundaries of what is seen as politically possible. Because climate justice and social justice go hand in hand.” The official summary of the Bill appears on page 7 of the parliamentary [Order Paper for March 26](#) including a 10-year time line with reporting requirements, and a stated goal for community and employee-led transition from high-carbon to low and zero-carbon industry, and the eradication of inequality.



Green Party MP Caroline Lucas has a long history with the concept of “green new deal”, as part of the **Green New Deal Group** which was founded in the U.K. in 2007 and published its first policy statement : ***A Green New Deal Joined-up policies to solve the triple crunch of the credit crisis, climate change and high oil prices*** in 2008.

The Labour Party has also been in the news recently for its new grassroots initiative, the Labour Green New Deal. For example, **“Labour scrambles to develop a Green New Deal”** in *Climate Change News* (Feb. 14); **“Labour members launch Green New Deal inspired by US activists”** in *The Guardian* (March 22) ; and **“Our new movement aims to propel Labour into a radical Green New Deal”** (March 22) in *The Guardian*, an Opinion piece by Angus Satow, co-founder of the coalition, who states that the party’s ***Green Transformation Environmental policy statement***, is a starting point, but “ a GND means a new settlement for Britain. It would give local communities the funding and power to control their future, while democratising industry and the economy. Communities with control of utilities will have great power over their lives, while tackling fuel poverty, as the profits go to ordinary people, not shareholders.” **“Labour for a Green New Deal – because climate change is a class issue”** by Chris Saltmarsh at *Labourlist*(March 22) lays out the role of unions in the initiative, with specific and detailed plans: “A Green New Deal in the UK is therefore nothing without participation and leadership from our unions. Rank-and-file trade unionists across the country are ready to organise for this from below. We’ll work with them to build support, host events, pass motions from branches to policy conferences, and develop regional plans for a Green New Deal that put workers first.”

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Brexit, California, Green New Deal, Labour and Greens, labour union policies, United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian-made Pacifica van priced out of Electric Vehicle incentives in Budget 2019- Update: layoffs announced at Windsor van plant

Posted on **March 25, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Updated March 29 re associated layoffs at Windsor plant

Canada’s **federal Budget 2019** delivered on March 19, included a **number of policies aimed at speeding up EV adoption**: a 2040 deadline to phase out new internal combustion vehicle sales, \$130 million over the next five years to build electric vehicle charging stations, and consumer rebates for purchases of electric and hybrid vehicles (\$5000 for

purchases under \$45K). On March 22, [CTV Windsor](#) reported on a protest rally by [Unifor Local 444](#) and local NDP politicians, who are infuriated that the EV consumer incentives program carries a price limit set at \$45K – which excludes the Canadian-built Pacifica Hybrid, priced at \$54,000. The CBC also reported [“Federal rebate on electric cars will push consumers to buy American, NDP says”](#) .

Brian Masse, NDP Member of Parliament for Windsor-West is [promoting a petition](#) demanding to have all Canadian-built hybrids, including the Pacifica Hybrid, added to the list of incentive-eligible vehicles.

Update: On March 28, the Windsor Star reported [“FCA Canada to stop third shift at Windsor Assembly Plant, cutting 1,500 jobs”](#). The article quotes a company email which states: “In order to better align production with global demand at its Windsor Assembly Plant, FCA notified Unifor today that it intends to return the plant to a traditional two-shift operation, beginning Sept. 30, 2019....Retirement packages will be offered to eligible employees. The Company will make every effort to place indefinitely laid off hourly employees in open full-time positions as they become available based on seniority.” The plant will also be on shutdown for the weeks of April 8 and 15. Although Premier Ford is quoted as saying that the government will “fight tooth and nail” for the workers, there is no mention of restoring the electric vehicle [purchase incentives which the Ford government discontinued](#) in Summer 2018.

In further critiques of the electric vehicle incentive package: Almost immediately, [critics pointed out](#) that there were no sales mandates for auto manufacturers, despite previous findings that car dealers were failing to meet a high consumer demand- for example, in [Batteries Not Included](#) (2018).

[“Stalled: why North American lags as China and Europe lead the way on electric vehicles”](#) is an Opinion piece by Will Dubitsky in the *National Observer* (March 20), which calls the EV purchase incentives “a halfway measure offering less than the consumer rebate programs elsewhere,” and judging the \$130 million over five years for charging and refuelling stations “mediocre” compared to equivalent commitments in California and the EU.

Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood calls the incentives “modest” in his overall analysis of Budget 2019, [“Budget fiddles while climate crisis burns”](#) (March 20).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [consumer incentives](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Budget 2019 provides modest funding for climate change improvements – Just Transition, electric vehicles, energy efficiency

Posted on [March 20, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Updated March 25, 2019 with reactions.

No clean economy vision is evident in the **pre-election budget , Investing in the Middle Class**, delivered by Canada's Finance Minister on March 19. The *National Observer* has a **Special Report on Budget 2019** , composed of twelve focused articles covering the range of notable provisions. Mitchell Beer provides a good summary of the Budget's climate-related provisions, in "**Morneau's Pre-Election Budget Boosts ZEVs and Energy Retrofits, Extends New Fossil Subsidy**" in the *Energy Mix* (March 20). Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party is quoted in that article, and says that the climate provisions are "pathetic" – a similar reaction to that of **Environmental Defence**, which states more diplomatically that "funding for climate change in this budget does not match the scale of the challenge". Similarly, the **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reaction** judges the climate provisions as "modest efforts to move forward on greening the economy", although calls the just transition plan "an important precedent." The **Canadian Labour Congress reaction** is a lengthy commentary on many worker-related initiatives – including the issue of Just Transition.

UPDATED: Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood weighed in with his overall analysis, in "**Budget fiddles while climate crisis burns**" (March 20), judging the initiatives as modest and inadequate to the urgent task – with the greatest disappointment being the ongoing support to the oil and gas industry. Similarly, **Climate Action Network Canada** states that "business as usual policy is no longer acceptable to respond to the climate crisis and the level of climate action that citizens, students, workers and communities are urgently demanding."

On the issue of Just Transition: The **Budget plan text** on Just Transition reiterates the previous Budget's pledge of \$35 million over five years for Just Transition of coal workers. In its **reaction, the Canadian Labour Congress** acknowledges the new pledge of \$150 million in infrastructure funding to directly assist resource-based municipalities, but quotes Hassan Yussuff, Co-Chair of Canada's Task Force on Just Transition: "... Canada's unions are looking forward to working with the Minister of Natural Resources as the newly named lead minister, but are disappointed to see that the government has not addressed key Task Force recommendations to support workers, in terms of income, training and reemployment needs. Without this, workers will be left behind."

More details appear in "**Coal workers get cash in budget but lack of details risks 'major blowback'**" in the *National Observer* (March 19), including that the \$150 million infrastructure funding will not flow until the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Funds will be delivered by Western Economic Diversification Canada at a rate of \$21 million a year over 4 years, and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency , at a rate of \$9 million a year for 4 year.

On the issue of fossil fuel subsidies: The government reaffirmed its long-standing (and unfulfilled) commitments to phase out fossil fuel subsidies , and pledged to establish an expert committee to examine the issue. Here is the **reaction from the Stop Funding Fossils Initiative**: "This year marks the tenth anniversary of Canada's G20 commitment to phase out fossil fuel subsidies. Yet, despite moderate progress in the 2017 budget, Canada remains the largest provider of fiscal support to oil and gas production in the G7 relative to the size of its economy.... the Government of Canada has doubled down on fossil fuels by introducing billions of dollars in new subsidies in the past year. Budget 2019 allocates a further \$100 million over four years to the Strategic Innovation Fund, aiming to help the oil and gas industry reduce emissions. "

(Coincidentally, the 2019 **Annual Fossil Fuel Report Card** was released on March 20, revealing that global banks have invested nearly US\$2 trillion in fossil projects since the Paris Agreement was signed, and Canada's Bank of Montreal, RBC, ScotiaBank and CIBC are amongst the worst offenders.)

On the issue of electric vehicles: Budget 2019 included a number of policies aimed at speeding up EV adoption, including a 2040 deadline to phase out new internal combustion vehicle sales, and consumer rebates for purchases of electric and hybrid vehicles (\$5000 for purchases under \$45K). Despite recent reports that EV supply is restricting purchases, the government did not institute a mandatory sales mandate for car manufacturers. Businesses will be allowed to deduct the full value of a new ZEVehicle worth up to \$55,000 in the year they purchase it. The government also pledged \$130 million over the next five years to build electric vehicle charging stations – specifically including workplaces in the named locations. The *National Observer* summarizes these proposals in "**Canada proposes rebates for electric cars, voluntary sales mandate**".

UPDATED: Unionists and local politicians staged a protest rally at the Windsor plant which manufactures the Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid on March 22. **CTV Windsor reported** that leaders of **Unifor Local 444** and local NDP politicians are infuriated that the consumer incentives carry a price limit set at \$45K – excluding the Canadian-built Pacifica Hybrid, priced at \$54,000. The CBC also reported "**Federal rebate on electric cars will push consumers to buy American,**

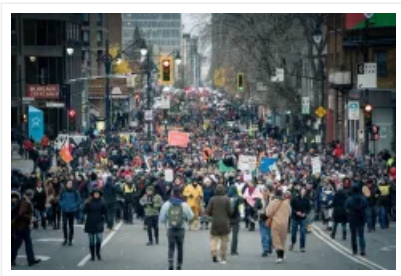
NDP says” . And an Opinion piece by Will Dubitsky, “[Stalled: why North American lags as China and Europe lead the way on electric vehicles](#)” in the *National Observer* (March 20) calls the EV purchase incentives “a halfway measure offering less than the consumer rebate programs elsewhere,” and judging the \$130 million over five years for charging and refuelling stations “mediocre” compared to equivalent commitments in California and the EU.

On the issue of infrastructure and the built environment: The text of the government’s announcement relating to energy efficiency is [here](#) , and a [Backgrounder: Strong Communities, Affordable Electricity and a Clean Economy](#) is also relevant. Initiatives include \$1.01 billion in funding, immediately, to increase energy efficiency in residential, commercial and multi-unit buildings – in the form of financing and grants to retrofit community buildings, financing for municipal initiatives to support home retrofits, and financing to improve energy efficiency and support on-site energy generation in affordable housing developments . Funds will be administered through the Green Municipal Fund of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. *Macleans* magazine summarizes this, as well as infrastructure funding, in “[Cities are billion-dollar winners in Budget 2019](#)” which states that “the biggest single new spending item in the budget is a \$2.2 billion “one-time transfer” through the federal Gas Tax Fund. That money doubles the usual federal-municipal transfer through that mechanism. The windfall is intended to address “serious infrastructure deficits” in municipalities and First Nations communities.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Government Policy](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian kids out in force for the global Fridays for Future climate strike on March 15

Posted on [March 19, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



— [Montreal climate strike](#)

The global movement that is the [#Fridays for Future](#) climate strike, inspired by Greta Thunberg, exceeded all expectations for the number of demonstrators and the number of locations on March 15. In Canada, students marched in 55 cities, with the greatest showing in Montreal – 150,000 strikers – a greater turnout than Paris, London, Sydney , or almost any of the hundreds of cities and towns which participated. The *Energy Mix* highlights the global successes in “[1.4 million students in 128 countries make March 15 #schoolstrike a global phenomenon](#)” (March 15) .

Here are some accounts of the strike in Canada: From the *National Observer*: “[Canadian children school adults about climate crisis](#)” (March 15), which reports particularly on Montreal and Vancouver; “[Quebec students join global marches to demand climate change action](#)” (March 17) which reported that 150,000 students were on strike, representing 120 student associations. This amazing number is widely confirmed – including by [an article in La Presse](#) (in French). Also, “[CCL Youth join March 15 youth strike for climate](#)” from the Citizens Climate Lobby; “[We know we](#)

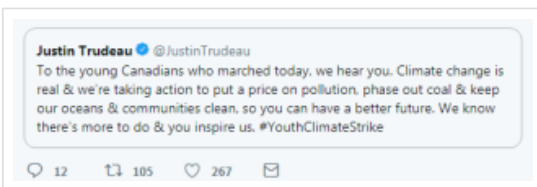
are at a crossroads” in *The Tyee* (unique photos of the Vancouver strike); “**Students in Canada prepare to strike for the climate**” (March 14) in *Rabble.ca* .



CBC coverage consisted mainly of photos and brief interviews from across Canada, including: “**Tens of thousands rally in Montreal**”, and “**Montreal students block schools ahead of climate protest**” (which prompted the school board to cancel classes). From [Halifax](#) ; [New Brunswick](#) ; [Ottawa](#) ; [Regina](#) ; [St. John’s Newfoundland](#) ; [Toronto](#); and Vancouver [here](#) and [here](#) .

Who are these young Canadian strikers? Of the many youth organizers across Canada, two have received special attention. **Sophie Mathur** of Sudbury, aged 11, was the first Canadian to take up the call of Greta Thunberg and has been profiled several times, even before the March 15 global strike. Early articles: “**Strike For Climate: Fridays For a Future**” appeared in *Below 2C* on October 31 2018 and “**Young climate activist to strike Friday in Sudbury**” in the *Sudbury Star* on November 2, 2018 . Most recently, on March 8, Sophie was one of five climate strikers [interviewed by Sierra Club International](#), for International Women’s Day.

Rebecca Hamilton of Vancouver, aged 16, is a founding member of [Sustainabiliteens](#) , which organized the school strike in Vancouver. She is profiled in a new Greenpeace Canada series “**12 Questions with #YouthClimateStrike organizer Rebecca Hamilton**”. Both Sophie Mathur and Rebecca Hamilton were interviewed by CBC Radio in “**Ignoring climate change is like ‘putting off homework,’ says teen in School Strike for Climate**” on *The Current* on March 15 (transcript and audio), and also on CBC radio *Day 6* on February 2, along with Dominique Deveaux of Fredericton, [here](#) .



Politicians Reactions and support for student strikers: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded to the strikers on Twitter, as did Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna on her personal Facebook account, but there was no official reaction from the Canadian government. George Heyman, British Columbia’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change also used [his Twitter account](#) to express that he is “inspired by the concern and commitment of the students”. Elizabeth May, leader of Canada’s Green Party, issued [a statement of support](#) which lists Green Party candidates who are supporting strikes in their local ridings.

Reactions from Unions: In Canada, the B.C. Teachers Federation [tweeted](#) a thanks to the students from their Annual Meeting , and at that AGM, activist Seth Klein [addressed](#)



the meeting about the role of teachers in fighting climate change. The international confederation of teachers' unions, Education International, has also supported the student climate strikers, with this **Statement of Support** (Feb. 28, 2019) and this **blog post** of February 22. A **CBC report** of March 1 also states that staff and faculty of Laurentian University in Sudbury have signed a letter of support for the strikers.

The International Trade Union Confederation issued a **statement of support** which states that "Unions in Australia, Belgium, France, Italy, the UK and elsewhere are taking part and many others are active in mobilising their members" and "Taking inspiration from young people, **union representatives in workplaces will, in the last week of June, invite employers to sit down with the workers in workplaces to discuss plans to reduce emissions and climate proof workplaces.**"



Canada's next big student protest has been set for **May 3**. Updates will be posted on the Facebook Events page **here**. In the meantime, 350.org has posted "**5 ways you can support the school climate strikes**".



And last word goes to Nobel-nominee Greta Thunberg, from **her Facebook post** following the March 15 strikes:

Once you have done your homework, you realize that we need new politics. We need a new economics, where everything is based on our rapidly declining and extremely limited carbon budget.

But that is not enough. We need a whole new way of thinking. The political system that you have created is all about competition. You cheat when you can because all that matters is to win. To get power. That must come to an end. We must stop competing with each other. We need to start cooperating and sharing the remaining resources of this planet in a fair way. We need to start living within the planetary boundaries, focus on equity and take a few steps back for the sake of all living species.

We are just passing on the words of the science. Our only demand is that you start listening to it. And then start acting.

So please stop asking your children for the answers to your own mess.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate strikes](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [labour union policies](#), [teachers](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [1 Reply](#)

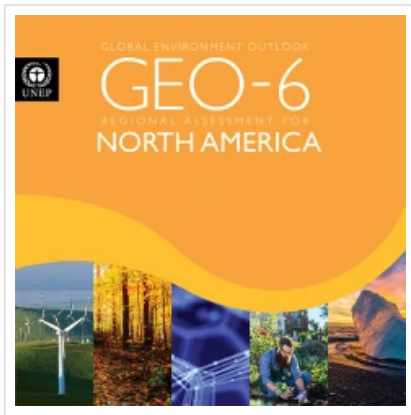
United Nations reports warn of health impacts of climate change, thawing Arctic

Posted on **March 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) convened from March 11 – 15 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the sombre cloud of the crash of Ethiopian Airlines **which killed many, including Canadians**, on their way to attend the meetings.

The flagship report, produced by 250 global scientists and experts, is the **Sixth Global Environmental Outlook**, which the UN press release calls “the most comprehensive and rigorous assessment on the state of the environment completed by the UN in the last five years .. warning that damage to the planet is so dire that people’s health will be increasingly threatened unless urgent action is taken.” It warns that, without such urgent action, cities and regions in Asia, the Middle East and Africa could see millions of premature deaths by 2050, with pollutants in freshwater systems leading to deaths through increased anti-microbial resistance, as well as impacts on male and female fertility and impaired neurodevelopment of children, from endocrine disruptors. A 28-page **Summary for Policymakers** is available in multiple languages besides English, including **French** .



The official documents from the UNEA meetings are compiled [here](#) , including the closing press release summary, “**World pledges to protect polluted, degraded planet as it adopts blueprint for more sustainable future**” .

Other reports relevant to Canada:

1. The ***Assessment and Data Report for North America*** is one of the regional reports, all of which are compiled [here](#) .

2. ***Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want*** examines the economic benefits and environmental costs of resource use, and finds that all resource sectors combined (including agriculture, mining, forestry) account for 53% of the world’s carbon emissions. Extraction and primary processing of metals and other minerals is responsible for 20% of health impacts from air pollution and 26% of global carbon emissions. The report warns that without change, resource demand would more than double to 190bn tonnes a year, greenhouse gases would rise by 40% and demand for land would increase by 20%. A **summary** of the report appeared in *The Guardian*.

3. With a forecast even more dire than the 2018 IPCC report, ***Global linkages: A graphic look at the changing Arctic*** warns that even if global emissions were to halt overnight, winter temperatures in the Arctic would still increase 4 to 5°C by 2100 because of greenhouse gases already emitted and ocean heat storage. The UNEA report warns of the dangers of thawing permafrost, predicting that by 2050, four million people, and around 70% of today’s Arctic infrastructure, will be threatened. However, a **critique by the Carbon Brief** disputes this particular conclusion within the UNEA report, and states that if humanity can mobilize to hit a -2 degrees C target, “future Arctic winter warming will be around 0.5 to 5.0°C by the 2080s compared to 1986-2005 levels, much lower than the 5.0 to 9.0°C values stated in the report.” ... “This means that much of the future warming in the Arctic will depend on our emissions over the 21st century, rather than being ‘locked in’, as the report claims.” The Carbon Brief analysis is **summarized in *The Energy Mix*** .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Arctic](#), [climate change and health](#), [extractive industries](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [mining industry](#), [United Nations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta Federation of Labour’s 12-point Plan, and the art of communicating Just Transition

Posted on **March 15, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Alberta Federation of Labour has launched a campaign “by and for Alberta’s workers” in advance of the provincial election in Spring 2019. The **Next Alberta Campaign** website compares the **party platforms** of the NDP and the United Conservative Party (UCP), characterized as “pragmatists” and “dinosaurs” – with a clear preference for the pragmatist NDP platform. In a **March 13 press release**, the AFL also released their own **12 Point Plan** with this introduction by Gil McGowan, AFL President: “The old policy prescriptions of corporate tax cuts and deregulation .. are particularly ill-suited to the challenges we face today. And simply waiting for the next boom, as Alberta governments have done for decades, is not an option because it probably won’t happen. Like it or not, our future is going to be defined by change. So, the priority needs to be getting our people and our economy ready for that change, instead of sticking our heads in the sand.”

What exactly does the AFL propose? Their **12 Point Plan** includes initiatives around five themes: Support Alberta’s oil & gas industry; Diversify the economy; Invest in Infrastructure; Invest in people (by investing in public services, including expanding medicare, child care and free tuition, and expanding pension plans); and Protect Workers’ Rights. With a very pragmatic orientation, the document has no mention of “Just Transition” or coal phase-out, and emissions reduction is proposed in these terms: “Reduce carbon emissions, as much as possible, from each barrel of oil produced in Alberta so, we can continue to access markets with increasingly stringent emission standards.”

On the issue of the **oil and gas industry**, the Plan states:

We need to build new pipelines to access markets other than the U.S.

We need to incentivize and support oil and gas companies in their efforts to reduce emissions so we can continue to access markets with increasingly stringent environmental standards.

Our goal should be to make sure that Alberta is last heavy oil producer standing in an increasingly carbon constrained world.

On the issue of **Infrastructure**, the 12-Point Plan calls for:

procurement policies need to be revamped, for example, to use Community Benefit Agreements which emphasize the public interest by awarding contracts to companies that hire local, buy local and achieve thresholds related to environmental, social, and economic factors.

companies and contractors working on public infrastructure projects need to comply with labour standards, provide fair pay, and provide training for Albertans.

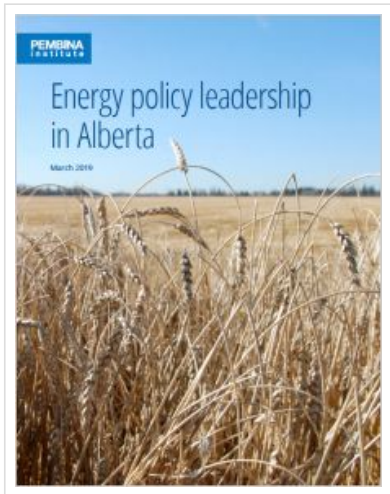
Research into communicating energy policies: The Alberta Narrative Project released a report, **Communicating Climate Change and Energy in Alberta** in February, documenting Albertan’s voices on issues of climate change, oil sands, politics, and more. Some highlights are cited in **“Lessons in talking climate with Albertan Oil Workers”** (Feb. 21), including:

“In Alberta, recognising the role that oil and gas has played in securing local livelihoods proved crucial. Most environmentalists would balk at a narrative of ‘gratitude’ towards oil, but co-producing an equitable path out of fossil fuel dependency means making oil sands workers feel valued, not attacked. Empathic language that acknowledges oil’s place in local history could therefore be the key to cultivating support for decarbonisation.

.....This project was also one of the first to test language specifically on energy transitions. While participants were generally receptive to the concept, the word ‘just’, with its social justice connotations, proved to be anything but

politically neutral. In an environment where attitudes towards climate are bound to political identities, many interviewees showed a reluctance to the idea of government handouts, even where an unjust transition would likely put them out of a job. Rather, the report recommends a narrative of 'diversification' rather than 'transition', stressing positive future opportunities instead of moving away from a negative past."

The **Alberta Narratives Project** is part of the global **Climate Outreach Initiative**, whose goal is to understand and train communicators to deliver effective communications which lead to cooperative approaches. The Alberta Narratives Project, with lead partners The Pembina Institute and Alberta Ecotrust, coordinated 75 community organizations to host 55 facilitated "Narrative Workshops" around the province, engaging an unusually broad spectrum of people: farmers, oil sands workers, energy leaders, business leaders, youth, environmentalists, New Canadians and others.



Pembina Institute communications seem to reflect the goal of an inclusive, constructive tone. For example, their pre-election report, **Energy Policy Leadership in Alberta**, released on March 8, makes recommendations regarding renewable energy, energy efficiency, coal phase-out, methane regulation, and "legislating an emissions reduction target for Alberta that is consistent with ensuring Canada meets its international obligations under the Paris climate agreement." Also, **Pricing Carbon Pollution in Alberta** (March 8), which places carbon pricing in the history of the province since 2007, stresses the benefits, and makes recommendations relevant to the current political debate.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Alberta Federation of Labour](#), [communicating climate change issues](#), [community benefits agreements](#), [Energy policy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Provincial Elections](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

AFL-CIO Energy Committee releases letter opposing the Green New Deal

Posted on **March 14, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A **letter**, dated March 8, was addressed to Senator Ed Markey and Representative Alexandra Ocasio Cortez, and signed by Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America, and Lonnie Stephenson, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, on behalf of the AFL-CIO's Energy Committee. The letter states: "...the Green New Deal resolution is far too short on specific solutions that speak to the jobs of our members and the critical sectors of our economy. It is not rooted in an engineering-based approach and makes promises that are not achievable or realistic." "... We want to engage on climate issues in a manner that does not impinge on enacting other labor priorities, especially much-needed infrastructure legislation..."



How they would engage and what they would propose is contained in a position paper posted on the IBEW website, and drafted by the IBEW, UMWA, and five other unions in the electric utility, construction, and rail transport sectors. The position paper, [Preliminary Labor Positions on Climate Legislation](#), states their opposition to carbon tax legislation and grave concerns about the Green New Deal. It calls for comprehensive, economy wide climate legislation which would include an national emissions trading scheme, to be introduced no earlier than 10 years after enacting legislation, to allow for development of Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) technologies. It also calls for worker transition protections, including compensation and retraining. The policy document was submitted to the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee for the record of their February 6th meeting: [“Time for Action: Addressing the Economic and Environmental Effects of Climate Change”](#).

Reaction: The *Washington Post* reported: [“AFL-CIO criticizes Green New Deal, calling it ‘not achievable or realistic’”](#) (March 12) and in a follow-up piece, [“Labor opposition to Green New Deal could be a big obstacle”](#) (March 14). The United Mine Workers [re-posted](#) the *Washington Post* article. Friends of the Earth, in its [reaction](#) to the March 8 letter, states “one-fifth of the unions that make up the AFL-CIO energy committee commented on the Green New Deal”, and, “With the energy committee’s position, the AFL joins climate deniers like the Koch brothers, the Republican Party and Big Oil. We encourage the AFL and other unions within it to rethink this position.”

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [AFL-CIO](#), [Green New Deal](#), [IBEW](#), [labour union policies](#), [United Mine Workers of America](#) | [2 Replies](#)

Final Report released by Canada’s Task Force on Just Transition

Posted on **March 12, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



- Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna stands with Hassan Yussuff, Co-Chair of the Just Transition Task Force and President of the Canadian Labour Congress

The Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities **was appointed** by the Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change in April 2018. Their report, completed in December 2018, was released to the public on March 11, 2019 : ***A just and fair transition for Canadian coal power workers and communities*** – in French, ***Une transition juste et équitable pour les collectivités et les travailleurs des centrales au charbon canadiennes*** .

This report provides ten recommendations for the workers and communities affected by the federal government's 2016 policy decision to phase-out coal-fired electricity in Canada, as part of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. A 2030 timeline was decided in 2018, and final **Regulations** were released in November 2018. There are 16 coal-fired generating stations left in Canada and nine mines which produce the thermal coal that feeds them, located in Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Coal worker layoffs have already begun in Alberta, which has its own **Workforce Transition Program** in place. Workers in the metallurgical coal industry, which is used to make steel, are unaffected by the coal phaseout.

The new federal report, ***A Just and fair transition for Canadian coal power workers*** is built upon 7 principles, and makes 10 recommendations. Those principles of a Just Transition include: 1. Respect for workers, unions, communities, and families; 2. Worker participation at every stage of transition; 3. Transitioning to good jobs; 4. Sustainable and healthy communities; 5. Planning for the future, grounded in today's reality; 6. Nationally coherent, regionally driven, locally delivered actions; and, 7. Immediate yet durable support. The report defines Just Transition, relates it to the Paris Agreement, provides an overview of coal mining work and provincial policies, and makes ten broad recommendations, largely based on what the Task Force heard in its public engagement sessions across the four provinces in the summer of 2018. ***"What we heard"*** is an accompanying report which summarizes submissions and lists the dozens of communities and organizations involved.

Recommendations: The Foundational recommendations of the Task Force include a call to “embed just transition principles in planning, legislative, regulatory, and advisory processes to ensure ongoing and concrete actions throughout the coal phase-out transition: 1. Develop, communicate, implement, monitor, evaluate, and publicly report on a just transition plan for the coal phase-out, championed by a lead minister to oversee and report on progress. 2. Include provisions for just transition in federal environmental and labour legislation and regulations, as well as relevant intergovernmental agreements. 3. Establish a targeted, long-term research fund for studying the impact of the coal phase-out and the transition to a low-carbon economy.” Recommendations concerning workers include: establish local transition centres to provide retraining, relocation and social supports; establish a pension-bridging program for those forced to retire early; create a detailed and publicly available inventory of labour market information regarding coal workers, and create a comprehensive funding program to assist workers in securing a new job – including income support, education and skills building, re-employment, and mobility. Recommendations relating to communities include: identify, prioritize, and fund local infrastructure projects in affected communities, and establish a dedicated, comprehensive, inclusive, and flexible just transition funding program ; meet directly with affected communities to learn about their local priorities, and to connect them with federal programs that could support their goals.

\$35 million was committed to Just Transition programs in 2018. The Task Force estimates that “direct and indirect costs of the phase-out will stretch well into the hundreds of millions of dollars and the timeframe will go beyond 2030.” It calls for “additional and more substantial investments in Budget 2019 and budgets thereafter.” Canada's next **budget will be delivered** on March 19 – providing a gauge of the government's intentions re Just Transition for coal workers and their communities.

The Canadian Labour Congress announcement concerning the Task Force Report release is titled ***"Just Transition Task Force report has potential to put people at the heart of climate policy"***, and pictures the **members of the Task Force**. In addition to Hassan Yussuff, President of the CLC and Co-Chair of the Task Force, union members included Gil McGowan (Alberta Federation of Labour), Mark Rowlinson (United Steelworkers), Scott Doherty (Unifor) , Tara Peel (Canadian Labour Congress), and Mark Wayland (IBEW).



Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Offshore wind energy investment promises jobs, but the example of Scottish workers leads unions to protest

Posted on [March 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On March 7, the government of the United Kingdom announced a new [Offshore Wind Sector Deal](#) which aspires to provide 30% of the U.K.'s electricity by 2030 and, according to the [article in *The Guardian*](#), also promises that jobs in offshore wind will triple to 27,000 by 2030. The detailed government [press release](#) further states that the deal will increase the number of women in the industry, continue efforts by educational institutions to develop a sector-wide curriculum to facilitate skills transfer, prompt new targets for apprenticeships, and create an "Offshore Energy Passport", recognised outside of the UK, so that workers will be able "to work seamlessly across different offshore sectors." Unite the union reacted with [this statement](#), which included a warning that the Energy Passport "should not be used to attack workers' terms and conditions of employment, nor compromise health and safety regulations."

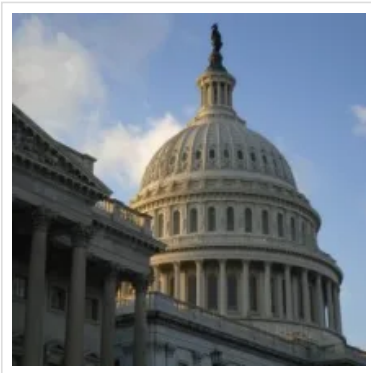
In the [same statement](#), Unite also called for a 'level playing field' for Scotland so that it can secure large-scale manufacturing contracts for its own offshore renewables sector. The concern follows the award of £2.8 billion in contracts for turbine manufacture to companies in Spain, Belgium and the United Arab Emirates, rather than to the BiFab yards in

Fife, Scotland. As reported in "[Union fury as £2.8 billion wind turbine contract goes overseas](#)" in the *Greener Jobs Alliance newsletter* (March/April), the GMB and Unite unions are calling on the Scotland's Prime Minister and the Scottish Parliament to intervene, stating: "The Scottish Government and the public have a stake in BiFab and with it our renewables manufacturing future. We owe it to our communities to tackle the spaghetti bowl of vested interest groups that's dominating our renewables sector and to fight for Scotland's share'.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Offshore Wind](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Scotland](#), [United Kingdom](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Labour unions' climate change policies explained

Posted on **March 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



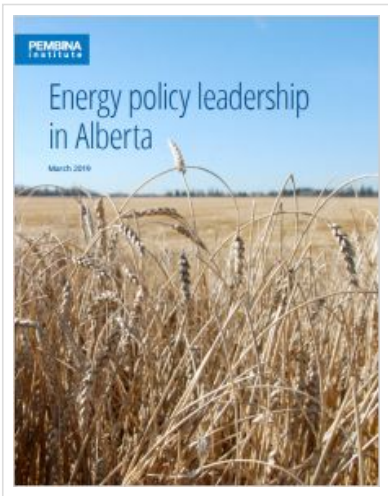
Labour Unions and Green Transitions in the USA: Contestations and Explanations is a new report by Dimitris Stevis, released on February 27 by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project. Professor Stevis, from Colorado State University, identifies and provides details about 50 climate change-related initiatives by labour unions in the U.S. , up to May 1, 2018. In his own words: "This report outlines the deep cleavages with respect to climate policy but also argues that the views of unions are more complex and contradictory than the opposition-support dichotomy. Additionally, it seeks to understand what explains the variability in union responses to climate change and policy. What can account for the contradictions evident amongst and within unions?"

From his conclusion: "There is good evidence to suggest that unions can adopt initiatives to deal with climate change and can and have supported climate policy. But it is very unlikely that broader and deeper change can take place without some modification of the institutional and political economy dynamics of the country or, at least, some states. There is plenty of evidence that internal factors do shape the attitudes of unions as there is also good evidence that public policies can steer unions in one direction or another. For that reason strategies that aim at changing public policy at the level of cities, states and, even better, the whole country are necessary. In their absence the road of labour environmentalists will be that much harder."

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

With an election coming, updates on Alberta energy policy

Posted on **March 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



With a provincial election looming large in Alberta, the Pembina Institute released a new publication, ***Energy Policy Leadership in Alberta***, on March 8, with this introduction: “Like most Albertans, we want to see the responsible development of oil and natural gas. The province’s policy and regulatory environment must ensure that our resources are produced in a manner that is both economically and environmentally sustainable. ... Alberta’s future as an energy provider is directly linked to an ability to demonstrate a demand for its products in a decarbonizing world. With the right policies, Alberta can be competitive, attract investment, spur innovation and remain a supplier of choice in the global energy market.” The **17-page document**, intended to reach across political partisan thinking, continues by outlining 23 policy recommendations “to unleash innovative technologies, deploy renewables, promote energy efficiency, continue greening our fossil fuel industries, and reduce climate pollution.”

The Alberta government itself is active in getting out its story about its energy policies. Most recently, the ***Alberta Climate Leadership Progress Report*** was released in March 2019, documenting the fiscal year of April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 – the first year Alberta collected a carbon levy. The report states that a total of \$1.19 billion of carbon revenue was invested back into the economy that year, and a **press release** of March 7 catalogues the impacts, including:

- Climate Leadership Plan (CLP) investments have supported more than 5,000 jobs in 2017-18. CLP commitments, such as the Green Line in Calgary, will support a further 20,000 jobs in the coming years.
- Combining 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years, a total of \$978 million in rebates has made life better and more affordable for lower- and middle-income Albertans.
- The solar industry in Alberta has grown by more than 800 per cent.... About 3,100 solar installations have been completed across the province.
- Alberta is forecast to cut emissions by more than 50 megatonnes in 2030.

Further press releases from the government :

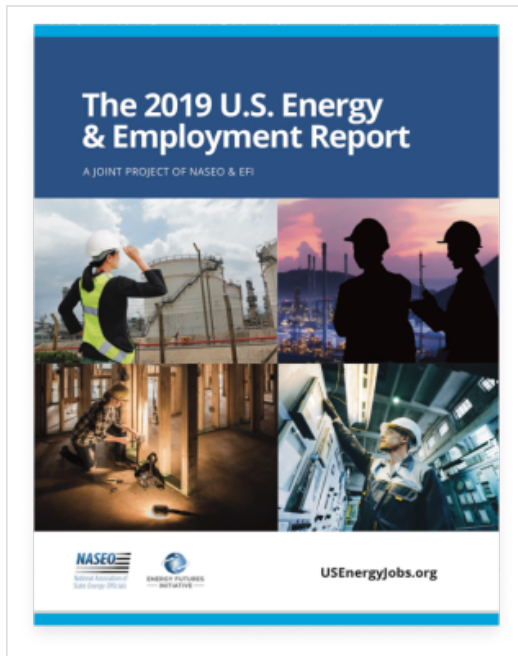
“Alberta solar on the rise”: (Feb. 15) announced a new contract for solar electricity with Canadian Solar, to run from 2021 to 2041, at an average price of 4.8 cents per kilowatt hour, sufficient to supply approximately 55 per cent of the government’s annual electricity needs while creating jobs in Southern Alberta.

“Premier’s plan unlocks \$2-billion energy investment” (Feb. 20) announced that the province will provide up to \$80 million in royalty credits, funded through the Petrochemicals Diversification Program, to support phase one of the **Methanol production project by Nauticol Energy**. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2020, with a commercial operational date set for 2022; the government states that the project will create “as many as 15,500 construction jobs and an additional 1,000 permanent jobs.”

The **Alberta Community Transit Fund** announced a program which will provide \$215 million over 4 years. The press release lists 33 municipal projects awarded funding on March 7, 2019.

U.S. energy employment report shows job growth in oil and gas, energy efficiency; decline in solar jobs

Posted on **March 8, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



The ***U.S. Energy and Employment Report 2019 edition*** (USEER) was released by the National Association of State Energy Officials and the think tank Energy Futures Initiative on March 6 , providing detailed statistics about the energy workforce and the industrial sectors in which they work. The 2019 USEER reports on the “Traditional Energy Sector” (composed of fuels; electric power generation; and electric power transmission, distribution and storage) as well as the energy efficiency sector. Those four sectors combined to employ approximately 6.7 million Americans, or 4.6 percent of the workforce, with an employment growth rate of almost 7 percent in 2018, outpacing the economy as a whole. The report also includes statistics on the motor vehicle and parts industry, (excluding automobile dealerships and retailers) – which grew at a rate of 3%, employing over 2.53 million workers. Of these, almost 254,000 employees worked with alternative fuels vehicles, including natural gas, hybrids, plug-in hybrids, all-electric, and fuel cell/hydrogen vehicles, an increase of nearly 34,000 jobs.

Noteworthy trends: the number of jobs in solar decreased by 4.2% in 2018 (the latest ***Solar Foundation Census*** reported a decrease of 3.2% for 2017- 2018); Oil and natural gas employers added the most new jobs in the fuel sector, nearly 51,000, most of which were in mining and extraction; the energy efficiency sector produced the most new jobs of any energy sector—over 76,000—with 2,324,866 jobs in total, and an anticipated growth rate of approximately 8%.

This is the second edition of the USEER Report to be published by the National Association of State Energy Officials and Energy Futures Initiative, and as before, it uses same the survey instrument and underlying methodology as was used when the U.S. Department of Energy was responsible, so that data is compatible for year-over-year comparisons. The survey was administered to over 30,000 employers across 53 different energy technologies in late 2018. Data shows: Employment numbers and trends; Employer hiring expectations for the next 12 months; Hiring difficulty by technology and industrial classification; High demand jobs and skills gaps; Workforce demographics by race, ethnicity, gender, and veteran’s status; highly detailed geographic location by state, county, congressional and legislative districts. A separate report on energy wage data is scheduled for release later in 2019. Reports are available in **several formats**: a Full

Report, Executive Summary, and reports by State, as well as individual sections for [Fuels](#); [Electric Power Generation Transmission, Distribution, and Storage](#); [Energy Efficiency](#); and [Motor Vehicles & Component Parts](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [Clean energy industry](#), [Electric power generation](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Energy Independence](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Generational justice and climate change: we can all strike for our future

Posted on **March 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The constitutional challenge by the government of Saskatchewan to the Canadian government's [Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act of 2018](#) is underway – [hearings were held in February](#) and a decision is pending, with a similar challenge by Ontario to be heard in April. The main purpose of the court challenges is to nullify the federal government's national carbon tax program, the signature issue of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. But the case has also given youth activists an opportunity to address the intergenerational justice of Canada's climate change policies, as described in "[Canada obliged to protect future generations from climate change, test case on carbon tax hears](#)" (Feb. 20) in *The Narwhal*.

The preamble of the [Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act of 2018](#) states: "...Parliament recognizes it is the responsibility of the present generation to minimize impacts of climate change on future generations." This gave the Intergenerational Climate Coalition, led by [Generation Squeeze](#), a platform, as recognized intervenors, to argue that: "Failure to price pollution discriminates against younger Canadians, because it puts in jeopardy our reasonable aspiration to thrive in 2030 and beyond" and "the health threats to children and future generations are vastly disproportionate to their contribution to greenhouse gas emissions". A [press release](#) in December 2018 describes the coalition and summarizes their arguments – mostly based on health consequences of climate change.

This issue of intergenerational justice was also addressed by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood in "[The all too ugly truth: Climate change is generational genocide](#)", published in *Behind the Numbers* in February. Echoing the strong and direct tone we have come to expect from Greta Thunberg, Mertins-Kirkwood states: "For the generations poised to inherit our warming world, the complacency and greed of their predecessors is no longer being tolerated. From [Autumn Peltier's presentation](#) to the United Nations to the climate strikes organized by [school children across Europe](#) to the [Quebec youth suing the government](#) for failing to protect the environment, young people are refusing to sit by while this existential crisis deepens." He continues: "The perpetrators of the climate change genocide [include the fossil fuel industry](#) and [climate-denying politicians](#), of course, but also the silent majority of fossil fuel consumers who actively ignore the mounting scientific evidence or otherwise take no responsibility for the path we are on. It is this generation's campaign of destruction that is being inflicted upon all other and future generations."

Youth are asking for help: The main point of Mertins-Kirkwood's article is to urge us all to act: First, by recognizing and acknowledging how we have contributed to the problem; Second, by making climate change "a central concern for everyone in your life"; and third, by supporting those fighting for a better future, through donations, but also by amplifying youth voices "online and beyond". Greta Thunberg has also stated: "If you think that we should be in school instead, then we suggest that you take our place in the streets, striking from your work. Or, better yet, join us, so we can speed up the process."

How to respond? "Intergenerational" organizations exist to support the actions of youth activists: for example, in Canada, [Canadian Parents for Climate Action](#), and [For our Grandchildren Canada](#); in Australia, [Australian Parents for Climate Action](#) and [1 Million Women](#). [Fridays for Future Canada](#) is coordinating the school strikes, but there are many more youth-led activist groups, many of whom are asking for support and donations. Some Canadian examples: [Canadian Youth Climate Coalition](#); [ENvironment JEUnesse](#) (Quebec group for under-35's suing the government); [PowerShift Young and Rising](#); [Youth Climate Lab](#); [The 3% Project](#).

Youth in at least 22 communities in Canada are participating in the Global Fridays for the Future climate Strike on March 15. As George Monbiot wrote in Resilience, **“Young climate strikes can win their fight. We must all help”**.

#FridaysForFuture Canada

Victoria BC
Nanaimo BC
Vancouver BC
Nelson BC
Edmonton AB
Calgary AB

Brighton ON
Vaughan ON
Peterborough ON
Toronto ON
Barrie ON
Kitchener/Waterloo ON

Winnipeg MN
Sudbury ON
Perth ON
Ottawa ON
Kingston ON
Belleville ON

London ON
Montreal QC
Fredericton NB
Bridgewater NS
Halifax NS

Youth striking in Canada registered as of March 1, 2019
We suspect that are more youth in Canada that are striking.
We connect them on teleconference calls so that they can support each other
and also receive help from adults if they choose.
Canadian youth, please register your strikes online here: cop24climatestrike.com
Let's get too connected to fail.

An excellent example: At their most recent climate strike, elementary school students in Sudbury were presented with a **letter of support from the faculty members** of Laurentian University.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate Activism](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [intergenerational justice](#), [Saskatchewan](#), [school strikers](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Reports on the future of Ontario's auto industry: one by experts, one by the Ontario government

Posted on **March 4, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

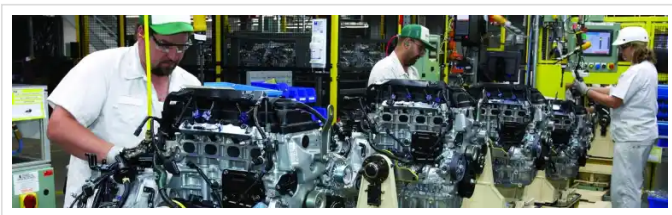


In ***The Future of Canada's Auto Industry***, released on February 26, co-authors Charlotte Yates and John Holmes assess the sector's current state – focusing on trade agreements and technological innovation – and recommend a suite of policies to boost competitiveness and avoid plant closures, especially timely in the aftermath of the “shocking” closure

announcement of GM Oshawa. Although concentrated in Ontario, the industry is important nationally: “The automotive industry contributes significantly to Canada’s economic prosperity through investment, employment and technological innovation. Currently, it is Canada’s second largest manufacturing industry, adding \$18.28 billion a year to GDP, \$86.58 billion a year to Canadian exports (17% of total merchandise exports), and employing over 126,000 people directly and half a million people indirectly.”

The authors acknowledge the importance of the future trend to electric and autonomous vehicles, and propose a green industrial policy with targeted supports for companies that commit to building green vehicles sustainably. They point out current shortages of skilled workers and the aging workforce in the industry, and call for a workforce development plan that will invest in engineering, technical and data analytic skills, including trades and apprenticeships and income supports for skills retraining towards a just transition for workers. They acknowledge the challenges of global competitiveness and the need for research and development, and call for financial incentives, including tax credits and grants, and better access to capital for small- and medium-sized Canadian technology companies, as well as more focused R & D investments. In general, they call for deep collaboration between the federal and Ontario government, rising above bureaucratic and jurisdictional interests. Flagged as the most important condition for future success for the industry: “government policy needs to prioritize the North American automotive platform centered on the Great Lakes. Canada–U.S. auto production and trade could be further integrated to create even greater competitive advantages of efficiency associated with a larger regional production footprint. Canada continues to need preferential tariff access to the American market for finished goods for this model to succeed.”

The Future of Canada’s Auto Industry was published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. A summary article which appeared in the *Toronto Star* on February 26, “**Electric, driverless vehicles key to survival of Canada’s auto industry**” gives short shrift to the trade relationships and the complex global dynamics of the auto industry, which figure more prominently in the actual report. The authors, John Holmes and Charlotte Yates, are both members of Canada’s **Automotive Policy Research Centre (APRC)**, with long and deep knowledge of Canada’s auto industry.



Ontario government discussion paper recommends less red tape and “pro-jobs labour reforms”:

In a second report, the same issues are discussed but with much different emphasis and level of analysis. The Ontario government’s discussion paper, *Driving Prosperity: the Future of Ontario’s Automotive Sector* was released in February under the “Open for Business” mandate. The government describes the paper as: “... a 10-year vision for how industry, the research and education sector, and all three levels of government, can work together to strengthen the auto sector’s competitiveness and bring new jobs to the province.” In the introduction, the government states “We are driving prosperity in the industry and creating a pro-jobs environment by cutting red tape, eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax, allowing businesses to write off job-creating capital investments faster, and embracing pro-jobs labour reforms.”

Although the government report acknowledges technological disruption and trade issues as challenges, there is no direct mention of the GM Oshawa plant closing – and in fact, most of the statistics provided are from 2017. The issue of retraining and skills upgrading is raised in the general context of changing technologies, stating: “ We also want to minimize the disruption caused to workers and their families by technology and production mandate changes. We need to find new ways to respond to complex challenges. We need to establish new relationships with government partners in labour and academia to help Ontarians find faster and smarter training solutions.”

The Green New Deal and Labour – updated with March 8 letter by AFL-CIO Energy Committee

Posted on February 27, 2019 by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Labor Network for Sustainability in the U.S. published a new Discussion Paper written by Jeremy Brecher in late February. **18 Strategies for a Green New Deal: How to Make the Climate Mobilization Work** states that initial discussion of the **Green New Deal resolution** was rightly focussed on values and goals, but this Discussion paper moves on to the “how”- in 18 specific proposals which are itemized individually, but are intended to work together. The paper explains and consolidates many of the goals and strategies which have been proposed before by LNS, including: protect low-income energy consumers and empower communities; mobilize labour and leave no worker behind; ensure worker rights and good union jobs, and yes, provide a “job guarantee.” The *18 Strategies* Discussion paper is summarized as **“The Green New Deal can work: Here’s How”**, which appeared in *Commons Dreams* on February 25 and was re-posted in *Resilience* on Feb. 26. In the article, Jerney Brecher states: “A GND will not pit workers against workers and discourage the growth of climate-protecting industries and jobs abroad. It will oppose both escalating trade wars and the free trade utopia of neoliberalism.”

The Labor Network for Sustainability has worked to build solidarity behind the Green New Deal, and on February 26, published a **Special Issue** of their newsletter, which profiles the GND endorsements and initiatives of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council in California, SEIU Locals 32BJ in New York, SIEU Local 1021 in San Francisco, and the Business Manager of IBEW Local 103 in Dorchester, Massachusetts, along with other examples and resources. The LNS website also hosts a new blog by Todd Vachon, **Green New Deal is a Good Deal for New Jersey workers**, in which he argues for the GND and cites some of **his research** which shows that union members are more likely than the general population to support environmental action.

Sean Sweeney, the Director of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, has published **“The Green New Deal’s Magical Realism”** in *New Labor Forum*, which rejects the “far-fetched” label that many have used for the GND, and argues that “the magnitude of the climate crisis makes the half-measures and failed ‘market mechanisms’ of the mainstream in fact more unrealistic than the bold plans put forward by the Green New Deal.” He further argues that the GND deserves to be defended by the Left, not least because it does not call for carbon pricing. “If it can be sustained, this exclusion will amount to a massive policy breakthrough, because it flies in the face of almost 30 years of investor-focused climate policy.”

Another voice for consensus: David Roberts, the climate change journalist at Vox, who wrote **“This is an emergency, damn it: Green New Deal critics are missing the bigger picture”** (Feb. 23). Roberts states: “..... So that’s the context here: a world tipping over into catastrophe, a political system under siege by reactionary plutocrats, a rare wave of well-organized grassroots enthusiasm, and a guiding document that does nothing but articulate goals that any climate-informed progressive ought to share. Given all that, for those who acknowledge the importance of decarbonizing the economy and recognize how cosmically difficult it is going to be, maybe nitpicking and scolding isn’t the way to go. Maybe the moment calls for a constructive and additive spirit.”

On the other hand, Naomi Klein attacks Republicans, but also unions, in her article [“The Battle lines have been drawn on the Green New Deal”](#) , which appeared in *The Intercept* (Feb. 13) . Klein praises the Canadian Union of Postal Workers for their climate change vision in [Delivering Community Power](#) , but singles out “bad actors like the Laborers’ International Union of North America who are determined to split the labor movement and sabotage the prospects for this historic effort.” Calling LIUNA “a fossil fuel astroturf group disguised as a trade union, or at best a company union”, Klein states: “The time has come for the rest of the labor movement to confront and isolate them before they can do more damage. That could take the form of LIUNA members, confident that the Green New Deal will not leave them behind, voting out their pro-boss leaders. Or it could end with LIUNA being tossed out of the AFL-CIO for planetary malpractice.”

The [LIUNA official response](#) to the Green New Deal was posted on February 7, and states: “It is exactly how not to successfully enact desperately needed infrastructure investment. It is exactly how not to enact a progressive agenda to address our nation’s dangerous income inequality. And it is exactly how not to win support for critical measures to curb climate change.... threatens to destroy workers’ livelihoods, increase divisions and inequality, and undermine the very goals it seeks to reach. In short, it is a bad deal.”

UPDATE: On March 8, the Energy Committee of the AFL-CIO released a letter they sent to Senator Ed Markey and Representative Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, opposing the Green New Deal. The *Washington Post* reported: [“AFL-CIO criticizes Green New Deal, calling it ‘not achievable or realistic’”](#) (March 12) and in a follow-up piece , [“Labor opposition to Green New Deal could be a big obstacle”](#) (March 14). More details are [here](#), along with a link to a policy paper submitted by IBEW, United Mine Workers of America and others to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce in February 2019.

For all those who are still wandering through the mountains of Green New Deal articles and opinions: Canada’s *National Observer* published a very brief summary in [“What is the Green New Deal and how would it benefit society?”](#) (reprinted from *The Guardian* in the U.K.). A more detailed explanation appears in [The Green New Deal: Mobilizing for a Just, Prosperous and Sustainable Economy](#) , a 14-page paper written by the originators of the concept, Rhianna Gunn-Wright and Robert Hockett at New Consensus, or their [2-page summary](#) . And here is the text of the GND Resolution tabled in the House of Representatives on February 7 2019: [Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [AFL-CIO](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Labor Network for Sustainability](#), [Laborers International Union](#), [labour union policies](#), [LIUNA](#), [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

NEB rules that Trans Mountain pipeline is in public interest, despite marine dangers and ignoring climate impacts

Posted on [February 25, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



In headline news on February 22, Canada's National Energy Board released the **Report of its Reconsideration** process ([here](#) in French), and for the second time, approved construction of the Trans Mountain Pipeline. The NEB states: "... Project-related marine shipping is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects on the Southern resident killer whale and on Indigenous cultural use associated with the Southern resident killer whale. The NEB also found that greenhouse gas emissions from Project-related marine vessels would likely be significant. While a credible worst-case spill from the Project or a Project-related marine vessel is not likely, if it were to occur the environmental effects would be significant. While these effects weighed heavily in the NEB's consideration of Project-related marine shipping, the NEB recommends that the Government of Canada find that they can be justified in the circumstances, in light of the considerable benefits of the Project and measures to minimize the effects."

The decision was expected, and reaction was immediate: From *The Energy Mix* "**NEB Sidesteps 'Significant' Impacts, Recommends Trans Mountain Pipeline Approval**", which summarizes reaction; from the *National Observer* in "**For a second time, NEB recommends approval of Trans Mountain pipeline expansion**" (Feb. 22) and "**NEB ruling sparks new vows to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline**". An Opinion piece by Andrew Nikoforuk in *The Tyee* is titled, "**NEB 'Reconsideration Report' a New Low for Failing Agency**" and from the Council of Canadians, "**The fight to #StopTMX Continues as feds approve their own pipeline**". From British Columbia, where the government has appeared as an **intervenor** against the pipeline, the Sierra Club reaction is [here](#); the **Dogwood Institute** pledged opposition (including a rally against the decision in Vancouver) and pledged to make the Trans Mountain project a major part of the federal election scheduled for Fall 2019; and West Coast Environmental Law **press release** also pledged continued opposition. Albertans see it differently, with Premier Rachel Notley **releasing a statement** which sees the decision as progress, but not enough to be a victory, and states: "We believe these recommendations and conditions are sound, achievable, and will improve marine safety for all shipping, not just for the one additional tanker a day that results from Trans-Mountain." It is important to note that not all Albertans are pro-pipeline: Climate Justice Edmonton is protesting with a "**People on the Path**" installation along the route, and **Extinction Rebellion Edmonton** actively protests fossil fuel development.

Meaningful Indigenous consultation still needed : The NEB Reconsideration process was triggered by an August 2018 decision of the Federal Court of Appeal, which ordered the NEB to re-examine especially the potential impacts of marine shipping on marine life, and the potential damages of an oil spill. The Reconsideration report has resulted in 16 new recommendations on those issues, along with the existing 156 conditions. Although the final decision on the project rests with Cabinet, the issue of meaningful Indigenous consultation is still outstanding from the order of the Court of Appeal. According to the CBC, "**Ottawa has met already with three-quarters of Indigenous communities during Trans Mountain consultation reboot**" as of Feb. 20, but also **according to the CBC**, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs says "We still say no to the project."



Even if one nation, one community says no, that project is not happening". And the **Tiny House Warriors** continue to occupy buildings along the pipeline path, to assert their authority over the land.

Canada ignores GHG impacts while Australia rules against a coal mine on GHG grounds.... A motion was brought by the environmental group Stand.earth, demanding that the NEB reconsideration of Trans Mountain include consideration of its upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emissions, as had been done in the Energy East consultation. Stand.earth stated: "The board cannot possibly fulfill its mandate of determining whether the project is in the public interest without considering whether the project is reconcilable with Canada's international obligations to substantially reduce GHG emissions." An article in the *National Observer*, "**IPCC authors urge NEB to consider climate impacts of Trans Mountain pipeline expansion**" summarizes the situation and quotes Tzeborah Berman, international program director at Stand.earth, as well as Marc Jaccard and Kirsten Zickfeld, two professors from Simon Fraser University. On February 19, the National Energy Board **ruled on the Stand.earth motion**, refusing to expand the scope of their reconsideration. Council of Canadians reacted with "**NEB climate denial another Trudeau broken promise**".

It is doubly disappointing that Canada's National Energy Board declined to include climate change impacts in its assessment, in the same month that the Land & Environment Court of New South Wales, Australia upheld the government's previous denial of a permit for an open cut coal mine. According to [a report in *The Guardian*](#), the decision explicitly cited the project's potential impact on climate change, writing that an open-cut coalmine in the Gloucester Valley "would be in the wrong place at the wrong time.... Wrong time because the GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions of the coal mine and its coal product will increase global total concentrations of GHGs at a time when what is now urgently needed, in order to meet generally agreed climate targets, is a rapid and deep decrease in GHG emissions." The decision was also covered in: "[Court rules out Hunter Valley coal mine on climate change grounds](#)" (Feb. 8) in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and from the Law Blog of Columbia University: "[Big Climate Win Down Under: Australian Court Blocks Coal Mine Citing Negative Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)".

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Australia](#), [British Columbia](#), [Environmental Assessment](#), [First Nations](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [National Energy Board](#), [Ocean Protection](#), [Oil pipelines](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

One more time – how best to train workers in green construction?

Posted on [February 25, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The U.K.'s [Committee on Climate Change](#) released a new report on February 21, *U.K. Housing – Fit for the Future?*, assessing how well U.K. housing is prepared for the impacts of climate change, including heat waves and flood risks. Energy use in Britain's 29 million homes accounts for 14% of current GHG emissions, and the report concludes that the U.K. cannot meet its present climate targets without major improvement in the housing sector. The report states that energy use in homes actually increased between 2016 and 2017, with many energy efficiency initiatives stalled and standards and policies weakened or not enforced. The report identifies 5 priorities and makes 36 recommendations to improve that performance, with a goal to reduce emissions by 24 % by 2030 from 1990 levels.

One of the five priority areas needing urgent change is "the skills gap". The report states: "Regular changes to key policies have led to uncertainty and poor focus on new housing design and construction skills in the UK. The UK Government should use the initiatives announced under the [Construction Sector Deal](#) to tackle the low-carbon skills gap. Professional standards and skills across the building, heat and ventilation supply trades need to be reviewed, with a nationwide training programme to upskill the existing workforce, along with an increased focus on incentivising high 'as-built' performance. There is an urgent need for further work to ensure that low-carbon heat and mechanical ventilation systems are designed, commissioned and installed properly, and that householders are supported to use them effectively.

Similar efforts are needed to develop appropriate skills and training for passive cooling measures, water efficiency, property-level flood resilience and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).”

The Paper Trail of Government Reports: The **Construction Sector Deal** referred to is a 2018 policy paper, part of the larger Industrial Strategy exercise, which includes a “**People**” **section** , which describes very specific proposals to improve training and apprenticeship programs under the industry-led **Construction Industry Training Board** (which was itself **reviewed** in 2018). The 2018 Construction Sector Deal built upon **Construction 2025**, which was a vision paper of government and industry working together, released in 2013.

A different perspective from the government-industry reports appears in an article by Linda Clarke, Colin Gleeson, and Christopher Winch in 2017, “**What kind of expertise is needed for low energy construction?**” which appeared in the journal *Construction Management and Economics*. The authors, from ProBE , the Centre for the Study of the Production of the Built Environment at University of Westminster, sketched out the essence of the problem, stating: “There is a lack of the expertise needed for low energy construction (LEC) in the UK as the complex work processes involved require ‘energy literacy’ of all construction occupations, high qualification levels, broad occupational profiles, integrated teamworking, and good communication.” Their proposed prescription for low energy construction was “a transformation of the existing structure of VET provision and construction employment and a new curriculum based on a broader concept of agency and backed by rigorous enforcement of standards. This can be achieved through a radical transition pathway rather than market-based solutions to a low carbon future for the construction sector.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Apprenticeship](#), [Green Building](#), [retrofitting](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [Training](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Architects, planners, and engineers working for climate change mitigation and adaptation

Posted on **February 22, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A joint statement, “**Advancing Integrated Climate Action**” was released in Fall 2018 by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects , Canadian Institute of Planners , Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and the Canadian Water & Wastewater Association, acknowledging their ethical and civic responsibilities to address climate change issues, undertaking to improve professional development, and calling on all levels of government and Indigenous leaders to show meaningful leadership in “advocating for integrated climate action and upholding commitments in the Paris Agreement.” The 3-page Joint Statement, which includes much more, is [here](#).

What lies behind this statement? A team of researchers at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, in cooperation with the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) in Victoria, surveyed and interviewed planning professionals in British Columbia, and provincial and national professional associations on the issue of “low carbon resilience (LCR)”. The final

report of their research, [Low Carbon Resilience: Best Practices for Professionals – Final Report](#) , was released in December 2018, providing case studies, tools and resources. The report includes a conceptual model of Low Carbon Resilience, as well as best practices case studies of how LCR can be mainstreamed – for example, local government planning in [the City of Hamburg, Germany](#) ; the [British Columbia Energy Step Code](#) ; and the construction and operation of a major health facility, the [Christus Spohn Hospital in Corpus Christie Texas](#) . The report also addresses the needs and possibilities for training and continuing professional development, and describes the database of key LCR-related tools and resources which is under construction.

An earlier report, [Professionals' Best Practices for Low Carbon Resilience Summary of Phase One Engagement of Professionals and Professional Associations and Proposed Research Agenda](#) summarizes the responses regarding individual attitudes and the role of professional associations . The report identified “siloe thinking among professions” as a barrier to climate change action – leading, for example, to a lack of awareness of the interconnections between zoning requirements, agricultural uses, biodiversity and infrastructure engineering in decisions about development and infrastructure planning.

The rationale behind the research: “This project focused on the key role professionals play as change agents in climate action, and what is needed for all sectors to advance uptake of LCR-based practices. Communities and businesses rely on professional planners, engineers, developers, lawyers, and other experts for guidance, design, development, implementation, operations, maintenance and replacement of all aspects of society’s systems. Professionals are seminal in supporting and supplementing capacity at the local scale, where climate change impacts are felt most prominently, and where the greatest burden of response typically resides. It is therefore urgent that professionals are equipped to help local governments think through cost-effective plans that transcend outdated planning.”

It should be noted that Canadian professional engineers are an important part of this system, and have long addressed their professional role related to climate change. Engineers Canada’s most recent [Policy Statement on Climate Change](#) details that history, sets out their position and makes recommendations for government. In May 2018, Engineers Canada issued comprehensive guidelines for standards, practice and professional development in [National Guideline: Principles of Climate Adaptation and Mitigation for Engineers](#).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Adaptation](#), [architects](#), [B.C. Energy Step Code](#), [Engineers](#), [Mitigation](#), [Professional Associations](#), [Professional Codes and Guidelines](#), [Urban Adaptations](#), [urban planners](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Budget delivers \$902 million to fund Clean B.C. initiatives

Posted on [February 20, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The government of British Columbia [tabled its Budget](#) on February 19- officially detailed in [Making Life Better- A Plan for B.C. 2019/20 — 2021/22](#) . As summarized by the *National Observer* article, [“B.C. provincial budget funds nearly \\$1 billion for climate action”](#) , it included \$902 million over the next three years to support the 2018 [Clean B.C. Plan](#) . Here are some of the big-ticket items: \$107 million for transportation initiatives – mostly providing incentives for zero-emission vehicle purchases (up to \$6000 per vehicle) and funding for new charging stations; \$58 million for making homes and commercial buildings more energy efficient – as a result, homeowners can get up to \$14,000 for energy efficiency

improvements such as switching to high-efficiency heating systems or upgrading their doors or windows. \$168 million is dedicated to funding an incentive program to encourage large industrial polluters to reduce their emissions; \$15 million is dedicated to help remote communities transition to clean energy solutions, and \$299 million is unallocated as yet. In addition to the Clean B.C. funds, the budget includes \$111 million over three years to fight and prevent wildfires, another \$13 million for forest restoration, and \$3 million for the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative, to help First Nations communities build clean energy projects.

Reaction has generally been positive – for example, [from Clean Energy Canada](#). The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. Office, in [“Nine things to know about the B.C. Budget”](#) commends the \$223 million which is budgeted to increase the climate action tax credit for low- and middle-income earners, but says, “action needs to be ramped up further—and fast”. CCPA’s [Special Pre-budget Feature](#) included an essay by Marc Lee [“Expand climate initiatives to reflect the urgency of the crisis”](#) (Feb. 1). Lee had called for the reinstatement of annual increases to the carbon tax, beginning in 2019 with an increase of \$10 per tonne – but no such policy was announced. (Lee had also called for more realistic budget allocations for wildfire response, which was addressed).

Finally, [the Pembina Institute response](#) is generally positive, though it calls for an independent panel to publicly monitor accountability and report on progress annually, echoing the [Op-Ed “wish list”](#) it had released before the budget was handed down. That had stated: “B.C.’s Climate Change Accountability Act needs more teeth. What’s required is a transparent process whereby the government forecasts carbon pollution (including reduction goals for each sector), tracks and publicly reports on our progress, submits this data for independent verification, and adjusts policies as necessary.”

Other key items which Pembina had called for include stronger regulations than those [announced in January](#) to limit methane pollution, and a strategy to use clean electricity to power the controversial LNG production which threatens to make the province’s GHG emissions targets unreachable.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [BC LNG](#), [British Columbia](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Roadmap to improve green building skills in Ontario

Posted on [February 19, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A report released by the Canadian Green Building Council (CaGBC) at the end of January is called “an action plan to close the low-carbon building skills gap in the Ontario construction industry”. [Trading Up: Equipping Ontario Trades with the Skills of the Future](#) estimates that the skills gap is costing Ontario C\$24.3 billion in annual economic activity, and limiting the province’s ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The report identifies where shortages in low-carbon skills training currently exist, and defines specific actions that labour, governments, post-secondary institutions and industry organizations can take to optimize green building skills training. Although it focuses on the skilled trades, the report also calls for skills upgrading for designers, architects, engineers, buildings officials and buildings managers, highlighting that

“Changes to the larger construction approach and acknowledgment of soft skills are necessary to deliver high-performing buildings. We therefore need to increase overall levels of ‘green literacy’ .” The 6-page Executive summary is [here](#) .

The CaGBC also released the [2018 LEED Impact Report for Canada](#) in January 2019 providing statistical snapshots of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified and Zero Carbon building in each province and territory – with measures for energy savings, GHG reductions, water savings, recycling, and green roofs.

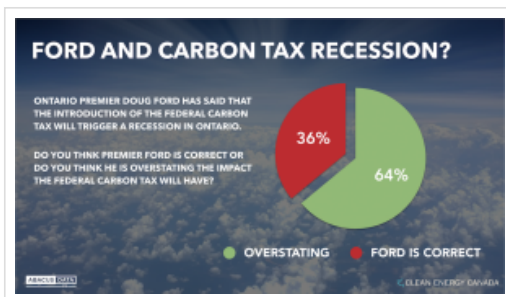
On February 13, the U.S. Green Building Council released its annual ranking of the Top 10 countries and regions of the world (excluding the U.S.) which have the highest cumulative gross square meters of construction which are LEED-certified. **Canada ranked 2nd** in terms of gross square metres of LEED certified space, after China, and ranked first in the number of certified projects, with 3,254 certified projects.

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Public opinion polls: on carbon tax, pipelines, and a growing fear of climate change around the world

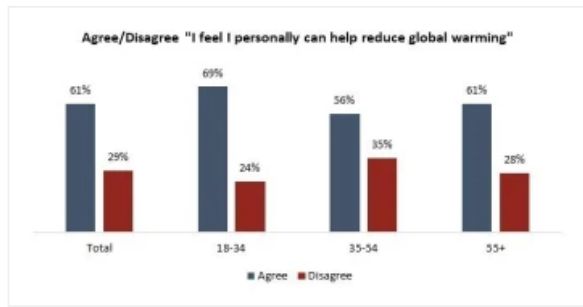
Posted on **February 19, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On February 8, Clean Energy Canada [released results](#) from an online survey of 2,500 Canadian adults, conducted by Abacus Data. Across Canada, 35% support a federal carbon tax, 37% say they are open to considering it, and 28% oppose it – with the highest opposition from Alberta (41%). When told that revenues would be rebated to households (the



Carbon Incentive Plan), support climbed by 9 points – and even more in Alberta. Asked if they agreed with Ontario Premier **Doug Ford’s statement** that a carbon tax will bring a recession, **64% of Canadians and 63% of Ontarians disagreed** – and when asked a follow-up question asserting that many economists disagree with Premier Ford, 74% of Canadians and 73% of Ontarians stated they would trust the economists over the Premier.

The [Angus Reid Institute](#) has tracked opinion about a carbon tax in Canada since April 2015, and are due to release new survey results in winter 2019 . Their online survey conducted in October 2018 (just after the announcement of the federal Carbon Incentive plan), showed that [support for a carbon tax](#) had increased nationally from 43% in July 2018 to 54% in October. The leading cause of opposition to the carbon plan is the sense that it is a “tax grab”, followed by the opinion that it will not help reduce emissions. Also notably, “six-in-ten Canadians say they do not trust information about climate change from their provincial government – with only 24% of Manitobans trusting their government. *Who do* Canadians trust on this issue? 78% trust university scientists; 56% trust “international organizations doing work in this field”.



— From Angus Reid Institute, “Duelling realities” poll

Other recent Angus Reid analysis of Canadians’ overall attitudes on climate change was released on November 30 in **“Duelling realities? Age, political ideology divide Canadians over cause & threat of climate change”**. Only 9% of Canadians do NOT perceive climate change as a threat, with 55% of 18 to 34-year-olds said they believe climate change to be a very serious threat. Yet a survey released in January 2019, **“Six-in-ten Canadians say lack of new pipeline capacity represents a crisis in this country”** details the polarized opinions about oil pipelines, showing that 53% of Canadians surveyed support both the Energy East and TransMountain pipeline projects, and six-in-ten say the lack of new pipeline capacity constitutes a “crisis”. Opinions are divided by region, ranging from 87% in Alberta and 74% in Saskatchewan seeing a crisis, versus 40% in Quebec.

Opinion in the United States: Results from the December 2018 national survey, **Climate Change in the American Mind**, reveal that 46% of Americans polled have personally experienced the effects of global warming, and a majority are worried about harm from extreme events in their local area – including extreme heat (61%), flooding (61%), droughts (58%), and/or water shortages (51%). This longstanding survey (since 2013) is conducted by the **Yale Program on Climate Change Communication** and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication. It also updates the results in the series, **“Global Warming’s Six Americas”**, which categorizes attitudes from “Alarmed”, to “Concerned”, all the way to “Doubtful” and “Dismissive” – showing that in December 2018, the “Alarmed” segment is at an all-time high of 29%, while the “Dismissive” and “Doubtful” responses have declined to only 9%. The **full report** also includes responses concerning emotional responses to global warming, perceived risks, and personal and social engagement – which includes such questions as “How much of an effort do your family and friends make to reduce global warming?”

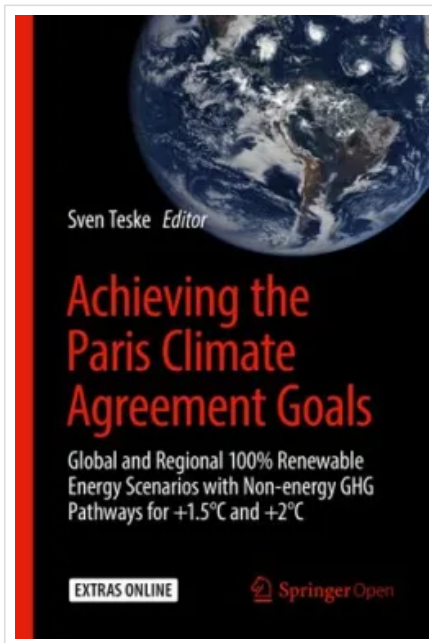
Australian women are re-considering having children: A survey released in February by the **Australian Conservation Foundation** and the **1 Million Women** organization reports on climate change attitudes of Australian women, in the lead-up to the country’s federal election in 2019. Of the 6514 Australian women who responded to the survey between September – October 2018, nearly 90% are extremely concerned about climate change. Again, concern is highest in the under-30 bracket, where one in three are so worried about what global warming that they are reconsidering having children. A four page summary of survey results is [here](#).

Finally, international attitudes are reflected in a survey published in February by Pew Research Center: **“Climate Change Still Seen as the Top Global Threat, but Cyberattacks a Rising Concern”**. This top-level survey of 26 countries shows that climate change was perceived as the most important threat in 13 countries: including Canada, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Spain, Sweden, U.K., Australia, South Korea, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. In the U.S., the top threat was seen to be cyberattacks from other countries (74%), followed by attacks from ISIS (62%). Global climate change was the third-ranked threat at 59%.

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New modelling forecasts 46 million jobs by 2050 in a 100% renewable energy scenario

Posted on February 8, 2019 by elizabethperry493



A newly-released book, *Achieving the Paris Climate Agreement Goals*, provides detailed discussion of the the implications, including job implications, of a transition to 100% renewable energy. The book's findings are summarized by Sven Teske of the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney, in "[Here's how a 100% renewable energy future can create jobs and even save the gas industry](#)", which appeared in *The Conversation* (Jan. 23). That article states: "The world can limit global warming to 1.5°C and move to 100% renewable energy while still preserving a role for the gas industry, and without relying on technological fixes such as carbon capture and storage, according to our new analysis." The scenario is built on complex modelling – The **One Earth Climate Model** – and foresees a gradual transition from gas to hydrogen energy, so that "by 2050 there would be 46.3 million jobs in the global energy sector – 16.4 million more than under **existing forecasts**.... Our analysis also investigated the specific occupations that will be required for a renewables-based energy industry. The global number of jobs would increase across all of these occupations between 2015 and 2025, with the exception of metal trades which would decline by 2%."

The article summarizes a book with a daunting title: *Achieving the Paris Climate Agreement Goals: Global and Regional 100% Renewable Energy Scenarios with Non-energy GHG Pathways for +1.5°C and +2°C*. It is the culmination of a two-year scientific collaboration with 17 scientists at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), two institutes at the German Aerospace Center (DLR), and the University of Melbourne's Climate & Energy College, with funding provided by the Leonard DiCaprio Foundation and the German Greenpeace Foundation. It was published in January 2019 by Springer as an **Open Access book**, meaning it is free to download the entire book or individual chapters without violating copyright. Of special interest: Chapter 9, **Trajectories for a Just Transition of the Fossil Fuel Industry**, which provides historical production data for coal, oil and gas production, discusses phase-out pathways for each, and concludes with a discussion of the need "to shift the current political debate about coal, oil and gas which is focused on security of supply and price security towards an open debate about an orderly withdrawal from coal, oil and gas extraction industries."

The data presented in Chapter 9 form the foundation of Chapter 10, **Just Transition: Employment Projections for the 2.0 °C and 1.5 °C Scenarios**. This consists of quantitative analysis, (the overall number of jobs in renewable and fossil fuel industries) and occupational analysis – which looks into specific job categories required for the solar and wind sector, and the oil, gas, and coal industry. The chapter provides projections for jobs in construction, manufacturing, operations and maintenance (O&M), and fuel and heat supply across 12 technologies and 10 world regions. The conclusion: "Under both

the 1.5 °C and 2.0 °C Scenarios, the renewable energy transition is projected to increase employment. Importantly, this analysis has reviewed the locations and types of occupations and found that the jobs created in wind and solar PV alone are enough to replace the jobs lost in the fossil fuel industry across all occupation types. Further research is required to identify the training needs and supportive policies needed to ensure a just transition for all employment groups.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [employment impacts](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [Modelling](#), [Natural Gas Employment](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar PV Manufacturing](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate litigation in Canada – first youth, now Victoria B.C. may take to the courts

Posted on **February 7, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new articles describe the first examples of climate change litigation in Canada. In “[Climate change litigation arrives in Canada](#)”, lawyers from Osler’s, a Toronto-based law firm, summarize two examples of climate change litigation to arise in Canada: the claim by Quebec youth against the government of Canada, and the January 16 decision by the council of Victoria, B.C. to endorse a class action lawsuit against fossil fuel companies. The second article appeared in *Climate Liability News*, and provides more detail about the municipal movement for climate accountability.



As the [WCR blog reported](#) when the case was launched in November 2018, the first Canadian lawsuit was filed by [ENvironnement JEunesse \(ENJEU\)](#) in the Quebec Superior Court on behalf of people under the age of 35 and resident in Quebec. They are claiming that the federal government has infringed on the rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Québec Charter of Rights and Freedoms, by failing to take adequate action to prevent climate change. The [ENJEU](#) website places their action in the context of the global litigation movement begun by the Urgenda case in the Netherlands, and the Juliana case in the U.S., and like them, faces a long road of legal procedures.



Victoria endorses a class action lawsuit for climate change damages: The more recent example of Canadian climate litigation comes from Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia, which on January 17 endorsed a class action lawsuit against oil and gas producers for climate-related harms. This is described briefly in the [Osler article](#) (Feb. 5), in “[Next Climate Liability Suits vs. Big Oil Could Come from Western Canada](#)” in *Climate Liability News* on January 22, and in greater detail in a [Globe and Mail article](#) (Jan. 17). Also in January, Vancouver [city council voted to declare a climate emergency](#), and according to the *Globe and Mail* article, is considering whether to join with Victoria in the class action lawsuit. Also in January, the [city of Halifax in Nova Scotia](#) became the third major city to declare a climate emergency – with city staff tasked with figuring out how the city can set up a climate change directorate, with a goal of net zero carbon before 2050.

As both the Osler and the Climate Liability articles state, Vancouver and Victoria have been encouraged by the [Climate Law in Our Hands campaign](#) organized by West Coast Environmental Law – a campaign which began in 2017, and has enlisted 16 municipalities to send “Climate Accountability Letters” to the world’s largest fossil fuel companies, asking that these companies pay a fair share of local costs related to climate change adaptation. In September 2018, the [Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities](#) (of which Victoria is a member) sent a climate accountability letter on behalf of its 53 local government members.

Perhaps other Canadian municipalities should consider such actions. [“Evaluating the quality of municipal climate change plans in Canada”](#), first published online in November 2018 in *Climatic Change*, catalogues and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of climate change plans in eight dimensions, in sixty-three Canadian municipalities. The conclusions: Canadian municipal climate change plans currently prioritize mitigation over adaptation; implementation, monitoring, and evaluation are relatively weak aspects; and municipalities have given insufficient consideration to the element of stakeholder engagement in the climate change plan-making process. Highest ranked cities were in Ontario: Kingston, followed by the Waterloo Region, and Hamilton. New Westminster, British Columbia was identified as most needing improvement.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate litigation](#), [Halifax](#), [legal action](#), [Quebec](#), [Victoria B.C.](#), [youth litigation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green New Deal Resolution introduced in U.S. House of Representatives

Posted on [February 7, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



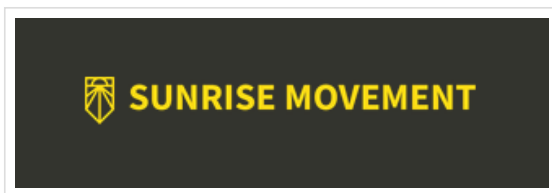
On February 7, 2019, freshman Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, in partnership with Ed Markey, tabled a Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives, titled, [“Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal”](#). Here is the statement of goals (cut and pasted by WCR from the OAC version): “Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that (1) it is the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal— (A) to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers; (B) to create millions of good, high-wage jobs and ensure prosperity and economic security for all people of the United States; (C) to invest in the infrastructure and industry of the United States to sustainably meet the challenges of the 21st century; (D) to secure for all people of the United States for generations to come—(i) clean air and water; (ii) climate and community resiliency; (iii) healthy food; (iv) access to nature; and (v) a sustainable environment; and (E) to promote justice and equity by stopping current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression of indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrant communities, deindustrialized communities, depopulated rural communities, the poor, low-income workers, women, the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities, and youth (referred to in this resolution as “frontline and vulnerable communities”).” .

David Roberts in his [article in Vox](#), states: “The resolution consists of a preamble, five goals, 12 projects, and 15 requirements. The preamble establishes that there are two crises, a climate crisis and an economic crisis of wage stagnation and growing inequality, and that the GND can address both. The goals — achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, creating jobs, providing for a just transition, securing clean air and water — are broadly popular. The projects — things like decarbonizing electricity, transportation, and industry, restoring ecosystems, upgrading buildings and electricity grids — are necessary and sensible (if also extremely ambitious).” Roberts emphasizes the progressive, social justice core of the proposals, including that “the Green New Deal now involves a federal job guarantee, the right to unionize, liberal trade and monopoly policies, and universal housing and health care.”

Media coverage began immediately : [“Democrats Formally Call for a Green New Deal, Giving Substance to a Rallying Cry”](#) in the *New York Times* ; articles also appear in the *Washington Post* and *The Guardian* , and *Politico* compiles general reactions in [“Green New Deal lands in the Capitol”](#). From Jake Johnson of *Common Dreams*, [“This Is What Hope Feels Like’: Green New Deal Resolution Hailed as ‘Watershed Moment’ for New Era of Climate Action”](#) .

By February 8, the *Washington Post* analysis appeared: [“No ‘unanimity’ on Green New Deal, says key House Democrat”](#) , which discusses the political odds of success for the Green New Deal – and cites the satirical headline which appeared in *The Onion*: “Nancy Pelosi Signals Support For Environmental Causes By Placing Green New Deal Directly Into Recycling Bin.” *Politico* also discusses the political opposition in [“The Impossible Green Dream of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez”](#) , referencing the “green dream” label given the plan by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

As of February 8, the AFL-CIO hadn't posted a reaction. The Labor Network for Sustainability has been strongly in favour of the Green New Deal: see, for example, their post, [Twelve Reasons Labour should demand a Green New Deal](#) , written before the proposal was tabled in the House of Representatives.



On February 11, the **Sunrise Movement**, the key mover behind the Green New Deal, posted [their reaction on Common Dreams](#) , pledging to assemble an “unprecedented coalition” , which already includes Justice Democrats, 32BJ SEIU, Green for All, 1199SEIU, Center for Popular Democracy, People's Action, Working Families Party, Dream Corps, Presente.org, Demos, Sierra Club, [350.org](#), CREDO, Bold, Organic Consumers Association, Honor the Earth, Seeding Sovereignty, American Sustainable Business Council President, and NextGen. From Sunrise: “We’re planning over 600 Congressional office visits this week to kick start our campaign to build the political and public support for the Green New Deal, which will include getting thousands of organizations signed on to back the resolution.”

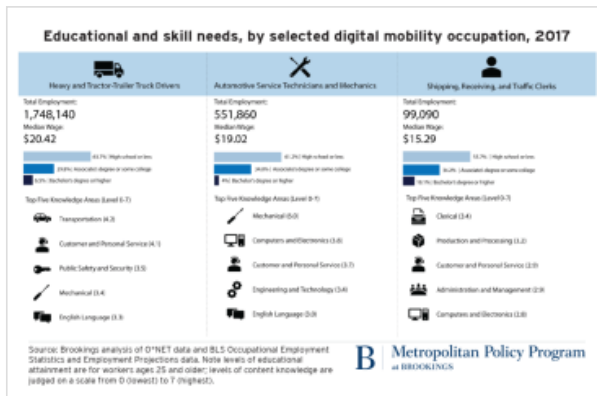
Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Environmental Justice](#), [Green Economy](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Sunrise Movement](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Skills and training for Clean jobs in the U.S. : Focus on infrastructure and auto manufacturing

Posted on [February 6, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A January 25th blog by the Brookings Institution is a recent addition to a series of publications about the workforce implications of the transition to a clean economy. [“The Green New Deal promises jobs, but workers need to be ready to fill them”](#) (Jan. 25) broadly discusses the range of occupations which will be affected by the transition to a clean

economy, and promises forthcoming research which “will delve deeper” into the workforce issues – going beyond simply job estimates and forecasts to look at skills and training requirements and barriers, as well as working conditions.



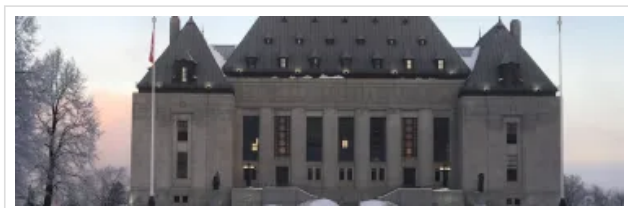
Specific to the transformation of the auto manufacturing industry, Brookings has published “[What GM’s layoffs reveal about the digitalization of the auto industry](#)” (Dec. 13 2018) and in February 2019, “[Equipping today’s AV workforce with skills to succeed tomorrow](#)”, which defines the “digital mobility workforce” to include truck drivers, automotive service technicians and mechanics, and many other jobs beyond the engineers we normally associate with autonomous vehicle production. The article cites the [Michigan Alliance for Greater Mobility Advancement \(MAGMA\)](#), a component of the [Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan \(WIN\)](#), which exists to identify the skill needs, and train for, “Michigan’s rapidly changing automotive industry as it moves towards CAV, cybersecurity, embedded software systems, and other emerging technologies.”

Earlier Brookings reports focus on infrastructure jobs, including [Infrastructure skills: Knowledge, tools, and training to increase Opportunity](#) (May 2016), and [Renewing the water workforce: Improving water infrastructure and creating a pipeline to opportunity](#) (June 2018). [Opportunity Industries: Exploring the industries that concentrate good and promising jobs in metropolitan America](#) (Dec. 2018) also provides an important look at the potential to improve workforce development policies, although it focuses on “good jobs” and “promising jobs”, rather than green jobs,

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [autonomous vehicles](#), [Education and Training](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Retraining](#), [workforce development](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Supreme Court rules in Redwater: bankruptcy is no escape from “polluter pays”

Posted on [February 6, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On January 31, the Supreme Court of Canada released a long-awaited, precedent-setting decision which holds fossil fuel companies responsible for the clean-up costs of their abandoned operations, and gives environmental clean-up costs precedence over other creditors’ claims. The case arose from the 2015 bankruptcy of Redwater Energy, a small, Calgary-based oil and gas company; the agent managing the bankruptcy was proposing to sell the company’s profitable wells to pay off debts, and leave the clean-up costs of the other non-producing wells to the [Orphan Well Association \(OWA\)](#), a provincial, industry-funded agency. The Supreme Court provides its own “Case in Brief” summary of the the case, [Orphan Well Association v. Grant Thornton Ltd.](#) [here](#), with links to all the official documents. The full decision is [here](#); French-

language versions of the [Case in Brief](#) , and the [full decision](#) are also provided. The response by the Orphan Well Association is [here](#) .

For a brief reaction: [“Redwater decision reassuring, but we aren’t out of the woods”](#) by the Pembina Institute (Jan. 31) or from the *National Observer* special series [Legacy of Liabilities](#) , a [summary of the decision](#) and the more detailed, [“Alberta lauds court ruling but has no oil well cleanup plan”](#).

Deeper background and analysis appears in [“Alberta’s Mega Oil and Gas Liability Crisis, Explained”](#) in *The Tyee* , in which Andrew Nikoforuk asks, “Just how will an increasingly indebted industry, hobbled by low energy prices and rising costs, find the up to \$260 billion needed to clean up its inactive pipelines, wells, plants and oilsands mines as it enters its sunset years?” He concludes with words from Regan Boychuk, a founder of [Reclaim Alberta](#), an advocacy group which began in 2016 to propose an [Alberta Reclamation Trust](#) , which would clean-up inactive wells and provide funding for job creation in the energy sector. Boychuk’s own insider’s view appeared in the *National Observer* as [“Putting the Supreme Court’s Redwater decision in context”](#) (Feb. 1) . (Boychuk also provided a briefer [Opinion piece](#) as a guest blogger in David Climenhaga’s *Albertapolitics.ca*).

Other detailed articles: An explainer from *The Narwhal*: [“What the Redwater ruling means for Alberta’s thousands of inactive oil and gas wells”](#) or from a legal point of view, from Osler law firm, [“Supreme Court of Canada decision in Redwater: Early Implications “](#).

It is clear that the implications of this decision are huge and expensive, not only for Alberta, but for all extractive industries across Canada. As the Pembina Institute points out: “obligations have steadily grown, and now include over 80,000 inactive oil and gas wells, facilities, and pipelines as well as 1.4 trillion litres in fluid oilsands tailings. The Government of Alberta officially estimates it will cost CAD\$57 billion to clean up these sites, though there are ongoing concerns about the accuracy of this figure. Conversely, only \$1.2 billion is currently held in securities to protect the public. ” (A [joint investigation](#) by the National Observer, Global News, the Toronto Star, and StarMetro Calgary in November 2018 estimated that the actual clean-up costs are approximately \$260 billion in Alberta alone).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [clean up costs](#), [Liability](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pollutor Pays Principle](#), [Redwater decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Can greener strategies like a Lucas Plan work for GM Oshawa?

Posted on [January 31, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Reaction to the November 2018 announcement by GM that it was closing five production plants in North America has been ongoing – as the WCR last reported in December in [“GM Oshawa closing – A sign of the disruption to auto manufacturing”](#). Unifor, the union representing most of the affected auto workers, has organized a vigorous [Save Oshawa GM campaign](#) , involving demonstrations and rallies; a [plant walkout](#) on January 8; a boycott of GM products, including a [boycott of GM cars made in Mexico](#) (launched on January 24); and a [television ad campaign](#) which will include air time on the Super Bowl broadcast. Unifor also commissioned an independent [economic impact study](#) which

found that the closure of GM would result in an immediate decline of \$5 billion in Ontario's GDP and a subsequent loss of \$4 billion per year to 2030. Both federal and provincial revenues would shrink, and job losses are projected to reach 14,000 in Ontario and a further 10,000 elsewhere across Canada by 2025. Unifor President Jerry Diaz has met with Ontario Premier Doug Ford, but Premier Ford's January 14 press release, "[Ontario Advocates for Auto Sector Jobs and Investment](#)", is silent on the GM closure. Federal Economic Development Minister Navdeep Bains and Premier Ford both met in [separate meetings with GM executives](#) during the Detroit Auto Show in January, but did not soften the company's position.

What role can greener strategies play? : "[High time for a green jobs strategy in Ontario](#)" in the *National Observer* (Dec.24) states: "Ontario is correct in supporting the transition of Oshawa plant employees with unemployment and retraining measures, accelerating the return to work of displaced workers. A more strategic approach by Ontario would have been an early response to GM's prior suggestion that its Oshawa production was guaranteed only until 2020, for example, by creating strategic retraining opportunities in alignment with emerging industries."

Several newspaper columnists have taken up the idea of re-tooling the Oshawa plant- beginning with David Olive's immediate reaction to the announcement in the *Toronto Star* in November, "[It's time for a truly Canadian automaker](#)"; Linda McQuaig in the *Toronto Star* with "[Trudeau should consider buying GM and making electric cars](#)"; and most notably, Jennifer Wells in the *Toronto Star* on January 15, "[For the GM Oshawa plant, hope is not a strategy](#)".

Wells has based her brief article on a much more thorough piece by Sam Gindin "[GM Oshawa: Making Hope Possible](#)", which appeared in the Socialist Project newsletter, *The Bullet*, on December 13. Gindin is a veteran of the labour movement and Ontario's auto industry, having served as the CAW's Research Director from 1974 to 2000. He argues that the current reactions are a dead end, and "larger, more radical aspirations [are]the only practical way out." He proposes a "Plan B", under which "the facility and its equipment should be placed under public ownership with no further compensation – the plant and its equipment have already been paid for by the sweat of workers and the \$3-billion in unpaid subsidies from taxpayers." Workers could stage "periodic industrial actions", including "days of action" and possibly occupation of the plant, to prevent GM from removing its equipment. And what to do with the plant in the future? Gindin proposes a [New Lucas Plan](#), following the model of the famous industrial conversion project in the 1970's, when U.K. labour unions met management's plans to restructure and cut jobs at Lucas Aerospace with worker-generated proposals to re-tool and produce socially-useful products, using their existing skills. Among the unions' proposed products – in the 1970's !! – were heat pumps, solar cell technology, wind turbines and fuel cell technology. Gindin's 2019 list of socially-useful products includes the energy-related products that our current climate change crisis requires.

In the U.S., some of these same ideas appear under the "Green New Deal" label. The [Detroit Green New Deal](#) is a coalition of labor, environmental, and community groups protesting the GM plant closures; participants include the Democratic Socialists of America, two groups from Unifor Local 222 (the Oshawa local), Sunrise Michigan, Good Jobs Now, and many others. Their "rallying cry" is "Make Detroit the Engine of Green New Deal", and their [Official Statement](#) calls for GM to honour its labour contracts and its legal and moral commitments by keeping all the plants open, creating more union jobs, and contributing to the building of a green economy. If GM does not agree to keep the plants open, Detroit Green New Deal demands that the plants be seized and put to public use (similar to Gindin's "socially- useful products").

Looking beyond the GM workers and their immediate predicament, the Detroit Green New Deal coalition demands "a Green New Deal that takes us on a path to rapid decarbonization of the economy, implements a federal union jobs guarantee, and ensures a just transition for workers, people of color, the poor, and other marginalized groups." These demands are more focussed, but reflect the social justice principles behind Sam Gindin's closing argument: "...thinking outside the box, engaging in larger struggles and actively involving our members in the discussions and strategizing over what to do and how to do it, carries the promise – or at least the potential – to revive our movement. There is no other way to overcome the demoralization of so many of our members, move to set aside the destructive divisions between unions that are such a barrier, and play the kind of social role that can excite a new generation of leaders and activists."

Bringing these arguments home to the issue of climate change and work, and the tensions of the green economy, is the 2010 article, "[Can trade unions become environmental innovators?: Learning from the Lucas Aerospace workers](#)". Authors Nora Räthzel, David Uzzell, and Dave Elliott concluded with: "We believe that drawing on the Lucas experience – trusting in and building on workers' skills and desire to produce something useful for themselves and the environment,

developing strategies with workers (technicians, and academics), instead of for them – would create a greater chance for the realisation of socially and environmentally just policies.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [General Motors](#), [GM Oshawa](#), [Green New Deal](#), [industrial strategy](#), [Lucas Plan](#), [plant closings](#), [plant conversion](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ILO report: “It is not action against climate change and environmental degradation that will destroy jobs, it is inaction that will destroy jobs”

Posted on **January 31, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



To mark its centenary in 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned a **Global Commission on the Future of Work** in 2015. On January 22, the Centenary was **launched** with the release of the Commission's report : **Work for a Brighter Future** , an aspirational document with recommendations for government policies to address the “unprecedented transformational change in the world of work.” The ten recommendations in the report call for a universal labour guarantee that protects fundamental workers' rights, an adequate living wage, limits on hours of work and safe and healthy workplaces, a universal entitlement to lifelong learning , managing technological change to boost decent work, and greater investments in the care economy, green economy, and rural economy. The Executive Summary is [here](#) ; the full 66-page Report is [here](#) .

Work for a Brighter Future is a broad and visionary document, but its arguments and proposals are supported by a series of more detailed research papers, including ***The Future of work in a Changing Natural Environment: Climate change, degradation and sustainability*** (August 2018) . The Research Paper argues that “... on the one hand, environmental degradation destroys work opportunities and worsens working conditions. On the other hand, any efforts to achieve sustainability will entail a structural transformation. Crucially, this transformation can result in more and better jobs.”

The paper calls for a new development model that acknowledges that the economy, including the world of work, is a subsystem of the global ecosystem, and cannot expand beyond the confines of ecological limits. It concludes: “...For developing economies, it means adopting a development strategy based on sustainable principles in energy, transport, construction, resource-intensive manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and waste management. For developed economies, it means restructuring these industries so they become sustainable ... In advanced economies, it means, potentially, embracing zero growth... For both developed and developing economies, it means developing a service sector that is decoupled from material extraction or carbon emissions in addition to progress towards resource efficiency and low

carbon intensity.....At a global level, if a tax on CO2 emissions were imposed and the resulting revenues were used to cut labour taxes, then up to 14 million net new jobs could be created.”

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder summed up some of these themes in [his address](#) to the [Ministerial Conference of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy](#) (PAGE), held on January 10 – 11 2019 in South Africa. He stated: “It is not action against climate change and environmental degradation that will destroy jobs, it is inaction that will destroy jobs. ... Economic activity and jobs depend on ecosystem services and a safeguarding of the natural environment. Around 1.2 billion jobs, or 40 per cent of world employment in 2014, were in industries that depend heavily on natural processes... ultimately, environmental degradation will compromise livelihoods and magnify inequality. We must work around these highly interconnected challenges to devise workable solutions in specific country contexts. “

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [ILO](#), [Labour Rights](#), [Labour Standards](#), [zero growth](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The latest analysis: What does Canada gain from the Trans Mountain Pipeline purchase?

Posted on [January 31, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Into Canada’s highly sensitive and highly political debate over pipelines comes the report on January 31 from the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) : [Canada’s purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline – Financial and Economic Considerations](#) . The report provides an overview and timeline of the negotiations and federal government purchase of the pipeline and its assets from Kinder Morgan, in August 2018 . The PBO financial analysis estimates that the \$4.4 billion price paid by the government was at the high end of the value, and calculates the effects of construction delays or higher construction costs on the price that the Government could negotiate for its re-sale –for example, a one year delay would result in a loss of value \$693 million. The report finds that the economic benefits relate to the pre-construction and construction periods: impact on GDP is estimated to peak at 0.11 per cent in 2020; impact on employment is estimated at 7,900 in 2020, with both declining thereafter.

“The main benefit of the TMEP would arise from the increased capacity of Canadian producers to sell oil to export markets, which could lead to a reduction in the differential between Western Canadian Select (WCS) grade of crude oil and other grades, most notably West Texas Intermediate (WTI).” Stating “It is difficult to determine the impact of the TMEP on the price differential between WTI and WCS grades”, the report refers to estimates in its [December 2018 report to Parliamentarians](#), and flags the other factor which might affect the economic impact, which is “increasing transportation capacity.”

Coinciding with the PBO report, the *National Observer* has brought an article out of its archives, which critiques the economic arguments used by supporters of the Trans Mountain purchase. [“False oil price narrative used to scare Canadians into accepting Trans Mountain pipeline expansion”](#) was written by Robyn Allen, and was originally published in November 2018. More recently, she has also written, [“What Bill Morneau didn’t tell Canadians about the Trans Mountain Purchase”](#) (Dec. 5 2018) and an Opinion piece [“Trudeau’s oilsands supply outlook reflects a future that doesn’t exist”](#) (Jan. 25 2019) , which concludes: “It is madness pretending that Trans Mountain’s expansion is financially or economically viable. A return to sanity begins with getting realistic about the supply of heavy oil in a world that knows — even if Trudeau won’t take his head out of the oilsands — that neither the economic system nor the ecosystem can, or will, support rapid oilsands growth.”



For coverage of both the economic and environmental aspects, follow the [National Observer Special Reports on Trans Mountain](#). An up-to-date review of the environmental arguments by experts Marc Jaccard and Kirsten Zickfeld appears there in "[IPCC authors urge NEB to consider climate impacts of Trans Mountain pipeline expansion](#)" (Jan. 21).

The National Energy Board documentation about all stages of the Trans Mountain Expansion project is [here](#) (and [here](#) for French documentation). Information about the current Reconsideration process is [here](#) (and [here](#) in French); the deadline for the Reconsideration report to the government is February 22, 2019.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Kinder Morgan pipeline](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Business looks at climate change: Davos publications include auto manufacturing, electronic waste

Posted on **January 30, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The overall theme of the [World Economic Forum meetings](#) in Davos Switzerland in 2019 was the 4th Industrial Revolution. Climate change issues were top of mind in discussions, as the annual [Global Risks Report for 2019](#) had ranked the top global risks to the world as extreme weather and climate-change policy failures. Discussions, speeches, blogs and reports are compiled on the themes of [The Future of the Environment and Natural Resource Security](#) and [Climate Change](#). Highlights include: "[6 things we learned about the Environment at Davos](#)", an overview which highlights Japan's pledge to use its G20 Presidency to reduce plastic ocean pollution; the launch of a new organization called [Voice for the Planet](#) to showcase the youth climate activist movement; and a pledge by 10 global companies have to take back the electronic waste from their products. Also of interest, the speech by Greta Thunberg, who is at the centre of the new youth climate activism – "[Our House is on Fire](#)"; and "[Why income inequality is bad for the climate](#)", a blog by the President of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation.

WEF Reports of interest: [Improving Traceability in Food Value Chains through Technology Innovations](#), which offers technology as a means to make the current industrial food system safer (and possibly more sustainable). [Shaping the Sustainability of Production Systems: Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies for competitiveness and sustainable growth](#) discusses the coming world of manufacturing, focussing on the electronics and automotive industries of Andhra Pradesh, India and the automotive industry in Michigan U.S.A., including a discussion of Cobotics 2.0 (collaborative robots), Metal 3D printing, and "augmented workforce".

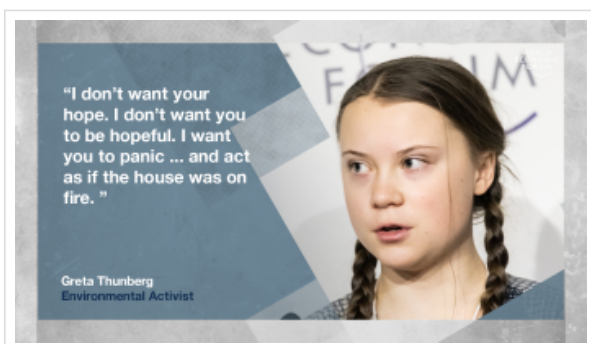


The circular economy was also discussed, with a spotlight **on electronic waste**, which is estimated at 50 million tonnes of produced each year currently. ***A New Circular Vision for Electronics Time for a Global Reboot*** was released by the **E-waste Coalition**, which includes the **International Telecommunication Union** (a UN organization), the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and others. The report, summarized **here**, is an overview of e-waste production and recycling, and includes a brief discussion of labour conditions, calling for upgrading and formalization of the recycling industry as a “major opportunity”. It states: “the total number of people working informally in the global e-waste sector is unknown. However, as an indication, according to the ILO in Nigeria up 100,000 people are thought to be working in the informal e-waste sector, while in China that number is thought to be 690,000.” As for the dangers... “using basic recycling techniques to burn the plastic from electronic goods leaving the valuable metals (melting down lead in open pots, or dissolving circuit boards in acid) lead to adult and child workers, as well as their families, exposed to many toxic substances. In many countries, women and children make up to 30% of the workforce in informal, crude e-waste processing and are therefore particularly vulnerable.” According to the report, the International Labour Organization is scheduled to release a new report in March 2019, to be titled *Decent work in the management of electrical and electronic waste*.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing, Circular Economy, Climate Activism, electronic waste, Manufacturing, Recycling, World Economic Forum** | [Leave a reply](#)

Greta Thunberg speaks truth to power at Davos, inspiring kids around the world to strike for climate

Posted on **January 29, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



As it does every year, the world's business elite gathered in Davos Switzerland in January for the **World Economic Forum**, and as it does every year, the WEF released its **Global Risks Report**, reflecting what business opinion leaders lose sleep about. In 2019, the top long-term risks identified as the gravest threats to the world were extreme weather and climate-change policy failures. Blogs and reports were produced on the theme, including "**How should corporate boards respond to climate change?**", and "**Infrastructure around the world is failing. Here's how to make it more resilient**". British celebrity David Attenborough addressed the group, telling them that "**the Garden of Eden is no more**" – but the real call to action came from 16-year old Greta Thunberg, the Swedish activist who has inspired world-wide climate strikes by teenagers. Her appearance was reported in *The Guardian*, and re-posted at the *National Observer* as "**Teenage activist takes School Strikes 4 Climate Action to Davos**" (Jan. 25). "**The Climate Kids are Coming**" in *The Nation* (Jan. 28), describes Greta's Davos appearance and links the climate strikes movement to the Green New Deal movement in the U.S.

Our House is on Fire: The transcript and video of her speech, "Our house is on fire", is now widely available – on **Youtube**, in another article in *The Guardian* (with a transcript), and on her own Twitter feed, **@GretaThunberg**. The embodiment of speaking truth to power must be from Greta's speech: "Some people, some companies, some decision makers in particular have known exactly what priceless values they have been sacrificing to continue making unimaginable amounts of money. I think many of you here today belong to that group of people." And then: ... "Here in Davos – just like everywhere else – everyone is talking about money. It seems money and growth are our only main concerns....We all have a choice. We can create transformational action that will safeguard the living conditions for future generations. Or we can continue with our business as usual and fail.... No other current challenge can match the importance of establishing a wide, public awareness and understanding of our rapidly disappearing carbon budget, that should and must become our new global currency and the very heart of our future and present economics.....We must change almost everything in our current societies. The bigger your carbon footprint, the bigger your moral duty. "



In Canada, there are now 12 cities in which kids have been inspired by Greta to stage climate strikes – the latest being **Extinction Rebellion Alberta** in Edmonton, which organized a climate strike at the provincial legislature on February 1. **TO Climate Strike** organized a protest at Queen's Park on February 1, organized deputations to the City Council Budget discussions, and is **organizing a networking event on March 1** at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto, to gather together the many climate activist groups in Toronto. **The Climate Pledge Collective** reports on Toronto student activism, and is currently organizing a political campaign to press Toronto to declare a climate emergency, **as Vancouver has done**, followed by the cities of **Victoria** and **Halifax**. The *Montreal Gazette* has reported that Quebec post-secondary students will strike across the province on March 15 and September 27. According to **Sophia Mathur**, Sudbury's next strike will be held on March 1 at Laurentian University, with "Canada's next big strike" being organized for May 3. All the activity will be easier to follow when a new Canadian Twitter feed goes live on March 1: **Fridays for Future Canada**.

Around the World: Every week, **Greta Thunberg compiles and posts** news of the school strikes that have happened anywhere in the world in the past week. Her post on February 10 features photos from dozens of cities throughout the U.K. and Europe, and including New York, Seattle, and in Uganda, Nigeria, and the Faroe Islands! In the week of January 21, as reported by *The Guardian*, 30,000 students from 50 cities in Germany protested; 12,500 in Belgium, and more than 20,000 in Switzerland. Previously, the largest national student-led climate strike had been on **November 30th in Australia**, when estimated 15,000 students protested.

The first **nationwide strike in the U.K.** is planned for February 15 – *The Guardian* is anticipating the action **here**, with the National Association of Head Teachers in support, according to a **Daily Mail report**.



This movement is growing and acting so fast that social media is the best source of information : for example, [Global Climate Strike](#) Facebook page; [School Strikes 4 Climate](#) Twitter feed; [The Kids are Alright blog](#) ; [@Fridays for Future](#) on Twitter; and The Citizens Climate Lobby, which maintains [an interactive map of protests](#) around the world.



A global climate strike is planned for March 15.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate strikes](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [kids climate strikes](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Electric vehicle policy in Canada stalled by provincial opposition – 2018 market share at 2.2% of vehicle sales

Posted on [January 28, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Article updated on February 12:

Just as the cost of solar energy has steadily declined, so too has the total cost of ownership of electric vehicles, according to **new research** from Deloitte consultancy in the U.K. . Deloitte's forecast is that total cost of ownership of electric vehicles will match that of internal combustion cars as early as 2021 in the U.K., and by 2022 globally. By 2030, Deloitte's also forecasts global EV adoption will rise from two million units in 2018, to four million in 2020, to 21 million in 2030, driven by consumer demand and government incentives.

In Canada: Electric Mobility Canada, a non-profit advocacy network, released **2018 statistics for sales of electric and hybrid vehicles** on February 8. Their report shows that ev sales amounted to 2.2% of all new car sales in 2018 – disappointing, but a 125% increase over sales in 2017. There are now approximately 93,000 ev's in Canada, with almost all concentrated in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.

A federal **Strategy for Zero Emissions Vehicles**, promised for 2018, was expected to be announced on January 21 at the meeting of the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety. The extent of a policy announcement was a quote which appeared in the *Toronto Star* article: "Ottawa wants to increase the number of zero-emission vehicles sold in Canada to 10 per cent of new cars sold in 2025, 30 per cent in 2030 and 100 per cent in 2040." Frustrated by the lack of progress, the David Suzuki Foundation is hosting a **petition** titled "Has Canada stalled on electric vehicles?" calling for mandatory targets for electric vehicle sales, ramping up to 30 per cent by 2030 and a temporary purchase incentive program.

Both Ontario and Saskatchewan opposed a national plan at the January Ministers' meeting, as reported in the *Toronto Star* in "**Ottawa Queens Park spar over federal plan for more zero emission vehicles**" (Jan. 22). The *National Observer* examines their opposition in "**Electric vehicle strategy sputters as provinces battle it out on green policies**" (Jan. 18). The Ford government in Ontario **cancelled the EV purchase incentive program** in June 2018, and more recently, **EV charging stations** at the commuter parking lots of the GO regional transit have been removed.



Meanwhile, on February 11, the **federal government announced** a \$1.15-million investment to build 23 electric vehicle fast chargers across British Columbia, in partnership with funding from the provincial government. The funding comes from the federal **Electric Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Deployment Initiative** (EVAFIDI), which has budgeted \$182.5-million for fast-charging and natural gas stations across the country. That program has recently been

criticized in a *National Observer* article, “[Close to half of Canadian program touted for electric cars is funding natural gas stations](#)”(Jan. 25) .

Relevant international research: An October 2018 Briefing paper from the International Council on Clean Transportation: [Electric vehicle capitals: Accelerating the global transition to electric drive](#)– which identifies the 25 cities worldwide with the highest electric vehicle uptake through 2017, and discusses the policies, actions, and infrastructure that have enabled their success. And in December 2018, the ICCT also published [Using vehicle taxation policy to lower transport emissions: An overview for passenger cars in Europe](#), which highlights the need for taxation incentives at the point of purchase and for gas/electricity consumption, as well as the importance of company fleets “as they make up the highest proportion of new-car registrations in markets such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Tax Incentives](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

German Coal Exit Commission recommends Just Transition measures but a 2038 deadline

Posted on [January 28, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On January 26, the [German Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment](#), (better known as the Coal Exit Commission) delivered its highly-anticipated report and a “roadmap” for lignite coal plant closures in the country. The report calls for Germany to end coal-fired power generation by 2038 – subject to reviews by independent experts in 2026, 2029, and 2032, when it will be decided if the deadline can be advanced to 2035. The 28 official Commissioners, drawn from industry, unions, environmental NGOs, community leaders and government, negotiated for six months, with all but one voting in favour of the final recommendations. Greenpeace voted “yes”, but also issued a dissenting opinion, stating “Germany finally has a road map for how to make the country coal-free. There will be no further coal plants. [Greenpeace](#) and other groups made sure that the commission has clearly supported keeping Hambach forest. However, the report has a grave flaw: the speed is not right.” Other participants, including Sir Nicholas Stern, also criticized the slow speed of the plan. The [Powering Past Coal Alliance](#), of which Canada and the U.K. were founding members, state that, in order to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, “a coal phase-out is needed by no later than by 2030 in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and in the European Union.”

A compilation of reactions from Commissioners is [here](#). From Michael Vassiliadis, head of the miners' union [IG BCE](#) :“We have found a compromise after 21 hours of negotiations that cannot make us happy, but leaves us overall satisfied. We managed to shield the employees in coal power generation from social hardships from the structural change. At the same time, the coal phase-out is closely tied to verifiable progress with the future energy mix, the expansion of renewables and the grids. The regions get money for structural change, to create new quality jobs. The commission laid the foundation for a new *Energiewende* of reason.”

The 336-page report is currently available in German only; , but it is well summarized in English in a [Fact Sheet](#) from Clean Energy Wire. According to CLEW, key issues addressed are the stability and pricing of energy supplies for Germany,

CO2 reduction, and compensation to industry. Regarding Just Transition for workers and communities, the report devotes almost 40 pages to the economic measures for the regional economies and workers. While the report itself doesn't estimate those costs, [an article in Der Spiegel](#) states that communities will receive 40 billion euros in structural assistance over the next 20 years. The Commission calls for the coal mining regions to remain energy-oriented, through the development of innovative technologies, such as electricity storage, renewable energy, or power-to-gas production .

The Commission's recommendations are expected to be accepted by government, but there is a long road ahead in passing legislation and negotiating financing, as outlined in "[German government stands ready to move on coal exit proposal](#)" (Jan. 29). The coal exit will be one part of the government's [Climate Action Law package](#), promised for the end of 2019.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Germany](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change and health: a new call to action for doctors

Posted on [January 22, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new articles appeared in the January issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, recognizing the health impacts of climate change and the gap in environmental justice. Most frequently cited, sometimes with alarmist headlines, is "[The Imperative for Climate Action to Protect Health](#)" (Jan. 17) (registration required). The authors state that the World Health Organization may have underestimated the health effects of climate



change when it predicted in a [2018 report](#) that climate change will kill 250,000 people per year between 2030 and 2050. The NEJM authors Haines and Ebi state: "We think the impact is more difficult to quantify because there is also population displacement and a range of additional factors like food production and crop yields, and the increase in heat that will limit labour productivity from farmers in tropical regions that wasn't taken into account, among other factors." They point to the need for investment and policies to promote adaptation to reduce health risks.

The other article in January's *New England Journal of Medicine* is an overview of the issue and a more direct call to action for doctors. "[Climate Change: A health emergency](#)" by Drs. Caren G. Solomon and Regina C. LaRocque states: "Disruption of our climate system, once a theoretical concern, is now occurring in plain view — with a growing human toll brought by powerful storms, flooding, droughts, wildfires, and rising numbers of insect borne diseases. Psychological stress, political instability, forced migration, and conflict are other unsettling consequences. In addition, particulate air pollutants released by burning fossil fuels are shortening human life in many regions of the world. These effects of climate disruption are fundamentally health issues, and they pose existential risks to all of us. People who are sick or poor will suffer the most....As physicians, we have a special responsibility to safeguard health and alleviate suffering. Working to rapidly curtail greenhouse gas emissions is now essential to our healing mission.... The authors' call to action includes: "working with medical students on climate action, supporting the undergraduate divestment movement, joining forces with like-minded health professionals, and speaking with our legislators. "

In Canada, the [Canadian Association for Physicians and the Environment \(CAPE\)](#) is leading the way on such education and advocacy – a [compilation of their press releases](#) reveals the broad range of their actions. Most recently, on January 15, [CAPE announced](#) that the Ontario Court of Appeal has granted intervenor status to the Intergenerational Climate Coalition, of which CAPE is a member, to defend the constitutionality of the federal pricing of climate emissions, challenged by the Ontario provincial government in a case to be heard in April 2019. Other members of the Intergenerational Climate Coalition are [Generation Squeeze](#), [Saskatchewan Public Health Association](#), the [Public Health Association of BC](#), the [Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children](#), and the [Youth Climate Lab](#). The same group [announced in December 2018](#) that it has intervenor status in the Saskatchewan government’s challenge to the federal carbon tax plan.

UPDATE:

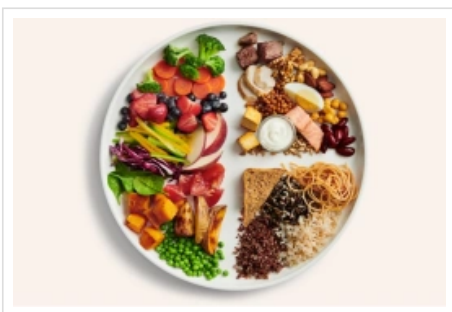
A February 5 [press release](#) states: “Together, representatives from the [Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment \(CAPE\)](#), the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) and the Urban Public Health Network (UPHN) are calling for action: asking federal parties to recognize that climate change is the greatest public health challenge of the 21st century, and to make climate solutions a priority in the 2019 federal election.”

Dr. Gigi Osler, President of the [Canadian Medical Association \(CMA\)](#) is [quoted](#) : “Climate change is no longer some abstract idea that may harm future generations or people on the other side of the globe; it’s a reality that’s already harming the physical and mental health of Canadians. We cannot afford to treat climate change as a wedge issue. We must treat it as the public health crisis that it is.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [climate change and health](#), [health care professionals](#), [physicians](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How transforming global food systems can reduce GHG emissions – in Canada, with a focus on food waste

Posted on [January 22, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On January 15 in Oslo, the prestigious medical journal *Lancet* launched the results and recommendations of a commission it had established, the [EAT-Lancet Commission](#), composed of 37 experts from 16 countries. Their report, “[Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems](#)” analyzes human diet and food production in light of the Paris Agreement, and the fact that food production contributes about 30 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The Commission recognizes the enormity of their goals : “humanity has never aimed to change the global food system on the scale envisioned in this Commission.”

The Lancet report recommends cutting meat consumption in half, greatly reducing food waste, and replacing resource-intensive farming methods with approaches that require less fertilizer, and replenish the soil. The authors estimate that wide-spread adoption of plant-based diets could reduce agricultural emissions by up to 80 percent, and changes in food

production practices could cut an additional 10 percent in 2050. Excellent summaries of the article appeared [from the American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) and from [Inside Climate News](#).

One of the recommendations of the [EAT-Lancet Commission](#) is to greatly reduce food waste. Coincidentally, a report released by Second Harvest Canada on January 17 is a thorough and detailed examination of that issue in Canada. [“The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste”](#) states that Canada is one of the most wasteful countries in the world, generating the food waste equivalent to \$1,766 per household per year, with an estimated 58 per cent of all food produced in Canada lost or wasted. Through supply chain analysis, the report estimates that nearly \$21 billion worth occurs during the processing and manufacturing process, and more than \$10 billion worth at the consumer level. The report also estimates the environmental cost of such waste: food in landfills creates methane gas, the equivalent of 56.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. The report makes dozens of recommendations for industry and government in a [32-page “Roadmap”](#) for farmers, producers, retailers, restaurant owners, and government. The Technical report of how calculations were made is [here](#). A CBC summary is [here](#). A White paper by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, [Characterization and Management of Food Waste in North America](#) concurred with much of Second Harvest’s analysis when it was published in 2018.

On January 17, eight of Canada’s leading food manufacturers and retailers- (Kraft Heinz Canada, Loblaw Companies Ltd, Maple Leaf Foods, Metro Inc, Save-On-Foods, Sobeys Inc, Unilever Canada and Walmart Canada) – [released a statement](#), committing themselves to cut food waste within their operations by 50% by the end of 2025, from 2016 levels. They will use the globally recognized [Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard](#), which addresses this issue on a global scale.

In Canada, the [2019 Food Guide](#) released on January 22, is the first update since 2007, and is intended as a consumer guide for a nutritious and healthy diet. To this end, it makes general recommendations about eating less meat and mostly plant-based foods, and has multiple recommendations for behaviour changes, such as “cook more often”, “eat with others” and “be aware of food marketing”.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Agriculture](#), [Food Retail Industry](#), [Food Wastage](#), [Waste management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New report recommends mandatory financial disclosure of climate-related risks for Canadian companies

Posted on [January 18, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Though written mainly for a financial audience, a new report from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is relevant to the livelihoods and pensions of all Canadians. [Leveraging Sustainable Finance Leadership in](#)

Canada: Opportunities to align financial policies to support clean growth and a sustainable Canadian economy

was released on January 16, examining and making recommendations for Canadian companies to disclose climate change risks to their shareholders and to the public. A [press release](#) summarizes the report. Why is it so important? It concludes with an analysis of financial disclosure in the oil and gas industry, (found in Annex E), and this warning about the dangers to us all of stranded assets: “When these emissions are counted via proved and probable reserves, as disclosed by Canadian oil and gas companies, a picture emerges of significant, undisclosed—and therefore unaddressed—risks to Canadian companies, financial institutions, pension beneficiaries and savers.... Once the implications of the Paris Agreement are fully priced into the market, oil and gas asset valuations will shift. If this change is sufficiently large, debt covenants may be triggered in companies. This will in turn impact financial institutions, including banks, insurance companies and pension funds. Debt downgrading could ensue, and bank capitalization thresholds could be impacted.” (And a related risk for oil and gas companies: in December 2018, the Canadian Shareholders Association for Research and Education (SHARE) joined [an international campaign](#) for improved disclosure by oil and gas companies of the water-related risks of their operations).

What is to be done? Canada’s transition to a lower carbon economy requires private investment capital, and Canada’s financial markets cannot operate in isolation. Canada has a lot of regulatory “catching up” to do regarding climate risk, (outlined in [“Data Gap”](#) in *Corporate Knights* magazine in May 2018) , and evidenced by the examples given throughout the report of current practice amongst [European Union](#) , G7 and G20 countries. The report shows the state of Canadian regulation, with frequent reference to the two major Canadian studies to date on the issue: the [Interim Report](#) of the government-appointed Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance (Oct. 2018), and the [Canadian Securities Association Staff Notice 51-354](#) (April 2018). In [Leveraging Sustainable Finance Leadership in Canada](#), author Celine Bak, sets out a three-year policy roadmap for Canada, calling for Canadian laws and statutes to be updated to require mandatory disclosure of climate risk by 2021. The report also calls for the Toronto Stock Exchange to join the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative, and that the the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board be required to report on the climate change risks which might affect its fully-funded status. Detailed and concise summaries are provided in the Annexes, titled: “An Overview of the Key Reports on Corporate and Financial Sector Climate- and Environment-Related Disclosure”; “G20 and G7 Precedents for Implementation of TCFD Recommendations in Canada”; and “Analysis of EU Sustainable Finance Proposed Actions, EU Laws and Canadian Equivalents”.

Expect more discussion and publications about sustainable finance issues, as Canada’s [Expert Panel](#) concludes its public consultations at the end of January 2019, and releases its final report later in the year. The European Union [Technical Expert group on Sustainable Finance \(TEG\)](#) is also expected to report in June 2019, and the international [Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures Task Force](#) will publish a Status Report in June 2019, updating its [first report](#), published in September 2018, with analysis of disclosures made in 2018 financial reports .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [financial disclosure](#), [Financial Risk](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Stranded Assets](#), [Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Growth and diversity in the U.S.clean energy industry

Posted on [January 14, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new reports foresee employment growth in the U.S. renewable energy industry – despite the chilling effect of the tariffs on solar equipment imposed by the Trump administration, as described in a Solar Energy Industry Association [press release](#) in December. The first study, [Clean Energy sweeps across rural America](#) (November 2018) by the Natural Resources Defence Council examines job growth in wind, solar, and energy efficiency in rural regions throughout the Midwest U.S., and finds that the number of clean energy jobs grew by 6 percent from 2015 to 2016 (a higher rate than the economic in general), to a total of nearly 160,000 in 2017. In 2017, in the rural parts of every midwestern state except North Dakota and Kansas, more people worked in clean energy than in the entire fossil fuel industry. The report emphasizes the outsized impact of job opportunities in rural areas in which job growth is normally negligible or even negative. The report also profiles examples of community solar programs operated by co-ops and investor-owned utilities.

A second report models the impact of replacing Colorado's coal plants with a mix of wind and solar backed by battery storage and natural gas. This report was prepared by consultants Vibrant Clean Energy and commissioned by energy developer Community Energy Inc., with a main focus on cost savings and carbon emissions. However, it also forecasts job impacts under three scenarios (keeping coal plants to 2040, gradually retiring coal plants, and retiring all coal plants in 2025), and overall, it forecasts a 52% increase in employment in the electricity industry.

The January 9 [press release](#) quotes a representative from Community Energy Inc: "The key to unlocking these benefits is to create a legal framework that enables utilities to voluntarily retire the coal plants. Otherwise, it could take years to negotiate or litigate utility cost recovery, replacement power costs and impact on local communities." The full Coal Plant Retirement study is [here](#) .

Finally, the Solar Energy Industries Association issued a [press release](#) in early December, highlighting its 2018 initiatives to improve gender equity and diversity – including the creation of the [Women's Empowerment Initiative](#), which includes summits to increase women's leadership and various industry opportunities. In September 2018, the SEIA [signed a Memorandum of Understanding](#) to help the solar industry recruit and employ more students from the 101 Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This will include hosting a national jobs fair, individual jobs fairs at the HBCU schools and bringing solar companies to campuses for recruitment. A webinar series on diversity and inclusion is scheduled for SEIA member companies in 2019.

Posted in [Green Economy, United States](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out, diversity, Gender Equality, hiring practices, Job Creation, Solar energy industry, United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian youth continue their climate strikes in frigid January weather

Posted on [January 14, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Children in Canada and around the world continue to demand climate action from their nations' policy leaders, following the example of the now-famous Greta Thunberg. In the first week of January 2019, according to [Greta's Twitter feed](#), climate strikes were held in "South Africa, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Czech Rep, Uganda, Nigeria, Faroe Islands, Italy and many more". As you would expect, social media plays a huge part in the campaigns, centred on the #Fridays for Future [Facebook page](#) and [@fridaysforfuture Twitter](#) account.

In Canada, Twitter accounts to watch are from [@Sophia Mathur](#) , (the 11-year old Sudbury girl who was the first to join the international campaign – profiled [here](#)); [@Student Climate Activist](#) , and [Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition](#) , both from Winnipeg, Manitoba; [Toronto Climate Future](#) from Toronto and the GTHA , also with a [Facebook page](#) here .

The Citizens Climate Lobby is hosting an [interactive map](#) to track climate strikes around the world, and [The Climate Pledge Collective](#) offers free resources to help others organize FridaysforFuture events.



Traditional media have provided fairly limited coverage of the stoic students who protested in Canadian cities on January 11: from the *Waterloo Record*, "[On a bitterly cold day in Waterloo, a new type of protest begins](#)" (Jan. 12) and "[Children and youth strike against climate change in Waterloo Region](#)" at KitchenerToday.com (Jan. 11); "[Students, climate activists protest provincial climate plan at Queen's Park](#)" (Jan. 13) from *The Varsity*, the student newspaper of University of Toronto; and "[I want to know the earth will be ok](#)" from the *Winnipeg Sun* (Jan. 11). CBC Vancouver reported the [previous student climate strike](#) on December 7 ; others are listed in the [Work and Climate Change Report summary](#) from December .

And another Canadian youth group to watch: [PowerShift: Young and Rising](#), who are gathering in Ottawa on February 14 – 18 . From their announcement: "We will dig deep into discussions on topics including fracking, pipeline politics, Indigenous sovereignty, divestment, and green jobs. We will learn how to make lasting change through community organizing, direct action, art, storytelling, and using traditional and digital media. ... PowerShift aims to ensure that once the convergence is over, the youth climate movement continues to grow through our networks, continued capacity building, and strategic action."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and youth](#), [climate strikes](#), [fridays for future](#), [Greta Thunberg](#) | [3 Replies](#)

Economists debate decarbonization: optimistic and pessimistic scenarios

Posted on [January 14, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A [debate forum](#) , [Is Green Growth Possible?](#) was hosted by the Institute for New Economic Thinking in December, consisting of papers by economists debating whether catastrophic global warming can be stopped while maintaining current levels of economic growth. The arguments are summarized for the non-economist in "[The Case for 'conditional optimism' on climate change](#)" by David Roberts in *Vox* (Dec. 31) . Economists may be interested in the full papers, which include "[The Road to 'Hothouse Earth' is Paved with Good Intentions](#)" and "[Why Green Growth is an Illusion](#)", both by Enno Schröder and Servaas Storm. The authors conclude that "... The world's current economies are not capable of the emission reductions required to limit temperature rise to 2 degrees. If world leaders insist on maintaining historical rates of economic growth, and there are no step-change advances in technology, hitting that target requires a rate of reduction in carbon intensity for which there is simply no precedent. Despite all the recent hype about decoupling, there's no historical evidence that current economies are decoupling at anything close to the rate required.... Without a concerted

(global) policy shift to deep decarbonization, a rapid transition to renewable energy sources, structural change in production, consumption, and transportation, and a transformation of finance, ... the decoupling will not even come close to what is needed."

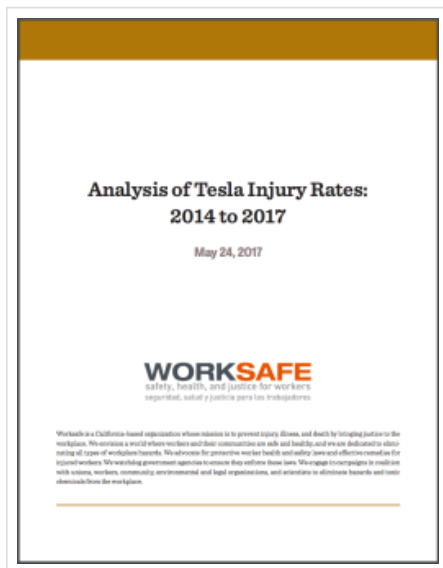
"The Inconvenient Truth about Climate Change and the Economy" by Gregor Semieniuk, Lance Taylor, and Armon Rezai summarizes and analyzes the October 2018 IPCC report, *Global Warming of 1.5 °C*, finding it overly optimistic about global productivity growth and fossil fuel energy use, and reiterating the argument that politics are holding back climate change solutions. They conclude that "a big mitigation push, perhaps financed by carbon taxes and/or reductions in subsidies, is possible macroeconomically even if the link between energy use and output is not severed. This, however, would require considerable modifications of countries' macroeconomic arrangements. Needless to say, military establishments and recipients of energy subsidies wield political clout. Fossil fuel producers have at least as much. Whether national preferences will permit big shifts in the use of economic resources is the key question."

Finally, in **"Conditional Optimism: Economic Perspectives on Deep Decarbonization"**, author Michael Grubb takes issue with Schröder and Storm, saying that their papers rely on historical data and rates of change, and thus are characterized by a "pessimism about our ability to change what matters fast enough." Grubb states that this "may be emblematic of a growing trend in energy-climate economics, of what we might term historical futures analysis." He lays out a technical economic critique and suggests four fundamental principles for his own "conditional optimism", which relies on analysis based on the rate of displacement of carbon intensive energy supply by the growth of alternate sources.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Decarbonization](#), [Decoupling](#), [Energy policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Can unions deliver good green jobs at Tesla?

Posted on **January 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The **"Driving a Fair Future"** website has documented the complaints against Tesla for years – including **an analysis of Tesla injury rates** between 2014 and 2017 at its Fremont California plant, which showed that injuries were 31% higher than industry standards. In June 2018, the U.S. National Labor Relations Board began to hear some of the workers' complaints of safety violations and anti-union harassment, with the United Auto Workers representing them. Two themes have emerged in the saga of Tesla's bad labour relations: 1. how can the apparently "green jobs" become decent, good jobs? and 2. would unionization at Tesla give a toehold at other precarious Silicon Valley workplaces such as Google, Amazon, and their like.

"Tesla's Union Battle Is About the Future of Our Planet" (Oct. 9) in *Medium* describes the union drive at the Fremont California electric vehicle manufacturing plant, in light of its environmental mission. The article contends : " This case isn't

just about Tesla. It's about the future of an industry that sees itself as key to addressing the climate crisis. Clean tech companies peddle a progressive vision of a low-carbon future, but Tesla's anti-union fervor suggests that some in the industry have lost sight of their work's bigger point."

Workers from Tesla's solar panel factory in Buffalo New York expressed similar sentiments in [interviews with the local news organization](#) . Taking pride in their green jobs, they are seeking better pay, benefits, and job security through a unionization drive [announced in December](#). The Tesla Gigafactory 2 in Buffalo received \$750 million in taxpayer funding for the state-of-the-art solar production facility, promising new jobs in a high unemployment area; the unionization campaign involves about 300 production and maintenance employees in a partnership between the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#) and the [United Steelworkers](#). The drive is endorsed by the [Labor Network for Sustainability](#) , which states: "We are hearing a lot about the need for a Green New Deal that will provide millions of good jobs helping protect the climate. These Tesla workers represent the Green New Deal in action." Follow developments on the [Facebook page of the Coalition for Economic Justice Buffalo](#).

Implications for High Tech workers: "Why Elon Musk's latest legal bout with the United Auto Workers may have ripple effects across Silicon Valley" is a thorough overview about the UAW unionization drive at Tesla's auto manufacturing plant at Fremont California, from [CNBC](#) in early December. Similar themes appeared in ["What Tesla's union-busting trial means for the rest of Silicon Valley"](#) appeared in [Verge](#) in September 2018, chronicling the arguments of the UAW and Tesla management – including Elon Musk and his tweets – during the [NLRB hearings](#) in June 2018. The article concludes that "Tesla's case [is] a bellwether — particularly for Amazon. ... Tesla might be a car company, but it's also a tech company — and if its workers can unionize, tech workers elsewhere are bound to start getting ideas."

What is life like for these high tech workers? ["A New Kind of Labor Movement in Silicon Valley"](#) in *The Atlantic* (Sept. 4) gives a good overview, and introduces nascent groups as [Silicon Valley Rising](#) and [Tech Workers Coalition](#) .

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Green Economy](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Job Quality](#), [Silicon Valley](#), [Solar Industry](#), [Solar PV Manufacturing](#), [Tesla](#), [unionization](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Economists weigh in on deceptive carbon pricing messages

Posted on [January 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Economist Brenda Frank contributes to the ongoing battle of ideas about carbon pricing in Canada with his [January 9](#) blog : ["Carbon pricing works even when emissions are rising"](#) . Frank begins: "An old, debunked argument against carbon taxes has flared up recently: If total emissions aren't falling, the tax must not be working. Let's quash that myth."

Continuing the arguments he published in a 2017 blog, ["The curious case of counterfactuals"](#), his central question is, "if emissions are still rising, how fast would they have been rising without a carbon price?" He cites recent studies, such as ["The Impact of British Columbia's Carbon Tax on Residential Natural Gas Consumption"](#) (in *Energy Economics*, Dec. 2018), as well as the extensive carbon pricing reports produced by the Ecofiscal Commission, most recently ["Clearing the Air: How carbon pricing helps Canada fight climate change"](#) (April 2018). The conclusion: carbon pricing is more "complicated than something you can fit in a tweet", and complex analysis demonstrates that it *does* work.

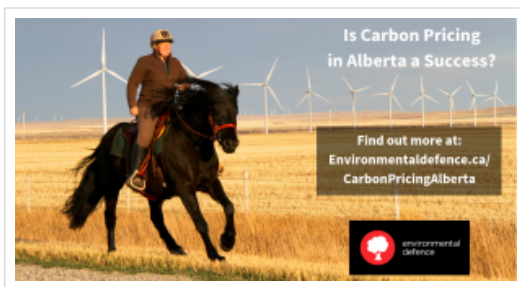
Marc Hafstead , U.S. economist and Director of the Carbon Pricing Initiative pursues a similar theme in ["Buyer Beware: An Analysis of the Latest Flawed Carbon Tax Report"](#) (November 28). Hafstead contends that "some papers can introduce confusion and misinformation", and demonstrates how this is done in ["The Carbon Tax: Analysis of Six Potential Scenarios"](#) , a study commissioned by the Institute for Energy Research and conducted by Capital Alpha Partners. Hafstead critiques the modelling assumptions and concludes they are flawed ; he also charges that the paper fails to explain its differences from the prevailing academic literature.

Even without Hafstead's economic skills, one might be wary of the U.S. paper after a check of the DeSmog's [Global Warming Disinformation Database](#) , which provides mind-blowing detail about the financial and personnel connections between the Institute for Energy Research and Koch Industries . DeSmog maintains records on organizations and individuals engaged in "climate change disinformation" in the [U.S.](#) and the [United Kingdom](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change in the Media](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Review of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan and carbon levy; updates on renewables and methane regulations

Posted on [January 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Environmental Defence released a report in December 2018, [Carbon Pricing in Alberta: A review of its success and impacts](#) . According to the report, Alberta's carbon levy, introduced in 2017 as part of the broader [Climate Leadership Plan](#), has had no detrimental effect on the economy, and in fact, all key economic indicators (weekly consumer spending, consumer price index, and gross domestic product) improved in 2017. The report also documents how the carbon levy revenues have been invested: for example, over \$1 billion used to fund consumer rebates and popular energy efficiency initiatives in 2017; support for Indigenous communities, including employment programs; a 500% growth in solar installations; funding for an expansion of light rail transit systems in Calgary and Edmonton; and prevention of an estimated 20,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution. The conclusion: the Climate Leadership Plan and its carbon levy is off to a good start, but improvement is needed on promised methane reduction regulations , and the regulations to enforce the legislated cap on oil sands emissions need to be released.

Methane Regulations: The Alberta Environmental Law Centre published [a report](#) in 2017 evaluating the province's methane emissions regulations. On December 13, the government released [new, final regulations](#) governing methane. On December 19, the Alberta Environmental Law Centre published a summary of the new Regulations [here](#) .

Since the Environmental Defence study, on December 17, the government [announced](#) agreement on five new wind projects funded by Carbon Leadership revenues, through the Renewable Electricity Program. Three of the five projects are private-sector partnerships with First Nations, and include a minimum 25 per cent Indigenous equity component to stimulate jobs, skills training and other economic benefits. The government claims that all five projects will generate 1000 jobs.

On December 19 the government also [announced](#) new funding of \$50 million from Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan for the existing [Sector-specific Industrial Energy Efficiency Program](#) , to support technology improvements in the trade-exposed industries of pulp and paper, chemical, fertilizer, minerals and metals facilities.

Balanced against this, a December 31 [government press release](#) summarized how its "[Made in Alberta](#) " policies have supported the oil and gas industry: including doubling of support for petrochemical upgrading to \$2.1 billion; creation of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) investment team to work directly with industry to expedite fossil fuel projects; political fights

for new pipelines (claiming that “Premier Notley’s advocacy was instrumental in the federal government’s decision to purchase the Trans Mountain Pipeline”), and the ubiquitous **Keep Canada Working** advertisements promoting the



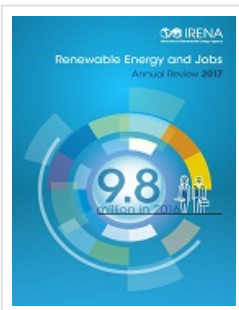
benefits of the Trans Mountain pipeline . The press release also references the November announcement that the province **will buy rail cars** to ship oil in the medium term, and the December 11 press release announcing that the province is exploring private-sector interest in **building a new oil refinery** .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [First Nations](#), [Methane Emissions](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Renewable Energy Incentives](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

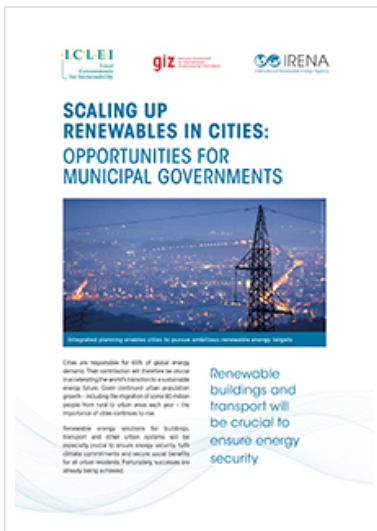
Canada joins the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

Posted on **January 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada **officially became a member** of the the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) on January 9th, on the eve of the 9th Session of the Assembly in Abu Dhabi, where 1,200 delegates from more than 160 governments, the private sector and civil society met. **IRENA describes itself** as: “an intergovernmental organisation that supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future, and serves as the principal platform for international cooperation, a centre of excellence, and a repository of policy, technology, resource and financial knowledge on renewable energy. IRENA promotes the widespread adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy, including bioenergy, geothermal, hydropower, ocean, solar and wind energy in the pursuit of sustainable development, energy access, energy security and low-carbon economic growth and prosperity.”



Canada’s membership brings to 160 the number of countries participating in IRENA, and will make it easier for Canadians to place their renewable energy development in an international context, by inclusion such flagship publications , such as the **Renewable Energy and Jobs Annual Review** . Recently, Vancouver B.C. was profiled as a case study in the IRENA publication **Scaling up Renewables in Cities: Opportunities for Municipal Governments**

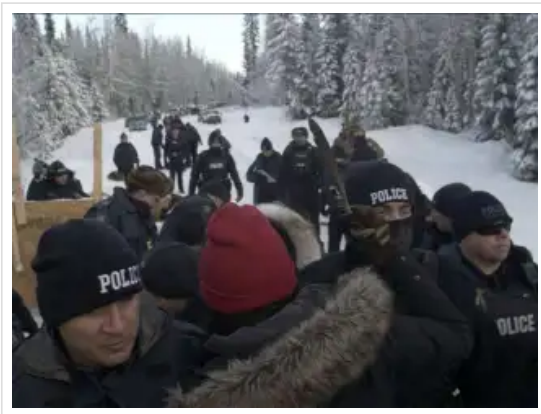


The **official press release** from Canada's ministry of Natural Resources was brief, and did not indicate any future plans for Canada's involvement in IRENA research activities. Some context is provided in a news item from the *National Observer*.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [International cooperation](#), [IRENA](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: Agreement reached between RCMP and Wet'suwet'en First Nation protesters after arrests in B.C.

Posted on **January 9, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Despite the high praise for British Columbia's new **Clean B.C. strategy** released on December 5, B.C. has a problem – supporting the \$40 billion LNG Canada facility makes it almost impossible for the province to reach its GHG reduction targets. (Marc Lee his most recent critique in "**BC's shiny new climate plan: A look under the hood**".) And on January 7, **the headlines began screaming** about another problem related to LNG Canada, as the RCMP began to enforce **an injunction** granted by B.C.'s Supreme Court, arresting fourteen members of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation.

The Wet'suwet'en built a fortified barrier on a remote forest service road near Houston, B.C., about 300 kilometres west of Prince George, to prevent construction workers from TC Energy (formerly TransCanada Corp.) and their pipeline

subsidiary [Coastal GasLink](#). The company maintains that they have signed agreements with all First Nations along the pipeline route, but those agreements have been made with elected chiefs and councils of the five Wet'suwet'en bands. The **hereditary chiefs maintain** that the agreements do not apply to traditional lands. The *Vancouver Sun* provides good local coverage at **"Fourteen people arrested after RCMP break down anti-pipeline checkpoint"**; *The Tyee* explains the background and issues in **"Nine Things You Need to Know about the Unist'ot'en Blockade"**; *The Energy Mix* writes **"Negotiations Seek 'Peaceful Solution' At Unist'ot'en After RCMP Arrest 14 Blocking Coastal Gaslink Pipeline"** (Jan. 9).

First Nations viewpoint appears in a series of posts at APTN News, including: **"An act of war': Gidimt'en clan prepares for police raid on Wet'suwet'en Territory"** (Jan. 5); **"Researchers say RCMP action against Wet'suwet'en would place corporate interests over Indigenous rights"** (Jan. 6); and **"RCMP set up 'exclusion zones' for public and media as raid on B.C. camps start"** (Jan. 7). According to those reports, "The Gidmit'en Clan, whose members are at the second check point, have called any RCMP raid an "act of war."



Not all First Nations oppose the LNG Canada project. In a summary of a **Canada 2020 conference in Ottawa** on December 13, First Nations speakers included Larry Villeneuve, Aboriginal Liaison with Local 92 of LiUNA, (involved in four training sites in western Canada for a skilled Indigenous workforce); Phil Fontaine, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, now Co-Chair of **Indigenous Affairs Committee at LiUNA**; and Crystal Smith, Chief Councillor of the Haisla Nation. In **An open letter to opponents and critics of LNG development** on the Haisla Nation website, Crystal Smith writes: "We urge you to think strongly about how your opposition to LNG developments is causing harm to our people and our wellbeing. Opposition does nothing towards empowering our Nation, but rather dismisses our Rights and Title and works towards separating our people from real benefits." As this issue has heated up, on January 8 she posted **"Investing in ourselves is not selling out"**.

Rallies in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en resistance have been coordinated through a Facebook campaign, **International Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en**, and reports indicate turnout across Canada, including Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Halifax, Montreal, New Brunswick, Whitehorse, and Calgary. The **APTNews** (Jan. 9) includes photos and video; Regional CBC outlets have also covered the story: **"Protesters across Canada support Wet'suwet'en anti-pipeline camps"** (Jan. 8); **"Protesters, counter protesters gather in downtown Calgary after B.C. pipeline arrests"**; **"Protests in Regina, Saskatoon show solidarity with B.C. First Nation fighting pipelines"** (Jan. 8). The **National Observer reports** that the Prime Minister was forced by protesters to change the time and venue of his address to First Nations leaders in Ottawa on January 8th. **Prime Minister Trudeau is visiting Kamloops** on January 9 but has declined to visit the protest camp.

UPDATES: On January 9, the **National Observer reported** on a press conference with B.C. Premier Horgan, at which he asserted that "his government believed it had met its obligations to consult with Indigenous nations in approving TransCanada's Coastal Gaslink project by receiving the "free, prior, and informed" consent that is referenced in United Nations declarations on indigenous rights." He sees sees "no quick fix" to the issue and did not set out any path forward.

An "uneasy peace" was reached between the RCMP and the Wet'suwet'en protesters on January 9, allowing workers access to the Coastal GasLink pipeline construction site in order to avoid a second RCMP raid on the protest camp. According to **"'Peaceful Resolution' to Unist'ot'en Blockade Allows Access, Not Construction, Chiefs Say"** in *The Energy Mix* (Jan. 11) and a related **CBC report**, "it's a temporary solution to de-escalate things while everyone figures out their next moves."

What comes next? Construction of the Coastal Gas Link pipeline is certainly not settled, not only because of the issue of Wet'suwet'en permission to build on hereditary lands (that issue explained [here](#)). There is also dispute over whether or not the pipeline falls under provincial or federal jurisdiction – an issue to be addressed by the National Energy Board in April. Read Andrew Nikoforuk in **"Is Coastal GasLink an Illegal Pipeline?"** in *The Tyee* (Jan. 11) or **"Coastal GasLink pipeline permitted through illegal process, lawsuit contends"** in *The Narwhal*.

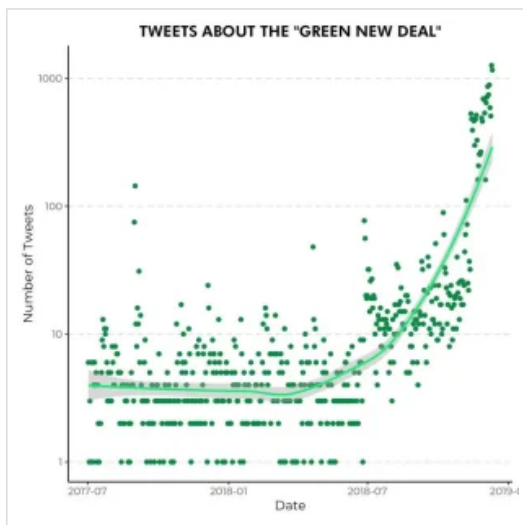
An analysis in *The Energy Mix*, "[Pipeline Investment 'Goes Palliative' in Wake of Unist'ot'en Blockade](#)" (Jan. 13) compiles responses to the blockade from several media outlets, and sketches out two themes. The first, Canada has provided yet another example of how unattractive and uncertain it is to energy investors; the second: First Nations concerns are represented by both hereditary and elected leaders. "As long as they [the government] are willing to resort to force instead of diplomacy, we haven't even begun to engage in meaningful reconciliation."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal people](#), [B.C. LNG](#), [British Columbia](#), [First Nations](#), [LNG Canada](#), [Protests & Rallies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green New Deal – an opportunity for the U.S. and for Labour

Posted on **January 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As the U.S. Congress returned for its 116th Session in January 2019, newly-elected Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the Green New Deal have become the symbols of the "freshmen" class in Washington. The term is now everywhere – as shown



by "[What's the Deal with the Green New Deal](#)" from the Energy Institute at Haas, University of California at Berkeley, which coins the acronym "GND" and shows a graph of the Twitter traffic on the topic. More substantially, the article critiques the economic, job creation proposals in the Green New Deal proposal, as does economist Edward B. Barbier in "[How to make the next Green New Deal work](#)" in *Nature.com* on January 1. From a Canadian, much less conservative viewpoint, Thomas Clayton-Muller discussed a Canadian version called the "[Good work Guarantee](#)", as proposed by 350.org. in "[Canada needs its own Green New Deal. Here's what it could look like](#)" in the *National Observer* (Nov. 29), and Matt Price urged unions to follow the lead in "[Unions Should Go Big on a Green New Deal for Canada](#)" in an Opinion piece in *The Tyee* (Dec. 10).

Jeremy Brecher and Joe Uehlein of the Labor Network for Sustainability write "The Green New Deal provides a visionary program for labor and can provide a role for unions in defining and leading a new vision for America" in "[12 Reasons Labor Should Demand a Green New Deal](#)" in *Portside*. The article reviews the history of the original U.S. New Deal, but more importantly, shows how the Green New Deal can help U.S. labour unions reclaim bargaining power, political power, and good jobs. They conclude with a long list of Labour goals for any Green New Deal, including: Restore the right to organize: Bargain collectively and engage in concerted action on the job; Guarantee the Constitutional rights to freedom of speech and assembly in the workplace; Restore the right to strike; Guarantee the right to a safe and healthy work environment; Provide a fair and just transition for workers whose jobs may be threatened by economic change; Establish fair labor standards; Establish strong state and local prevailing wage laws; Encourage industry-wide bargaining; Establish a

“buy fair” and “buy local” procurement policy. They conclude with suggestions for how unions can support a Green New Deal . [Héctor Figueroa](#) , President of 32BJ Service Employees International Union also urges other unions to support the GND, and describes its importance for his union in [“For the Future of Our Communities, Labor Support for The Green New Deal”](#) in *Common Dreams* (Dec. 13) .

The political story of the Green New Deal revolves around the negotiations to form a House of Representatives Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, summarized in a great article from *Inside Climate News*, [“New Congress Members See Climate Solutions and Jobs in a Green New Deal”](#) (Jan. 3). [HR-1, the first Bill](#) tabled by the Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Democratic Party in the new House of Representatives is a 60-page statement, which establishes the mandate of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis in Section 104, (pages 46-49). [Reaction from the Sunrise Movement](#) stated: “The mandate for [@nancypelosi](#)’s Climate Select Committee is out, and it’s everything we feared. No mandate to create a plan on the timeline mandated by top scientists; No language on economic & racial justice, or a just transition; Allows members to accept fossil fuel money. As well, it lacks power to subpoena.” Sunrise co-founder Varshini Prakash is extensively quoted in [“They Failed Us Once Again’: House Democrats Denounced for Dashing Hopes of Green New Deal”](#) from *Common Dreams* (Jan. 3), and though disappointed, she states: “In losing this fight on the Select Committee, we have won the biggest breakthrough on climate change in my lifetime.”

The Select Committee is not the only political avenue to deal with climate change. The House Energy and Commerce Committee, led by Democratic Representative Frank Pallone, announced it will hold its first hearing on climate change, [as reported by The Hill](#) . And prospective Democratic presidential candidates are under pressure, as described in [“Green Leftists Prepare to Give Democratic Candidates Hell”](#) in the *New Republic* (Jan. 4) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Green New Deal](#), [labour union policies](#), [Political parties and policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian press coverage of pipelines lacks workers’ voices

Posted on [January 8, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



[Jobs vs the Environment? Mainstream and alternative media coverage of pipeline controversies](#) examines how the press—classified into corporate and alternative outlets —treats the relationship between jobs and the environment, and how frequent and influential are the voices of workers and labour unions. The report uses two sophisticated methods of communications analysis – content analysis and critical discourse analysis – to examine two samples: The first sample comprises 129 articles about Canadian pipeline projects from the [Vancouver Sun](#), the [Edmonton Journal](#) and the Toronto [Globe and Mail](#) representing corporate media; articles from [Ricochet](#), [The Tyee](#), and the [National Observer](#) represent alternative media. The second examination was slightly different, made up of 170 articles about the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion which appeared in the *Vancouver Sun* and two commuter tabloids in Vancouver, and including [Rabble.ca](#) to the previously examined alternative sources of *Ricochet*, *The Tyee*, and *National Observer*.

The analysis is detailed and makes many interesting observations. Briefly, the authors conclude from these samples that both mainstream and alternative media frequently reinforce the assumption that there is a trade-off between environmental protection and job creation. Though alternative media are more critical of pipeline projects and provide more of the perspectives of Indigenous people and environmentalists, the authors conclude that “neither corporate nor alternative media gave much voice to the perspectives of workers and their unions.” And “while job creation is often touted as a rationale for pipeline projects, the actual workers and their unions—the presumed beneficiaries of fossil fuel expansion—appear to be largely missing from news reportage.”

To sum up, they write that : “... alternative media provide analyses and sources that help counterbalance the apparent extractivist orientation of the corporate press. They make a valuable contribution to well-rounded public discussion and offer perspectives on energy, climate and economic policies that are evidently under-represented in the corporate press.

The authors briefly discuss the labour press – mentioning [Rank and File.ca](#) specifically, and see a role for the labour media in the climate and energy debate. They state: “..... labour’s voice in the media system is muted. There are many reasons why a movement for a just transition has not gained greater traction. Governments have not sufficiently committed to retraining and other supportive measures, and thus there are few working examples for just transition advocates to highlight. But part of the problem lies in the lack of public arenas for exploring the common ground between workers and environmentalists regarding a low-carbon economy. Engaging the public imagination about such a necessary transition would be a valuable goal for corporate and alternative media, as well as media produced by the labour movement itself.”

The authors are Robert A. Hackett, a professor emeritus, and Philippa R. Adams, a PhD student, both from the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. The publisher is the [Corporate Mapping Project](#), a research and public engagement initiative investigating the power of the fossil fuel industry, jointly led by the University of Victoria, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives’ BC and Saskatchewan Offices and the Parkland Institute.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [attitudes to climate change](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [Journalism](#), [Labour Unions](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada: the year past and the battle over carbon pricing in the year ahead

Posted on [January 8, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Energy Mix Yearbook Review for 2018](#) is undoubtedly the most thorough and informed review of 2018 climate issues for Canadians. It compiles its newsletter coverage of 2018 stories and adds context and analysis, as well as a multitude of links to further reading. The sections of exceptional interest include “[Jobs and Just Transition: Renewables and Efficiency Jobs Surge while Fossil Employment Sags](#)”; “[Fossils go for Broke](#)” and “[Canada’s Contradiction: Low-Carbon Leader or Perpetual Petro-State?](#)” . Other, briefer overviews for Canada include “[State of Play 2018](#)” from EcoJustice, highlighting legal issues; “[10 wins for Canadian energy and climate action in 2018: Year in review](#)” with a positive slant from the Pembina Institute (Dec. 20) ; and from the Council of Canadians [2018 in Review: Offshore drilling](#) (December 21), a chronology from Atlantic Canada.

On December 20, easily overlooked because of the holiday season, Environment and Climate Change Canada published five separate review reports. [Clean Canada: Protecting the Environment and Growing our Economy](#) is a snapshot of Canada’s federal climate action policies and expenditures, and seems intended for a wide popular audience. [Second Annual Synthesis Report regarding the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Action](#) (French version [here](#)) is a more detailed accounting of the policies and programs by the federal and provincial governments in 2018, organized in chapters relating to carbon pricing, complementary measures (buildings, transportation, electricity, agriculture, etc.); adaptation and resilience; clean technology and innovation and jobs; reporting and oversight; federal engagement and partnership with Indigenous people . [2018 Canada’s Greenhouse Gas and Air Pollutant Emissions Projections Report](#) (French version [here](#)) provides, again, a policy overview but its main purpose is to continue the series of annual reports (since 2011) of detailed emissions data for economic sector and geographic region. It also

includes emissions projections to 2030 under two different scenarios – (spoiler alert: oil and gas will be Canada's leading source of emissions, followed by transportation and heavy industry).

Other substantial reports published on December 20 will form the basis for consultations in 2019. The new draft for the ***Federal Sustainable Development Strategy 2019 to 2022*** will inform a **public consultation** until April 2, 2019. (The companion ***2018 Progress Report on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*** evaluates the 2016 to 2019 strategy goals and the activities of 41 federal departments and agencies.)

The final ***Clean Fuel Standard Regulatory Design Paper*** focuses on the liquid fuels regulations, with comments requested by February 1, 2019. The draft regulation is scheduled to be published in 2019 and a final regulation by 2020, bringing to an end a complex consultation process that began in 2016 (summarized by **WCR** in January 2018). The Clean Fuel Standard will apply to the full life cycle of all fuels, gasoline and diesel, aviation fuel, natural gas for heating, and metallurgical coal, and has been called the single most important policy tool to achieve Canada's emissions reductions target for 2030.

And finally, a regulatory proposal relating to the most publicized issue for 2019: carbon pricing. ***Next Steps in Implementing the Federal Pollution Pricing System for Large Industry (the "Output Based Pricing System")*** was released on December 20, and carries a deadline for public comments of February 15, 2019. The Output Based Pricing System registration system went live on November 1, 2018, with reporting and verification requirements starting on January 1, 2019.

The coming battles over Carbon tax in 2019: As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau **announced in late October 2018**, the federal government has not backed down on its determination to impose a carbon pricing policy across all Canadian jurisdictions in 2019, despite resistance and constitutional challenges led by the premiers of Saskatchewan and Ontario. In some provinces – **British Columbia**, **Alberta**, **Quebec** – established carbon pricing systems continue; in **Nova Scotia**, **Prince Edward Island**, **Newfoundland and Labrador** – newly approved systems which meet the government's benchmarks under the **Pan-Canadian Framework** will begin. In the other provinces who have opposed the federal plan – **Manitoba**, **Saskatchewan**, **New Brunswick** and **Ontario** – the federal backstop fuel charge will be imposed starting in April 2019, sweetened by a "**Climate Action Incentive**", whereby all carbon revenue collected by the federal government will go directly back to people in the provinces from which it was generated. The Annex of the ***Second Annual Synthesis Report of the Pan-Canadian Framework*** provides up to date summaries for the situation in each province.

Public opinion supports the government's carbon tax actions, though barely, according to polling made public by **Global News** on January 3. Based on a November 9 internal poll conducted for the Liberal party, 46 per cent supported and 44 per cent opposed the plan in Saskatchewan and Manitoba; in Ontario, 43 per cent were in support and 32 per cent opposed. Nationally, support was at 47 per cent and opposition was at 29 per cent, with women more supportive than men.

Recently, one article appeared in the labour press, supporting carbon pricing: "**Pricing carbon first step to tackling climate change**" in CUPE's *Economy at Work* newsletter (Jan. 2). The mainstream press has been far more active, with general support for a carbon tax: for example, an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper is titled: "**Do you want a carbon tax, or do you want to be lied to?**" (Dec. 26). The editorial is critical of the Ontario government's Ontario Carbon Trust proposal, about which it states: "One emerging conservative alternative to carbon pricing is working with business to spur the development of green technology. What that usually means is taxpayers giving subsidies to business.... "Ontario's Progressive Conservativessay they will dish out \$400-million on a "Carbon Trust" that will collaborate with industry on emissions cuts. They can rail against carbon pricing all they want; spending taxpayer money has the same effect on pocketbooks as asking consumers to pay more."

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce was also widely cited as supporting a carbon tax, to the extent that they issued a **press release** on December 17 2018, clarifying their position: "While some of the [media] coverage notes the Chamber's support for carbon pricing, it neglects to include that the support is contingent upon significant caveats. The report calls for government to take concrete steps to reduce the overall regulatory burden on businesses in Canada, and to return the revenues from the carbon tax to business to help them lower their carbon emissions and their energy costs." The report referred to, outlining the full arguments, is ***A Competitive Transition: How smarter climate policy can help Canada lead the way to a low carbon economy***, which was published in December 2018.

Take it to the Courts! Saskatchewan **filed its challenge** to the constitutionality of the federal price on carbon pollution in April 2018; the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal announced that it will hear the case in February 13 and 14, 2019, and released the lengthy list of intervenors which it has allowed to appear. Intervenors include the provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick on the side of Saskatchewan, and the province of British Columbia on the side of the federal government; other intervenors include the **Canadian Public Health Association** ; **EcoJustice**, representing the David Suzuki Foundation and the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation; and the **Council of Canadians** , as part of a group of seven other civil society groups, including the National Farmers Union and Climate Justice Saskatoon.

A **separate case** was filed by the Government of Ontario and will be heard by the Ontario Court of Appeal in April 2019. The full list of intervenors, as well as the court filings by the Ontario government, appear at the Court of Appeal website **here** . British Columbia and New Brunswick have also applied for intervenor status in this case.

How will the courts decide? “**Courts should not have to decide climate change policy**” appeared on December 21 in *Policy Options*, with a discussion of the carbon pricing cases as well as the **recent litigation** by Quebec’s **ENvironnement JEUnesse** . Co-authors Nathalie Chalifour and Jason Maclean argue that “only a collaborative approach to policy-making is capable of delivering the kinds of rapid, forward-looking and systemic changes in how industries and societies function that are necessary to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of climate change. Litigation, by contrast, is necessarily reactive and typically divisive, time-consuming and influenced by the incremental development of legal precedent.” Regarding the provincial carbon tax challenges, they state that “the federal *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* is an example par excellence of cooperative federalism.”... “There’s little doubt that the courts will confirm the federal government’s **jurisdictional authority** to regulate GHG emissions. They may even decide that the Constitution obliges the government to take more serious climate action.”

A complex road is ahead, as indicated by a C.D. Howe Institute Memo published in October 2018: “**Federal carbon-pricing backstop is new constitutional territory**”.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing, Ontario, Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, provincial climate change policies, Saskatchewan** | **Leave a reply**

Canada at COP24: Summary and reaction

Posted on **January 4, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



In the wee hours of Saturday December 16, after a dramatic extension of negotiations, the Katowice Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP24) **concluded with the adoption of the Katowice Climate Package**. The meetings had brought together over 22,000 participants, including nearly 14,000 government officials, over 7,000 representatives from UN bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society organizations, and 1,500 members of the media. What was accomplished? IISD Reporting Services provides an **overview summary** of accomplishments, and a 34-page **compilation of official decisions** . For a more readable general overview, the UNFCCC **summarizes and links to the highlights** in a release on December 14 , including reports and developments of civil society participants. Next steps for the international negotiators: Another round at COP 25 in Chile in November 2019. In preparation, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will convene a **Climate Summit in New York City** in September 2019 .

Canadian reaction to COP24: As characterized by Elizabeth May, leader of Canada's Green Party – there was a dual agenda at the COP24 meetings: first, to agree on the “Paris Rule Book”, which will govern a shared approach to calculating and reporting on the specific items required under the Paris Agreement, and secondly, to respond to the urgency and dire warnings of the October *IPCC report* to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees C. Recognizing the difficulty of achieving any level of agreement in the politically fraught atmosphere of 2018, reaction in Canada and internationally was generally positive and aimed to put the best light possible on the failure to resolve other points, such as more ambitious GHG reduction targets.

From Canadian sources: “**COP24 delivers progress, but nations fail to heed warnings of scientists**” (Dec. 15) from the Climate Action Network Canada; “**The Hard Work Starts Now as COP Delivers Incomplete Rule Book, Low Ambition**” from the *Energy Mix* (Dec. 18); “**Environmental activists frustrated COP24 deal not strong enough**” at CBC ; and from Greenpeace Canada “**COP24 ends without firm promises to raise climate action and ambition.**” More critical comments come in “**Trudeau government fails to take bold action at COP24 to avoid climate breakdown**” (Dec. 16) and “**McKenna’s global carbon market plan more charade than genuine climate action**” both by Brent Patterson in *Rabble.ca*. On December 14, CBC broadcast an interview with Elizabeth May , where she asks “**Do we want to survive or not?**” , criticizing the focus on bureaucratic process which interfered with addressing the fundamental question of how to reduce emissions.

What did Canada achieve at COP24?: Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change pledged to improve Canada’s emission reduction targets on December 5 before she travelled to Katowice, and once there, signed on to **the statement of the “High Ambition Coalition”** , (along with the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Ethiopia, EU, Norway, U.K., Germany, New Zealand and Mexico), pledging to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement by 2020.

Regarding coal phase-out, the government’s **official statement** was issued on December 13, highlighting Canada’s continuing leadership role in the **Powering Past Coal Alliance**, which was co-founded by Canada and the U.K. in 2017. On December 12, Canada made good on its 2016 pledge to phase out traditional coal-fired electricity by 2030 by publishing **the final regulations** for that effort in the *Canada Gazette* .

Regarding Just Transition: Previous WCR posts (**Dec. 6** and **Dec. 11**) summarized the many Just Transition publications and events at COP24. Canada, along with 40 other jurisdictions, was a signatory to the **Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration** put forth by host country Poland. In the Climate Action Network Canada press release at the conclusion of COP24, Donald Lafleur, Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress is **quoted by Climate Action Network** as saying: “Canada’s trade unions applaud Canada and other parties for signing on to the **Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration**. We hope to see a commitment to a just transition that is tied to human rights and helps drive a more ambitious climate action plan designed to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees.” The Environment and Climate Change Minister joined the Canadian Labour Congress and the Just Transition Centre at the side event, **Unions in Action on Just Transition**, on December 10, yet she did not release the recommendations of the federal **Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities** . Personal testimony of Just Transition came from Roy Milne, a coal miner and the president of United Steelworkers Local 1595 in Wabamun, Alberta, who calls himself part of the first group at the first coal mine to be phased out in Canada. “**Some jobs in new energy industries come with a pay cut of \$50K: coal miner**” is an interview with Mr. Milne, was broadcast on CBC’s *The Current* on Dec. 13, in which he states that currently, “a basic operator earns \$80,000-\$100,000 per year, with additional benefits and a defined pension scheme. An electrician retraining as a renewable energy technician would go from that salary to \$45,000-\$50,000 per year.”

Other issues: The **Minister’s own Statement** at the conclusion of COP24 says that “Canada also played a leading role in laying the groundwork for a global carbon market, to help mobilize the billions of dollars of investments needed to tackle climate change” and “ Canada took part in the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, encouraging all countries around the world to use the most cost-effective tool to reduce emissions.” The details of that global carbon market remain unspecified. In another **press release**, the government announced that it will support increased participation by Indigenous people in international climate talks, by providing \$800,000 over four years to enable the creation of the Indigenous Peoples Focal Point at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. “The Focal Point will coordinate and lead work on issues related to Indigenous Peoples and climate change, promote awareness of Indigenous perspectives on climate change, and serve as a technical expert and advisor.”

And yet, with all the pledges and announcements, it must be noted that right after COP24, on December 18, the government of Canada **announced** a \$1.6 billion aid package for Alberta's oil companies. The *National Observer* article summarizes this in "**Sohi announces \$1.6 billion to help Alberta oil patch**" and quotes Minister Sohi: "These are commercial loans, made available on commercial terms. We have committed to phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2025, and we stand by that commitment." However, as stated in **a press release from Environmental Defence** "At COP24 in Katowice, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna announced that Canada would increase the ambition of its targets to cut carbon pollution. Less than two weeks later, her Cabinet colleagues, Minister of Natural Resources Amarjeet Sohi and Minister of International Trade Diversification Jim Carr, are using public money to make Canada's already-weak targets even harder to achieve."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [COP24](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

COP24 Updates and Week 2: Voices of unions, business, the U.S., and youth

Posted on **December 11, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The official meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP 24) in Katowice began optimistically, with over 40 countries, including Canada, adopting the host country's **Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration**. On the same day, December 3, IndustriALL Global Union and IndustriAll European Trade Union issued a **joint declaration demanding a Just Transition for workers**. The week ended with a diplomatic stand-off on whether delegates would "welcome" or "recognize" the landmark IPCC Scientific report – with four obdurate fossil fuel countries – U.S., Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait –refusing to use the word "welcome"; *The Energy Mix* **summarizes** those weekend negotiations and why the outcome is important – the Union of Concerned Scientists **issued a statement** that they are "deeply alarmed" by the U.S. position. DeSmog UK sums up some of the concerns from Week 1 in **'We Cannot Accept an Unjust Energy Transition': Future of Coal Communities Becomes Crucial Issue at Climate Talks**. The good news, according to an ITUC policy officer quoted in the article, is that "never, ever, before had climate negotiators debated so much about the impacts of the energy transition on workers and their communities".

Away from the official agenda, in all-important side meetings: on December 6, the Polish trade union Solidarność signed a **joint declaration** with the U.S. Heartland Institute, aligning itself with the climate denying group and rejecting climate science. A series of meetings were co-organized by **Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED)**, **Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)**, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-New York Office, the UK's Public and Commercial Services Union, Friends of the Earth Europe, transform! europe. The Agenda of the meetings is [here](#); discussion focused on the TUED discussion paper written by Sean Sweeney and John Treat, ***When "Green" Doesn't "Grow": Facing Up***

to the Failures of Profit-Driven Climate Policy, which is described as “a discussion paper highlighting the failures of profit-driven climate policy and making the case for an alternative approach that focuses on the public good and meeting basic human needs, and that embraces the struggle for public / social ownership and democratic control over energy resources and use.” It concludes with the observation that at the moment, everyone is being left behind. “This is not a scenario that unions can accept. Only a coordinated, public-goods approach allows us to escape the contradictions of commodified energy systems that pit some workers against others.”

Week 2, which runs from December 10 to 17th, has seen the arrival of political leaders, including Canada’s Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna. An interview with McKenna on her first day in Katowice appears in the *National Observer*, **“McKenna says climate targets could be law in future”**. One of the issues addressed in the interview: a new report from Stand.earth and Environmental Defence, **Canada’s Oil and Gas Challenge: A Summary Analysis of Rising Oil and Gas Industry Emissions in Canada and Progress Towards Meeting Climate Targets**, which shows how oil and gas emissions in Canada are rising, and documents examples of how oil and gas companies have influenced Canada’s climate policies. It calls for phasing out subsidies to the oil and gas sector on an accelerated timeline, and extending just transition policies, especially to oil and gas workers. McKenna did not commit to any such new policies.

In its only official event, the U.S. Administration attempted to lead a session on December 10, called “US innovative technologies spur economic dynamism”, which promotes “clean coal”. As reported by *Common Dreams* and *DeSmog UK*, protesters – mostly young people – disrupted the meeting with laughter and speeches before they walked out. *Think Progress* summarizes the event and the U.S. presence at COP24 in **“Anger, protests greet U.S. fossil fuels side event at U.N. climate talks”**. In contrast to the positions of the U.S. Administration, **We are Still In**, the coalition of U.S. state and local governments and organizations, is presenting a full slate of presentations and panels supporting the Paris Agreement – their agenda is **here**. Included under this umbrella are the positions of the U.S. business community, including the We Mean Business coalition. Their blog, **“Why we need a Just Transition to a Low Carbon World”** summarizes their report, released at COP24: **Climate and the Just Transition: The Business Case for Action**.

From an international business view, **Climate Change and the Just Transition: An Investor Guide** was released on December 10 by the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics, in partnership with the **Initiative for Responsible Investment** at the Harvard Kennedy School. The International Trade Union Confederation is also listed as a partner in this publication. The Guide endorses the need for Just Transition and illustrates a review of academic research and reveals the viewpoints of the financial community on the value of Just Transition. The release of the report coincides with the release of a **Global Investor Statement** by some of the world’s largest pension funds, asset managers and insurance companies, which calls for governments to phase out thermal coal power, put a meaningful price on carbon, and phase out fossil fuel subsidies. Its significance is described in *The Guardian* article, **“Largest ever group of global investors call for more action to meet Paris targets”**. The Investor Group **Briefing Paper** includes an endorsement of the Powering Past Coal Alliance, and states: “Investors encourage governments to transition to a low carbon economy in a sustainable and economically inclusive way. As stated in the Paris Agreement, this must include “the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”, by providing appropriate support for workers and communities in industries undergoing transition. Additionally, governments should work with investors to ensure that the benefits and opportunities created by acting on climate change and the increased adoption of clean energy technologies are accessible to all”.

For COP24 News from a trade union perspective, read a blog by Philip Pearson appear in **“Breaking News”** at the Greener Jobs Alliance website or the **COP24 Blog** by IndustriALL.

And for another view of the “unofficial” side of COP24, check **Democracy Now**, which is reporting from Katowice. **“Thousands Protest at U.N. Climate Summit in Coal-Heavy Poland, Facing Riot Police & Intimidation”** was posted on December 10, and Amy Goodman interviewed Swedish teenager and “climate hero” **Greta Thunberg** on December 11. December 8 was officially dedicated to **Youth voices**, with Greta being the most publicized, but certainly not alone. Last words to **Greta and the young people she represents**: “... we have not come here to beg the world leaders to care for our future,” They have ignored us in the past and they will ignore us again. We have come here to let them know that change is coming whether they like it or not. The people will rise to the challenge.” And from video of a **speech**

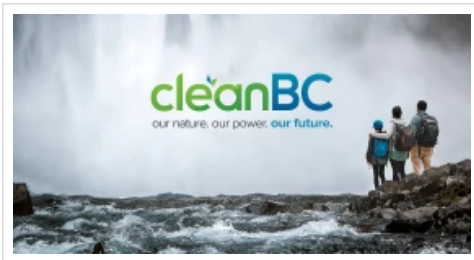
posted by the UNFCC , she states: “The first thing I have learned is that you’re never too small to make a difference.”



Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Business positions on climate change](#), [Coal Industry](#), [COP24](#), [energy democracy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Low-Carbon Investment](#), [Younger workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New B.C. Plan weds a clean economy with economic growth and worker training

Posted on [December 7, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



British Columbia's long-promised climate plan, [CleanB.C.](#) was released on December 5. The press release summary is [here](#) , details are in a 16-page [Highlights Report](#) . Top-line summary: the CleanBC plan is at pains to emphasize that it is a plan for economic growth as well as a cleaner environment. B.C.'s existing carbon tax will increase \$5.00 per year from 2018 to 2021, with rebates for low and middle income British Columbians and support for clean investments in industry. CleanB.C. repeats some already announced initiatives, such as the the [zero-emissions vehicle sales mandate](#) and ZEV consumer incentives, and the requirement for new buildings to be “net-zero energy ready” by 2032. Publicly-funded housing will benefit from \$400 million to support retrofits and upgrades. Cleaner operations by industry will target a 45% reduction of methane emissions from upstream oil and gas operations , and incentives “will provide clean electricity to planned natural gas production in the Peace region”. There is also support through “a regulatory framework for safe and effective underground CO₂ storage and direct air capture “.

CleanB.C. recognizes the needs of workers. From the [Highlights](#): “As new jobs and professions emerge, post-secondary education and training need to keep pace. The Province is working with employers, Indigenous communities, labour groups and postsecondary institutions to analyze the labour market and identify: -where the strongest job growth is likely to be, – what skills are needed to meet the demand, – what specific training we need to develop and deliver in our communities, and – what support students and apprentices need to excel in these programs. As a first step, we are investing in two key sectors where we already know demand is strong and growing – cleaner buildings and cleaner transportation: – Developing programs like Energy Step Code training and certification and Certified Retrofit Professional accreditation – Expanding job training for electric and zero-emission vehicles.” The government also states it is developing

a CleanBC Labour Readiness Plan, which is part of the reason that Unifor responded with “[Unifor supports introduction of Clean B.C. Plan](#)”. Laird Cronk, president of the [BC Federation of Labour](#) calls the new strategy an “historic opportunity” to develop a sustainable economy, and states: “We’re committed to working together on just and fair transition strategies to protect existing workers and to ensure that new employment opportunities created by the CleanBC plan are good, family- and community-supporting jobs.”

The general acclaim for Clean B.C. is compiled in a [Backgrounder](#) at the B.C. government website, with statements from politicians, environmentalists, business leaders, First Nations, labour unions, and academics- among them, Marc Jaccard from Simon Fraser University, who states: “This plan returns B.C. to global climate leadership.” From other sources: Clean Energy Canada: “[CleanBC marks a turning point for B.C.’s environment and economy](#)” (Dec. 5); The [Broadbent Blog](#) , which singles out the exemplary commitment to equity and reconciliation with First Nations people; the Pembina Institute, “[B.C. climate plan sets a course to Canada’s clean future](#)” and “[Five bright spots in B.C.’s new climate plan](#)”, which highlights the importance of the accountability mechanism. The [David Suzuki Foundation](#) calls it a “Big Step Forward”, but points out that there is more to be done – a Phase 2 is needed.

The Phase 2 of further initiatives (and implementation legislation) are promised. The Government clearly admits that the initiatives announced on December 5 will only achieve 18.9 Mt GHG reduction, leaving a 25% gap with what is required by the legislated target for 2030 (25.4 Mt GHG from a 2007 baseline).

The [response from West Coast Environmental Law](#) applauds and endorses CleanB.C. and its accountability measures, but raises the elephant in the room question: “We know that the Province needs to go further: the map set out in CleanBC is not complete, nor does it go far enough. Some recent decisions, for example on LNG, are difficult to square with this climate plan”. This big LNG question also appears in “[Critics question B.C.’s LNG pursuit in wake of climate plan announcement](#)” (updated on December 6), stating that “ the already-approved LNG export facilities — LNG Canada and Woodfibre in Squamish — would take up almost all of B.C.’s allowable carbon footprint under the current targets.” The government’s [current LNG Framework](#) was released in March 2018 , allowing [the approval of a controversial \\$40-billion LNG project](#) centred in Kitimat in October 2018. At that time, the Green Party leader linked his Party’s support for the clean growth strategy and promised the Greens “would have more to say” about LNG after the Clean Growth strategy was finalized.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [British Columbia](#), [Green Economy](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Talking Just Transition in the heart of coal country: COP24 delegates gather in Katowice, Poland

Posted on [December 6, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Representatives of almost 200 nations are meeting at the **24th annual Conference of the Parties (COP24)** in Katowice, Poland from December 3 to 17. Their goal is to negotiate a “rulebook” to turn the Paris Agreement pledges of 2015 into reality – basically, trying to find agreement on a host of implementation details so that the world can limit warming to 2, preferably 1.5 degrees C.



— Museum to coal mining in Katowice, Poland

With Poland as the host country and the location of the meetings in the centre of the country’s coal region, it was inevitable that Just Transition would have a high profile at COP24. The first day of the meetings at the Polish Pavilion was devoted entirely to discussion of the ***Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration*** which has been **signed by** Poland’s President and heads of 44 other countries. The Declaration states that social approval of changes is essential for the transition to a low-carbon economy and the social security of workers in affected communities is the first and foremost policy goal. Although the International Trade Union Congress is meeting for its **4th World Congress** in Copenhagen in the week of December 2, it released a **statement of support** for the Silesia Declaration, stating “This declaration means that workers and their unions will have a seat at the negotiating table and workers’ voices will be heard when climate policies are developed and implemented. Good social dialogue processes are a crucial factor to make the changes to industries, sectors and national economies that will stop dangerous climate change and unleash a 65 million low-carbon jobs dividend by 2030.”

Also at the ITUC World Congress, Canadian Labour Congress president Hassan Yussuff delivered a speech (radio broadcast [here](#)) on December 5 about on how Canadian unions are dealing with climate change. The European Trade Union Confederation is also participating in the discussion on Just Transition –notably with participation in the December 3 session ‘**Game changer for the future of work: Towards a just transition with gender equality**’. A list of ILO sessions and events regarding Just Transition and Decent Work is [here](#).

December 10 has been designated as “Ambition and Just Transition Day”, and on December 13, Canada and the U.K. , as co-founders of the **Powering Past Coal Alliance**, will co-host a **Side-event** to showcase the PPCA progress and to launch a new report on global coal economics by Carbon Tracker .



Already launched at COP24: **Just Transition: Mapping Just Transition(s) to a Low Carbon World** , published by the Just Transition Research Collaborative (JTRC), part of the U.N. Research Institute on Social Development (UNRISD). It focuses on Brazil, Germany, Kenya, South Africa, the United States, and Canada – with contributions from Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood. The report discusses how differently Just Transition has been framed, and provides case studies of how it is being implemented in the six countries.

The Climate Action Network- Canada (CAN-Rac) is participating at COP24 and released a **Brief** which sets out five goals for the meetings, including Just Transition goals. CAN-Rac calls for stronger institutional recognition of just transition – by including a Just Transition commitment in the official Nationally Determined Contribution, and by including it as a permanent theme within the COP meetings (which guarantees it status as an agenda item and as part of the official work programme). CANRac supports the Polish Solidarity and **Just Transition Silesia Declaration**, recognizing the need for a carefully planned process built on social dialogue. Within the Canadian context, the Brief calls for an ongoing mandate for the federal Just Transition Task Force and an expansion beyond coal phase-out, to include all fossil fuel sectors. Finally it states: “The contribution of Indigenous communities in the creation and implementation of just transition policies and national plans is essential.”

What will Canada do at the COP24? The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) makes its predictions in “**The End of Coal? What to Watch for at the Upcoming UN Climate Conference (COP24)**” . Environment and Climate Change Minister McKenna will not arrive at the meetings until December 9 ; December 10 has been declared “Ambition and Just Transition Day”, and December 13, “Coal-free Day”. On December 13, McKenna , along with the other co-founder, U.K.’s Claire Perry, will co-host a **Powering Past Coal Side-event** to showcase the PPCA progress and spotlight a new report, **Powering Down Coal** by Carbon Tracker.

In advance of leaving for COP24, the Minister **pledged** that Canada will set more ambitious GHG emissions targets when the Paris Agreement begins in 2020 – which is a good thing since **recently released data** from the Global Carbon Project shows Canada is one of the world’s top ten polluters, and the current target of reducing emissions 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 is generally considered insufficient (even if we were to meet it). The **2018 Emissions Gap Report** from the U.N. documents just how insufficient the efforts of all countries have been.

How to Keep up to date with COP24: The United Nations Framework on Climate Change (**UNFCC**) **website** has comprehensive coverage including highlights, official documents, photos, and webcasts from the meetings. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) also provides detailed daily coverage, including photos, in its **Earth Negotiations Bulletin** (and has also written a **Short Guide to COP24** as an introduction to how it all works). For media coverage: **Climate Home News** has extensive and expert coverage of all aspects and **The Guardian**, as always, has strong coverage. For the latest developments, follow Environment and Climate Change Canada’s Twitter feed **here** ; also **#JustTransition** ; **#Climate Justice** ; and for a variety of views , **#COP24Katowice** .

U.S. Democrats promote Green New Deal, based on a Jobs for All guarantee

Posted on **December 5, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“**Climate Jobs for All**” by Jeremy Brecher appeared in *CounterPunch* on December 3, and it would be hard to find a more knowledgeable guide to the current U.S. policy discussion about a Green New Deal. Brecher traces the origins and evolution of one of the key aspects of the Green New Deal – the Jobs for All Guarantee (JG), which began in 2017 as a policy proposal to combat unemployment and inequality. He then discusses how the concept expanded to include a Climate Jobs for All Guarantee – a jobs guarantee program that is geared to the transition to a climate-safe, fossil-free economy.

The Green New Deal is an increasingly popular and powerful policy within the Democratic Party of the U.S. Here are some of the stepping stones along the way to the present:

In May, 2017, ***Toward a Marshall Plan for America: Rebuilding Our Towns, Cities, and the Middle Class*** was published by the Center for American Progress as a proposal for full employment policies, based on the precedent of the Roosevelt New Deal policies of the Great Depression.

The Federal Job Guarantee – A Policy to Achieve Permanent Full Employment was published in March 2018 by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; also in March, “**Why Democrats Should Embrace a Federal Jobs Guarantee**” appeared in *The Nation* .

“**The Job Guarantee: Design, Jobs, and Implementation**”, published in April 2018, was one of several working papers on the topic by [Pavlina R. Tcherneva](#) of Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, New York.

Application to the climate change movement began with “**It’s Time for the Climate Movement to Embrace a Federal Jobs Guarantee**”, which appeared in *In These Times* in May 2018, written by two members of the [Sunrise Movement](#), the U.S. youth organization which promotes climate justice, and which has published the [Climate Jobs Guarantee Primer](#) .

A Green New Deal: A Progressive Vision for Environmental Sustainability and Economic Stability was published by Data for Progress in September 2018, stating: “This report articulates a vision for a broad set policy goals and investments that aim to achieve environmental sustainability and economic stability in ways that are just and equitable.”



The topic began to hit the headlines with the sit-in at Nancy Pelosi’s office on November 13, organized by youth activists for climate justice in the [Sunrise Movement](#) and [Justice Democrats](#) . Representative-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez unexpectedly took part in the demonstration, demanding that Pelosi support a [Select Committee on the Green New Deal](#) – which had been part of AOC’s platform in the congressional election . David Roberts of *Vox* provides expert political analysis in “[Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is already pressuring Nancy Pelosi on climate change](#)” (Nov. 15) , and *The*

Intercept also reported on the demonstration in “[Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Joins Environmental Activists in Protest at Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi’s Office](#)” .

For the latest, as Democratic members of Congress begin to sign on, read “[The Game-Changing Promise of a Green New Deal](#)” by Naomi Klein in *The Intercept* (Nov. 27); “[Video: Naomi Klein interviews Bernie Sanders on Climate Change](#)” on December 3, before the National Town Hall on Solutions for Climate Change, and “[The Green New Deal is designed to win](#)” in *The Atlantic* (Dec. 5) .

If time is short, read the brief introduction by the Sierra Club magazine : “[What is this Green New Deal anyway?](#)” , and follow [#Green New Deal](#) .

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Green Job Creation](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Just Transition](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

GM Oshawa closure – a sign of the disruption to auto manufacturing

Posted on [December 4, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



After the November 26 bombshell [announcement that the GM plant in Oshawa will close](#) at the end of December 2019, Unifor President Jerry Diaz [has demanded](#) that GM allocate product to the Oshawa plant, putting his faith in the newly-signed USMCA trade agreement and stating “Oshawa has been in this situation before with no product on the horizon and we were able to successfully make the case for continued operations.” But in a CBC interview, “[Why can’t they make the future in Oshawa?](#)”(Nov. 27), the Canadian Vice President for Corporate and Environmental Affairs states firmly that there is no hope for further production in Oshawa. “This decision has to do with simply being able to make the transition to the future and reallocate capital into the massive investments that are needed for electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles.” He forecasts that about half of the existing Oshawa workers will be eligible to retire with enhanced full pensions, some (but not all) others may find work at GM plants in Ingersoll or St. Catharines, and the rest will be covered by whatever compensation, benefits and timing is negotiated with their union, Unifor. In a more recent CBC article, “[GM Canada president says electric vehicles are the future — but they won’t be made in Oshawa](#)” (Dec. 4), the president reiterates that there are no changes planned for the CAMI plant in Ingersoll or the St. Catharines facility, and points to the growth of the new GM Canadian Technology Centre opened in Markham in January 2018, which has already hired approximately 450 software engineers and coders, with plans to hire more.

Although Ontario Premier Ford somehow blamed the previous government’s cap and trade policies for GM’s decision, others are recognizing the GM closure as part of the disruption and transformation of the auto industry. From the *Energy Mix*, “[GM Plant Closure Shows Industry Transition Catching Canada, Ontario Flat-Footed](#)” (Nov. 30) ; (also of interest: “[Lost Opportunities Show Cost of Canada’s Moribund Cleantech Manufacturing Strategy](#)” (Nov. 30), which discusses the dilemma of electric bus manufacturers in Canada). In “[GM and Canada’s transition to a zero-emissions fleet](#)” in IRPP *Policy Options* (Dec. 3) , author Ryan Katz-Rosene of the University of Ottawa states that “ the 20th-century auto-sector model (in which a handful of global automakers commanded the market and much of the supply chain associated with it) is pretty much dead now.” The article asks, “Where does this leave Canada in terms of its preparedness to participate in the 21st century automobile sector, which is largely centred on electric and autonomous vehicles? And, what role (if any) should governments, at all levels, play to improve Canada’s industrial positioning in that sector?” And Barry Cross of Queen’s University asks “[Have we reached peak car?](#)” in *The Conversation* (Dec. 2) – a quick view of the future of autonomous vehicles and car sharing.

New Ontario Environment Plan steps backwards on emission reduction ambitions

Posted on **December 4, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 29, the Ontario government of Doug Ford released its promised climate change proposals in a new report, called *Preserving and Protecting our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan*. The government will continue consultation, with public submissions accepted [here](#) until January 28 2019, and pledges to establish an Advisory Panel on Climate Change. The major focus of the plan is to establish a Carbon Trust of \$400 million over four years, which includes a \$50 million 'reverse auction,' through which the government will fund private sector clean technology proposals. It commits to an 8% emissions reduction over the next 12 years, a much less ambitious target than that of the previous Liberal government. Reaction has been almost universally negative, as compiled by [Climate Action Network Canada](#) and by the CBC in "[Ontario Climate change plan includes fund to help big polluters reduce emissions](#)" (Nov. 29) . The Ecofiscal Commission offers a detailed critique and assessment in "[Up in the Air](#)" ; the [Pembina Institute states](#) "The plan weakens Ontario's carbon pollution reduction targets by 27 per cent.... The plan released today contains mainly aspirational statements and plans to make plans."

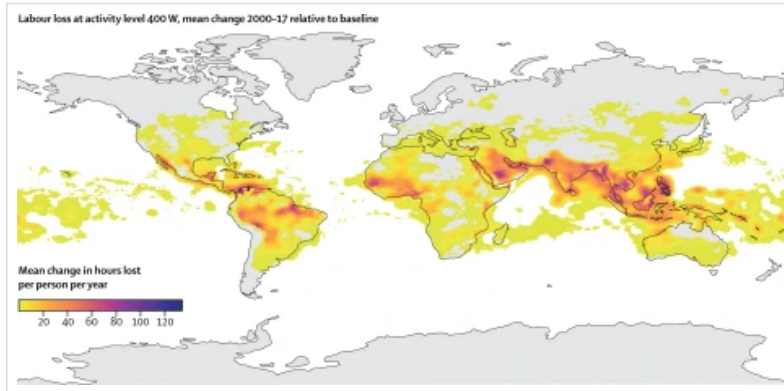


The Ontario [Green Party calls](#) the Ford government plan a Litter Reduction Plan, not a climate plan . The Green Party's own Climate Plan, *Leaping into the future: A comprehensive strategy for reducing Ontario's emissions*, was released on November 15, and sets a 100% carbon neutral by 2050 target, and a return to carbon pricing.

Lancet Report details health impacts of climate change with new estimates re heat impacts on labour

Posted on **December 4, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The latest landmark Report of the [Lancet Countdown](#) was released at the end of November 2018, updating the global research on the health impacts of climate change. The title of the press release reveals the focus : [Extreme heat damaging our health and livelihoods and threatening to overwhelm hospitals around the world](#) . Using new methodology, the report estimates work hours lost to extreme heat: “153 billion hours of work were lost in 2017 due to extreme heat as a result of climate change. China alone lost 21 billion hours, the equivalent of a year’s work for 1.4% of their working population. India lost 75 billion hours, equivalent to 7% of their total working population.”



Although the 2018 report emphasizes the increasing threats related to heat, it measures 41 indicators related to disease, air pollution, extreme weather, and addresses economic and social impacts – including food security and climate migration. Regarding energy, it states “ In 2017, renewable energy provided 10.3 million jobs – a 5.7% increase from 2016. But fossil fuel extraction industries increased to 11 million – an 8% increase from 2016.” The report estimates deaths from air pollution by source attribution, with coal estimated to account for 16% of deaths globally. It also includes a new indicator mapping extremes of precipitation, identifying South America and southeast Asia among the regions most exposed to flood and drought and, on food security, the report points to 30 countries experiencing downward trends in crop yields, reversing a decade-long trend.

In addition to the main global report, national Briefings for Policymakers are provided for the Brazil, China, the EU, India, the Netherlands, Spain, U.K. and the U.S., as well as Canada. An [excellent summary of the main report](#) and the Canadian sub-report appears from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

The [Briefing for Canadian Policymakers](#) is written in collaboration with the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Public Health Association. It provides a Canada-specific view of health impacts, and makes recommendations: for example, “Phase out coal-powered electricity in Canada by 2030 or sooner, with a minimum of two thirds of the power replaced by non-emitting sources ;... increase ambition in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution in Canada and twin this with an emphasis on Just Transition Policies to support an equitable transition for people who work in the fossil fuel industry as the energy economy transforms;.... Apply carbon pricing instruments as soon and as broadly as possible, enhancing ambition gradually in a predictable manner, and integrate study of resulting air pollution-related health and healthcare impacts into ongoing policy decisions.” The report provides Canadian context for the under-appreciated topic of “Climate Change, Mental Health and Ecological Grief”, with examples from the Arctic and sub-Arctic: Rigolet, Nunatsiavut, and a study of the SOS Summer-of-Smoke , when the area around Yellowknife experienced prolonged smoke and fire exposure in 2014.

Finally, the global Countdown report warns that “A lack of progress in reducing emissions and building adaptive capacity threatens both human lives and the viability of the national health systems they depend on, with the potential to disrupt core public health infrastructure and overwhelm health services.” It points to the growth of health-related advocacy groups , the divestment from fossil fuels, (including by the Canadian Medical Association), and the need for climate change-related training for health professionals. The Canadian report also addresses this need for training for health professionals, stating: “A well-trained workforce is required to respond to these challenges. The Canadian Public Health Association’s Ecological Determinants Group on Education has been working to integrate an ecosocial approach into public health education, including facilitating the participation of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students in an International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations initiative which seeks to see climate change and health gain a foothold in curricula by 2020 with fuller integration by 2025.”

The [Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change](#) is a global, interdisciplinary report funded by the Wellcome Trust, and researched through the collaboration of 27 academic institutions and inter-governmental organizations. The full report is [here](#) (registration required).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [climate change and mental health](#), [health care professionals](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Hospitals](#), [medical professionals](#), [outdoor workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Quebec youth sue the Canadian government for inadequate action on climate change

Posted on **November 27, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



ENvironment JEUnesse is the Quebec youth group behind the world's latest intergenerational climate lawsuit. Their [press release states](#): "On November 26 2018, ENvironnement JEUnesse, represented pro bono by the firm Trudel Johnston & Lespérance, applied to bring a class action against the Canadian government before the Superior Court of Québec today on behalf of Quebecers aged 35 and under. ENvironnement JEUnesse alleges that the Canadian government is infringing on a generation's fundamental rights because its greenhouse gas reduction target is not ambitious enough to avoid dangerous climate change and because it does not even have a plan that would allow it to reach this already inadequate target." The law firm [Trudel Johnston & Lespérance](#) provides legal details, and states that "The class action seeks a declaration that the Canadian government's behaviour in the fight against climate change infringes on the rights of young people, as well as an order to pay punitive damages."

ENvironment JEUnesse invites readers to join the class action suit, donate, and support the initiatives of other Quebec activists ([Pact for the Transition](#) , and the [Déclaration d'urgence climatique](#)). The main [website is in the French language](#), and a French language newsletter is available.

The National Observer broke the news with [Quebec youth apply to sue Canada to get tougher carbon pollution targets](#) and *Climate Liability News* published "[Canada Faces Latest Youth-Led Climate Lawsuit](#)". Both articles identify the Quebec lawsuit as part of a world-wide movement in where youth are suing their governments for their right to a future without climate catastrophe. The best known climate case of such cases is the [Juliana vs U.S. constitutional "Trial of the Century"](#) which began under President Obama and was scheduled to be heard on October 29. It is still under challenge from the federal government. There have also been youth cases in several U.S. states – most recently in [Florida](#) . In Norway, Nature and Youth Norway, in cooperation with Greenpeace, are currently appealing an [unsuccessful court decision](#) in January 2018, and the youth of Columbia achieved a successful decision in the [Demanda Generaciones Futuras v. Minambiente case](#) , in which the government was ordered to formulate plans to protect the Amazon from deforestation. ENvironment JEUnesse provides a summary of all related cases [here](#)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [intergenerational climate justice](#), [Our Children's Trust](#), [Quebec](#), [youth lawsuits](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Good news and bad news about electric vehicles: B.C. mandates, Oshawa plant closing

Posted on **November 26, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Good News: British Columbia: In the latest encouragement to electric vehicle ownership in British Columbia, the Premier **announced on November 20** that he will introduce legislation in Spring 2019 to phase in targets for the sale of zero-emission vehicles in the province – 10% ZEV sales by 2025, 30% by 2030, and 100% by 2040. This will be accompanied by funding to expand charging infrastructure, and for consumer incentives in addition to the existing incentives under the **Clean Energy Vehicle program**. The new policies are in line with the **Intentions Paper on Transportation**, part of a public consultation in Summer 2018. (For background, read **“Fuelled by strong demand, B.C. adds \$10 million to electric vehicle incentive program”** (Sept 27) and **“B.C. proposes mandate for electric vehicles”** (July 27), both in the National Observer.) Mandates for EV sales are already in place in Quebec, California, and other U.S. states.



The Bad news: Ontario: Mandates for EV sales in the U.S. was part of the modernization strategy by General Motors in its **comments to the U.S. government** under the *Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule* on October 26, 2018. According to the *National Observer* at the time, **“Transport Canada welcomes GM’s electric car plan”**. Apparently, Transport Canada didn’t know what was in store. As of November 26, GM’s global modernization strategy came crashing down on Ontario auto workers – announced in the November 26 corporate press release: **GM Accelerates Transformation**. The brief and unexpected press release names the GM Assembly plant in Oshawa Ontario as one which will be “unallocated” in 2019, along with Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly (Detroit) and Lordstown Assembly (Warren, Ohio). The *Toronto Star* makes the connections in **“GM plant closure in Oshawa part of company’s shift to electric, self-driving autos”** (Nov. 26).

Unifor, which represents approximately 2,500 GM Oshawa workers who will lose their jobs, was only informed of the decision one day ahead of the public announcement, and **has stated**: “Based on commitments made during 2016 contract negotiations, Unifor does not accept this announcement and is immediately calling on GM to live up to the spirit of that agreement.” Ontario’s Premier Ford **issued a statement** saying: “As a first step, I will be authorizing Employment Ontario to deploy its Rapid Re-Employment and Training Services program to provide impacted local workers with targeted local training and jobs services to help them regain employment as quickly as possible...we are asking the federal government to immediately extend Employment Insurance (EI) eligibility to ensure impacted workers in the auto sector can

fully access EI benefits when they need them most....We are also asking the federal government to work with their U.S. counterparts to remove all tariffs so that impacted auto parts suppliers can remain competitive after the Oshawa Assembly Plant closes its doors.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [General Motors](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s record on climate change, and the global failure to meet Paris emissions targets

Posted on **November 26, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



An analysis of the evolution of Justin Trudeau’s climate change policies is summarized in “[The Rise and Fall of Trudeau’s ‘Grand Bargain’ on Climate](#)”, published in *The Tyee* (Nov. 14). The article is a summary by author Donald Gutstein of his new book, [The Big Stall: How Big Oil and Think Tanks Are Blocking Action on Climate Change in Canada](#), which the publisher describes this way: “The Big Stall traces the origins of the government’s climate change plan back to the energy sector itself — in particular Big Oil. It shows how, in the last fifteen years, Big Oil has infiltrated provincial and federal governments, academia, media and the non-profit sector to sway government and public opinion on the realities of climate change and what needs to be done about it.” (Interesting companion reading to this argument: an October report from the Parkland Institute and the Corporate Mapping Project, [Who Owns Canada’s Fossil-Fuel Sector? Mapping the Network of Ownership & Control.](#)) *The Big Stall* concludes that by framing the challenge as an opportunity for economic growth through clean technology, the government has failed to address climate change effectively.



Recent studies continue to support the assessment that the world, including Canada, has not done enough to meet its climate change goals, let alone the urgent need to decarbonize. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will release its annual [Emissions Gap Report 2018](#) in November, but in a pre-release chapter released at the Global Climate Action Summit in September, the UNEP asserted that national governments are not meeting their Paris Agreement targets, and that [non-state actors and sub-national governments are crucially important in closing the gap.](#)

Time to Get on with It: The LCEI 2018: Tracking the Progress G20 Countries Have Made to Decarbonize Their Economies was released in early October by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) consultants. Their Low Carbon Economy Index (LCEI) report states that in 2017, no country was on track with the decarbonization rate needed to achieve the Paris Agreement temperature goal, and ranks Canada as 14th out of 20.



The ***Brown to Green Report 2018*** released by Climate Transparency in November rates all the G20 nations on 80 indicators regarding decarbonisation, climate policies, finance and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. No G20 countries are on track to meet their targets (Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Russia are ranked as worst).The 15-page ***Canada Country Report*** finds that Canada's GHG emissions per capita are the highest of any G20 country at 22 (compared to a G20 country average of 8). Despite encouraging coal phase-out policies, "Canada's NDC is not consistent with the Paris Agreement's temperature limit but would lead to a warming between 3°C and 4°C. "

Finally, for an academic treatment of this issue: "**Warming assessment of the bottom-up Paris Agreement emissions pledges**" appeared in *Nature Communications* on November 16. It states that India is the only country close to being on track to meet a 2 degree target, and singles out Saudi Arabia, Russia, Canada and China as laggards.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Justin Trudeau](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [2 Replies](#)

4th U.S. Climate Assessment provides new estimates of economic costs of climate change

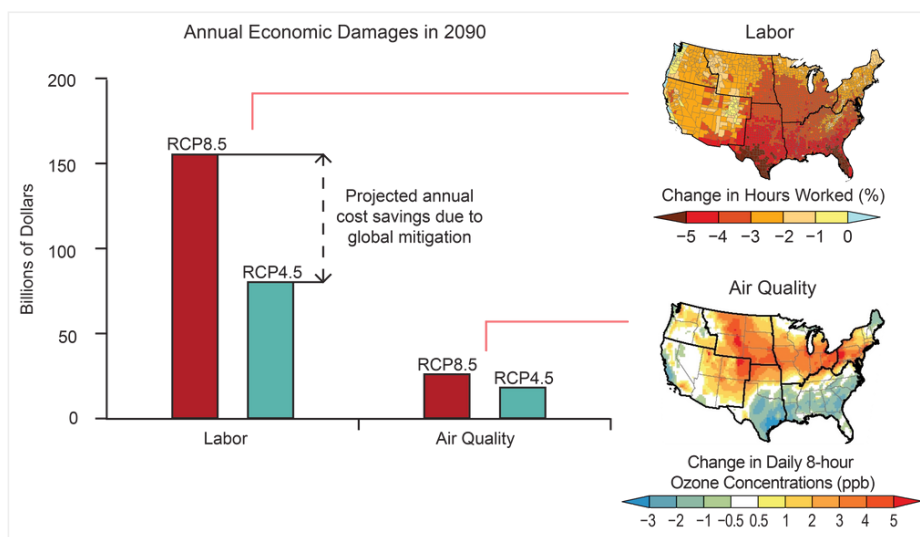
Posted on **November 26, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. Global Change Research Program, a consortium of 13 federal government departments and agencies, released volume 2 of the ***4th National Climate Assessment of Climate-change Impacts on the United States*** on November 23. This report is exceptional for the unequivocal, comprehensive, and detailed information contained, and a new emphasis on the economic impacts of climate change, described as "broader and more systematic", providing an advancement in the understanding of the financial costs and benefits of climate change impacts. For example, the report estimates a worst-case scenario for 2090 where extreme heat results in "labor-related losses" of an estimated \$155 billion annually; also, \$141 billion from heat-related deaths, \$118 billion from sea level rise and \$32 billion from infrastructure damage by the end of the century. Other key themes: the negative impacts of climate change on trade, the disruption of supply chains for U.S. manufacturers, likely loss of productivity for U.S. agriculture, unequal impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, and the impact on Indigenous peoples.

In an article from the *New York Times*, climate expert Michael Oppenheimer says, “This report will weaken the Trump administration’s legal case for undoing climate change regulations and it strengthens the hands of those who go to court to fight them.” Small wonder the administration chose to release it on the eve of American Thanksgiving, when public attention would be distracted.

Volume 2, just released, is based on the scientific findings of the [4th National Climate Assessment, Volume 1](#), which was released in 2017. Volume 2 is over 1500 pages, and is composed of 16 national-level topic chapters, 10 regional chapters, and 2 response chapters. Each of the 29 individual chapters is [downloadable from this link](#). The [Overview is here](#). A [Guide](#) briefly explains the modelling assumptions and sources of information used; more specific detail is in [Appendix 3: Data tools and scenario products](#).

Media reaction and summaries include: [“Climate Change Puts U.S. Economy and Lives at Risk, and Costs Are Rising, Federal Agencies Warn”](#) in *Inside Climate News* (Nov. 23); [“New National Climate Assessment Shows Climate Change is a Threat to our Economy, Infrastructure and Health”](#) from the Union of Concerned Scientists (Nov. 23); [“U.S. economy faces hit, climate change report warns”](#) from the *New York Times*, reposted to *Portside* (Nov. 24); or [“3 big takeaways from the major new US climate report”](#) in *Vox* (Nov. 24).



— From the 4th National Climate Assessment U.S. – Chapter 1 Overview

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change impacts](#), [Economic Risk](#), [Heat Stress](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Reducing emissions from Canada’s built environment – what is the government thinking?

Posted on **November 22, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In 2015, Canada's building sector accounted for approximately 12% of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions, according to *Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Canada's Built Environment*, a November 16 report from the Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. The report discusses "a wide range of policy tools and technology solutions that could lower building sector GHG emissions, including: national building codes; energy efficiency standards and labels; technology research, development, and demonstration; fuel-switching for space heating; federal investments in buildings; and, the role of cities and urban design." In its concluding statements, the Committee notes that the existing federal **Build Smart Strategy** faces pressures of climate-change related urgency, as well as the need to harmonize and work with the various provincial jurisdictions. In the discussion of energy efficiency, the report cites the **testimony of David Lapp of Engineers Canada**, in which he states that each \$1 million invested in energy efficiency improvements is estimated to generate up to \$3 to \$4 million in gross domestic product and up to 13 jobs. The report provides links to the testimony of all witnesses who appeared before it – no unions or worker representatives appeared.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Canada's Built Environment is the last of five interim reports by the Senate Committee regarding Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy. A final report is scheduled to be released later in 2018, compiling all five studies and issuing recommendations for the government.

The government has already received recommendations on the topic, from the June 2018 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development: *Better Buildings for a Low-Carbon Future*, and in French, *De Meilleurs Bâtiments Pour un Avenir À Faibles Émissions de Carbone*. In October, the Government released its **Response report** (French version [here](#)), which included reaction to the Committee's Recommendation # 4, that "Employment and Social Development Canada ensure that programs exist or are established to address the labour transition required so that skilled personnel are available to implement net-zero energy ready codes." The Government response offers only a reaffirmation of its commitment to existing skills training, upgrading and apprenticeship programs. What little new thinking there is comes in the statement regarding green jobs: "The Government is also supporting the development of specific skills required for employment in green jobs. For example, the Green Jobs Science and Technology Internship program is investing more than \$16 million to create 1,200 jobs as part of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy. This program provides opportunities for post-secondary graduates to gain relevant work experience through green jobs in science, technology, engineering and math fields in the natural resources sector. *NRCan is also exploring opportunities to collaborate with non-government organizations, trade associations and provincial and territorial governments to develop training resources to support implementation of net-zero energy ready codes by 2030.*"

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [energy efficiency](#), [Government Policy](#), [Green Building](#), [retrofitting](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [Training](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Position paper committed to centrality of unions in Just Transition and green industrial policy

Posted on **November 22, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



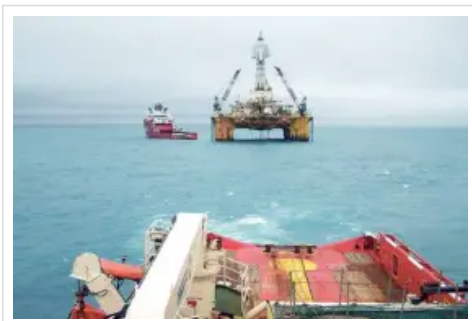
Working Together for a Just Transition is a brief new position paper by the U.K.'s New Economics Foundation (NEF), in association with the London Office of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung . The report was released on November 14, to launch a new, multi-year "programme of work" on just transition. Some highlights: Low carbon industrial policy, if done well, offers "an opportunity to deliver pioneering models for wider systemic reform – power, democracy and ownership – that would perhaps be impossible without that sense of urgency." The report cites the Scottish Government's **Just Transition Commission**, established in September 2018, as "an exciting model" which the U.K. should follow. Further, "NEF and FES are strongly committed to the centrality of the union movement in delivering a stronger, fairer and more sustainable economy . We believe that unions must be actively involved in shaping a programme of green industrial strategy, retraining and shaping. Individual and collective power in the workplace is a vital means to securing other 'good job' characteristics, and greater ownership by employees and meaningful corporate governance are central parts of the economic rebalancing that is essential for the UK's long-term prosperity."

Regarding the Just Transition project as a whole, **New Economics Foundation** states: "Our interest is in the practicality of change: the policies, processes, narrative and investment needed to accelerate the UK's progress on 'just transition', here and now. Over the coming months and years we will be working at local and national levels to explore what is needed to build common cause and provide the right mixture of incentives and critical challenge to all parties to help unlock a new momentum for a 'just transition' for the UK. "

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Newfoundland and Labrador announces its "lax tax" on carbon

Posted on **November 13, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A “Made-in-Newfoundland and Labrador Approach to Carbon Pricing” was announced and described in a [press release on October 23](#) , with a carbon tax rate of \$20 tonne starting on January 1, 2019. The details are many, as published [here](#) . Exemptions are granted for consumers (e.g. for home heating fuel) , and for industry – specifically “for agriculture, fishing, forestry, offshore and mineral exploration, and methane gases from venting and fugitive emissions in the oil and gas sector.” These exemptions make sense in light of the province’s Oil and Gas growth strategy announced in February 2018, [Advance 2030](#) , which aims for 100 new exploration wells to be drilled by 2030.

Despite the weakness of the provincial plan, it has been accepted by the federal government – thus, Newfoundland will avoid the stricter regime which would have been imposed by the federal backstop plan in 2019. For a brief overview: [“Why the lax tax? Finance minister says Muskrat burden played role in carbon pricing”](#) (CBC) . In depth analysis appears in [“Newfoundland’s carbon tax gives ‘free pass’ to offshore oil industry”](#) in *The Narwhal*. (Nov. 9)

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [carbon backstop](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Newfoundland](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition proposals to protect workers’ interests in a report commissioned by Australia’s energy workers’ union

Posted on **November 13, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



An October 29 report commissioned by CFMEU Mining and Energy union of Australia argues that government will need billions of dollars for comprehensive measures to support workers and communities in a move away from coal-fired power generation. It calls for consultation and participation in planning, and an independent statutory Energy Transition Authority . [The Ruhr or Appalachia? Deciding the future of Australia’s coal power workers and communities](#) examines case studies from around the world – both successful and unsuccessful – including South Wales (U.K.), Appalachia (U.S.), Singapore, Limburg (Netherlands) and the Ruhr Valley (Germany). Within Australia, the Hazelwood closure is judged as unsuccessful – due to a lack of advance planning – and the LaTrobe Valley experience as a positive model. The report concludes that advance planning is essential to success, with a national framework ...“ International evidence tells us that such a framework will require active participation from companies, workforce union representation, and government.”

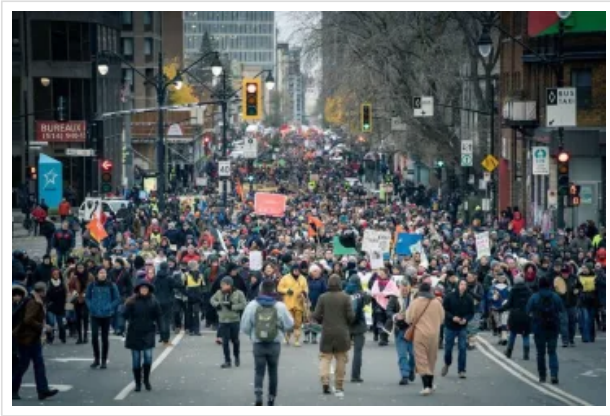
[The Ruhr or Appalachia?](#) report was written by Professor Peter Sheldon at the Industrial Relations Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. It includes an extensive bibliography of other studies of Just Transition. The report was commissioned by [CFMEU Mining and Energy union](#), which represents over 20,000 workers, mainly in coal mining and also in metalliferous mining, coal ports, power stations, oil refineries and other parts of the oil and gas production chain.

For briefer versions see the union’s press release [“New Independent Authority Needed To Manage Transition For Energy Workers”](#), or a 4-page [Executive Summary](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [case studies](#), [Hazelwood](#), [Just Transition](#), [LaTrobe Valley](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A “new social contract” launches to fight climate change in Quebec

Posted on **November 13, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



An [article in the *Montreal Gazette*](#) on November 12 describes the rapid rise of a new grassroots group in the province: in English, called “The Planet goes to Parliament”. Their demonstrations have been covered by [the CBC](#)— including a march of 50,000 people in Montreal on November 10, calling for the newly-elected provincial government to make climate change action an urgent priority . A report of an earlier march in October [is here](#) .

In addition to marches and demonstrations, over 175,000 Quebecers have signed the group’s *Pact for Transition* (English version [here](#)), French version [here](#)), which calls for “radical, co-ordinated and societal transformation” . The Pact first calls for a solemn personal pledge to change behaviours “to wean ourselves off fossil fuels.” It also calls for the government to: enact a plan by 2020 for reaching Quebec’s climate targets; commit to reducing emissions by 50 per cent by 2030; develop an energy efficiency and electrification strategy; rule out any exploitation of fossil fuels in Quebec; and make climate change the first consideration of every policy. Dominic Champagne, a theatre producer and anti-fracking campaigner, is being credited with launching the mass movement, and states: “This time it’s not just left-wing ecologists and artists. It’s way larger ... This is really fulfilling an empty space on the political landscape.”

The Quebec government is now led by the right-wing Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) party, which had the weakest environmental platform in the election campaign; Québec Solidaire, a new left-leaning party, had the most well-developed and ambitious climate platform , and went from 0 to 10 seats in the new legislature. (See a WCR explainer [here](#)). Since taking power in October, the CAQ government announced the cancellation of the [Apuiat wind farm](#) , which was to be built in partnership with Innu communities. As reported by the [Energy Mix](#) , the Chair and Vice-Chair of Hydro-Québec [resigned](#) due to the cancellation. Details about the Apuiat project are provided by [CBC here](#) (Oct. 20).

The Planet Goes to Parliament [has announced plans](#) for at least two more climate protests, in Quebec City and in Montreal, during the COP24 meetings in Katowice Poland in December. The group is thinking big, with a goal of 1 million signatories to their Pact – out of a population of 8 million in the province.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change activism](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Quebec](#), [Wind Farms](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Strikes: Children are leading the way

Posted on **November 8, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Although all eyes have been on the *Juliana vs. United States* legal action in the U.S (given the go-ahead again on November 2, according to [Inside Climate News](#)), other young people are taking up the fight against climate change. In September, after record heat and forest fires in Sweden, Greta Thunberg began to skip school to demonstrate outside the Swedish Parliament buildings, and, using the hashtag [#Fridays for Future](#) , is calling for people to demonstrate in solidarity at their own government's buildings on Fridays – read "[The Swedish 15 year old who's cutting class to fight the climate crisis](#)" in *The Guardian* for more.

Greta has become a Nordic celebrity, and her protest has spread. Australian kids from 8 to 15 began their own campaign on November 7, with a call for a nation-wide strike on November 30 – Updates and news are at [#School Strike 4 Climate](#) (the website is [here](#)) .



— NDP MP Charlie Angus
supports Sudbury striker

In Canada, an 11-year old in Sudbury Ontario credits Greta for inspiration and began striking from school in November, as reported by the *Sudbury Star* in "[Young climate activist to strike Friday in Sudbury](#)" (Nov. 2) and "[Activism runs in the blood for Sudbury student](#)" (Nov.8) . The article quotes her as asking: "If adults don't care about our future why should I? What is the point of going to school?"

Further inspiration also comes from (slightly older) young adults in Canada, in "[Meet 2018's Top 30 Under 30 in Sustainability](#)" in *Corporate Knights* magazine (Nov. 6). It profiles young adults from 16 – 29 who have rolled up their sleeves in a variety of green projects, organizations, and businesses.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Climate Activism](#), [climate strikes](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [Our Children's Trust](#), [Sweden](#), [Younger workers](#) | [3 Replies](#)

Preview of the recommendations by Canada's Just Transition Task Force

Posted on **November 6, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In a November 5 article, "[Federal panel privately urges Trudeau government to do more for coal workers](#)" , *National Observer* reporter Carl Meyer reveals that the Just Transition Task Force Interim Report is already in the hands of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, though not yet publicly available. Canada's **Just Transition Task Force** was launched in April 2018 – an 11-member advisory group co-chaired by Canadian Labour Congress president Hassan Yussuff, to "provide advice on how to make the transition away from coal a fair one for workers and communities." The Task Force **Terms of Reference** allowed for 9 months for the report; Environment and Climate Change Minister McKenna said on November 2: "We're still reviewing the report, but as we talk about the need to power past coal and our commitment in Canada to phase out coal by 2030, we know there has to be a priority to supporting workers and communities." A formal response is expected in November, and given the Minister's leadership role in the international **Powering Past Coal Alliance** and the public spotlight of the upcoming **COP24 meetings** in Katowice Poland in early December, that deadline is likely to be met.

The *National Observer* [article of November 5](#), along with an [April 2018 article](#) about the Task Force launch, provide good background to the Task Force. The new article emphasizes the different needs of different provinces – notably Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Most of the article is based on interviews with a few Task Force members.

But what are the Report's Recommendations? One member states that "A lot of the recommendations are directly connected to what we heard from municipalities, from workers, from unions and from communities." The comments about the actual recommendations are far from earth-shattering, but include: 1. Just Transition policies should be enshrined in legislation so that they are not as vulnerable to changing governments; 2. The government should commit to infrastructure funding for municipalities in order to attract other businesses and offset job losses; 3. Support to workers should be extended, to help people quickly and efficiently access benefits like employment insurance, retraining, and relocation assistance. These fall along the same lines as the 2017 [Recommendations from the Alberta Advisory Panel on Coal Communities](#) , which are more detailed and which also accounted for First Nations issues.

A list of Task Force members is [here](#). In addition to co-Chair Hassan Yussuff, there are members from the CLC, the Alberta Federation of Labour, United Steelworkers, Unifor, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [coal phase-out](#), [Just Transition](#), [Just Transition Task Force](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition for energy workers in Northern England includes job quality, skills training

Posted on **November 5, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Risk or reward? Securing a just transition in the north of England is a study released in late October by the Institute for Public Policy Research North (IPPR), based in Manchester and Newcastle of the U.K. – an area disproportionately at risk for job losses in the shift to a low carbon economy as it is the home of the majority of England's coal and gas power stations. This Interim report estimates that approximately 28,000 jobs in the coal, oil and gas industries could be lost by 2030 as the low carbon economy grows. In 2017, the IPPR forecasts that up to 46,000 low-carbon power sector jobs and 100,000 jobs could be created by 2030 by its **Northern Energy Strategy**, including a Northern Energy Skills Programme.

Risk or Reward? forecasts job numbers, but also discusses the quality of jobs using compensation levels of representative energy jobs. The report concludes that “Fundamentally, there is a failure to incorporate a just transition into industrial strategy and decarbonisation policy more generally; but, even if it were acknowledged, the skills system is ill-equipped to provide support for those that need retraining or for the next generation. Compounded by the uncertainty of Brexit amidst international competition for labour and skills, there is a real risk that the transition to a low carbon economy will not be just.”

Risk or Reward is an interim report. IPPR promises a Final Report in 2019 which will recommend a strategy for government action, to put just transition “at the heart of decarbonisation and industrial strategy”, and to build a skills system capable of supporting existing and future workers through well-paid, skilled and secure jobs. “This strategy will also consider other challenges facing the low-carbon sector both now and in the future, including how to ensure it can deliver good working conditions and a diverse workforce. In addition, it will set out the crucial role of trade unions in delivering well-paid, secure and high skilled jobs, as well as a successful industrial strategy and improving productivity.”

Companion reading to *Risk or Reward* is the broader perspective of ***Prosperity and Justice: A plan for the new economy*** – the final report of the **IPPR Commission on Economic Justice**, established in the 2016 in the wake of Britain's vote to leave the European Union. The Final Report is [here](#); an Executive Summary is [here](#). ***Prosperity and Justice*** presents a 10-part plan for economic reform and makes more than 70 recommendations – which it states “offer the potential for the most significant change in economic policy in a generation”. It includes a chapter titled “Ensuring Environmental Sustainability” as fundamental to its economic goal of just growth. The IPPR Commission on Economic Justice published an Interim Report (2017), as well as **discussion and policy papers** – including including ***Power to the people: How stronger unions can deliver economic justice***.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [economic policy](#), [England](#), [Job Quality](#), [Just Transition](#), [Retraining](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: New Just Transition agreement for Spanish coal miners called a model for others

Posted on **November 2, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The new government of Spain, in power since May 2018, has reached a new Just Transition agreement with coal miners, to further the coal phase-out which has been underway since the early 2000's. Approximately 1,000 miners and contractors at 10 mines will lose their jobs at the end of 2018, but according to [a report in The Guardian](#) (Oct. 26) “Unions hailed the mining deal – which covers Spain's privately owned pits – as a model agreement. It mixes early retirement schemes for miners over 48, with environmental restoration work in pit communities and re-skilling schemes for cutting-edge green industries.” The cost of the program is estimated at 250 million Euros.

UPDATED: For the most detailed summary of this new agreement, see the press release from IndustriALL : “[Spanish coal unions win landmark Just Transition deal](#)” (Nov. 1) . It includes a link to the 37-page [actual agreement](#) – in Spanish only – and quotes the Sustainability Director of IndustriALL, who states that it is a model agreement, and “The deal sets a precedent for responsible transition through social dialogue.”

Spain’s coal industry employed more than 100,000 miners in the 1960s, but today only 2.7% of the country’s electricity is powered by coal. The country had already done a good job of its coal phase-out, according to [Coal Transition in Spain](#), published in 2017 by The Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) and Climate Strategies Just Transition project. That report draws on Spanish language resources to provides a thorough overview of employment statistics, policy instruments and stakeholder positions from previous coal phase-out. It also evaluates the success of measures taken, including training and early retirement incentives, community and infrastructure investment. The [press release from IndustriALL](#) summarizes the history from a different, union viewpoint.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Just Transition](#), [social partnerships](#), [Spain](#) | [2 Replies](#)

Updated: What are the prospects for a Just Transition in U.K. communities?

Posted on **November 2, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On October 30, DeSmog UK began a new series of reporting titled [Just Transition, from Fossil Fuels to Environmental Justice](#), which it describes as “a comprehensive exploration of the UK’s prospects for a just transition towards a sustainable future and environmental justice.” The first installment, [Part One: Kingdom of Coal](#) profiles Fife, Scotland: the history of its coal mine closures around 2002, and the transition to its current situation as the site of a gas extraction facility run by Shell and an ethylene production plant operated by ExxonMobil. The report states that the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has issued fines and final [warning letters to both Shell and Exxon](#) for the flaring conducted at the two sites; a SEPA investigation into the flaring is underway, with a report scheduled for November 2018. Finally, [Kingdom of Coal](#) discusses the prospects for a just transition for Fife to a renewable energy industry, in the context of the [Just Transition principles](#) proposed by the Friends of the Earth Scotland. The impending Brexit threatens funding from the European Investment Bank (which was used to build the Beatrice Wind Farm in the Moray Firth), and “wider economic insecurity makes longer-term investments, such as hiring more apprentices, growing the workforce and investing in new machines and premises, increasingly challenging.”

Update: Part 2 of the series, [City of Oil](#) appeared on November 7 and profiles Aberdeen Scotland. Employment there centres on the harbour and the specialist tasks associated with the North Sea offshore oil and gas industry – decommissioning oil platforms at the end of their life, laying sub-sea cables, servicing and maintaining offshore drilling platforms – and representing the new economy, the offshore wind turbines of the Vattenfall installation. Through interviews, the report describes the workplace issues of the workers on ships under flags of convenience in the North Sea, changes to shift schedules for oil rig workers, and a growing problem of poverty.

[Just Transition, from Fossil Fuels to Environmental Justice](#) is described by DeSmog UK as : “This powerful new series starts from the basis of understanding that current lifestyles are dependent on oil and plastic, and that we are all to some degree complicit and integrated into the present system. It looks at how the UK can achieve the immediate, transformative and radical changes to the economy and society necessary to address the climate crisis. And it addresses this transformation through the perspectives of the communities that will be most affected.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Just Transition](#), [Scotland](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Tips for greening office workplaces in new Guide

Posted on **November 2, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The **Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare**, in partnership with the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment** and others, recently published the *Green Office Toolkit*, which provides practical tips and examples focused on improving energy and water conservation, handling of toxic materials, and workplace transportation, as well as the topics of creating, organizing and motivating a workplace “green team”. Although it is intended for health care clinics and medical offices, like *Confronting Climate Change on Campus*, (published by the Canadian Association of University Teachers in 2018), the *Green Office Toolkit* is easily adaptable to other office workplaces beyond the medical office or university setting.

The Guide falls squarely within the interest area of the **Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare**, established in 2000, and which is the lead agency managing the Green Hospital Scorecard program, “the only comprehensive health care benchmarking tool in Canada measuring energy conservation, water conservation, waste management and recycling, corporate commitment and pollution prevention.” The CCGH publishes an electronic newsletter, *Green Digest*, with news from Canada and the U.S., and other resource guides and tools.

One of the other partners in the publication of the *Guide* is the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment**, best known for its increasing advocacy related to the health impacts of climate change – such as air and water pollution, toxic chemicals, health effects of wildfires and natural disasters. The other partner organizations are McMaster University Hospital (Hamilton, Ont.), Women’s College Hospital (Toronto, Ont.) and **Santé Environnement** (Quebec).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **energy conservation, guides, health care industry, office workers** | [Leave a reply](#)

Updating the political battle of carbon pricing in Canada

Posted on **November 1, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



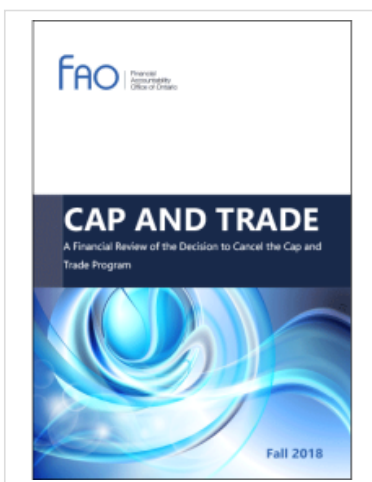
On October 23, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the federal government will hold its resolve to impose a carbon pricing policy across all Canadian jurisdictions in 2019 – see the press release, [“Government of Canada Putting a price on pollution”](#) (Oct. 23). Key to the plan: the Climate Action Incentive, whereby all carbon revenue will go directly back to people in the provinces from which it was generated. David Roberts of Vox hits the nail on the head with [“Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is betting his reelection on a carbon tax”](#) (Oct. 24), stating, “It’s a thoughtful plan, remarkably simple, transparent, and economically sound for something cooked up in a politically fraught context. If it’s put into place (and stays in place), it would vault Canada to the head of the international pack on climate policy.”

Reaction from the Canadian mainstream media: From the *Globe and Mail*, an Editorial: [“For the Liberals, a spoonful of sugar helps the carbon tax go down”](#); [“Arguments against the carbon tax boil down to a desire to do nothing”](#) (Oct. 24) by Campbell Clark; [“Carbon tax vs. climate change will be an epic contest”](#) by John Ibbitson and [“Trudeau’s carbon tax rebate is smart – but complicated”](#) by Chris Ragan of the Ecofiscal Commission. From Andrew Coyne in the *National Post*: [“Liberals’ carbon tax plan has its faults — but who has a better option?”](#) and from Chris Hall of the CBC, [“How the Liberals hope to escape the ‘Green Shift’ curse in 2019”](#) (Oct.23).

The [National Observer](#) provides some detail to the complex calculations of the backstop rebates of the Climate Action Incentive, but the detail is at the government’s webpage, [Pricing Pollution: How it will work](#) which provides links to individual explainers for each province and territory.

Other Responses: [Rabble.ca](#); [Elizabeth May](#) of the Green Party of Canada; [Canadians for Clean Prosperity](#); and the [Smart Prosperity Institute](#), which also provides a [compilation of reaction](#) and reports.

There seems to be general agreement that it is politics, not economics, which will determine support for the carbon plan. Ontario Premier Doug Ford has been making the rounds with other Conservative politicians in Canada to coordinate their messaging and opposition to the federal carbon tax – culminating in the introduction of [Bill No. 132—The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2018](#) in Saskatchewan on October 30, and on October 31, passage of Ontario’s [Bill 4, The Cap and Trade Cancellation Act](#). The *National Observer* describes the events of October 31 and summarizes the recent political dance in [“Doug Ford and Andrew Scheer play fast and loose with facts about carbon tax”](#). Other press coverage: from the CBC: [“The worst tax ever’: Doug Ford and Jason Kenney hold campaign-style rally against carbon levy”](#) on Oct. 5; [“Doug Ford attacks ‘terrible tax’ on carbon alongside Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe”](#) on Oct. 29; and [“Doug Ford meets Andrew Scheer as carbon tax war heats up”](#) on October 30, describing their meeting in Toronto. The gist of their arguments: the carbon tax is a money-grab which will “drive up the price of heating your home”, with Doug Ford stating “It’s just another Trudeau Liberal tax grab. It’s a job-killing, family-hurting tax.” After the rebate details were announced on October 23, Ford has added that the promised rebates are “a complete scam”, “trying to buy Canadians with their own money.” But as *iPolitics* reported on October 26, [“Ford gets his facts wrong while bashing federal carbon tax”](#) and [“Ford doubles down on falsehoods about federal carbon tax”](#). *iPolitics* cites the [independent analysis of the carbon tax’s impact](#) by Ontario’s Financial Accountability Officer,



which supports the federal government's numbers, and differs from Premier Ford's public statements. Meanwhile, the Ontario government promises to release their climate plan in November, [according to the Toronto Star](#) (Oct. 29), and Andrew Scheer also promises a climate plan "in 183 days".

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [carbon backstop](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Ontario](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Extended Producer Responsibility reduces waste and impacts the workplace

Posted on **November 1, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The October 16 report from the Ecofiscal Commission, [Cutting the Waste: How to save money while improving our solid waste systems](#) is a thorough examination of the issue of waste management in Canada, and while it discusses consumer behaviour (including single use plastics, briefly), the main focus is on municipal programs of disposal pricing (tipping fees and "pay as you throw") and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs shift the costs and responsibility for waste management from taxpayers and consumers to manufacturers. [Cutting the Waste](#) recommends expanding and harmonizing Canada's EPR programs, stating.... "extended producer responsibility" programs ... can improve the efficiency of recycling programs while also creating incentives to produce goods that generate less waste or goods that can more easily be recycled." The report provides a good overview of the history, structure, and efficiency of EPR programs in Canada, stating that there are over 120 such programs (both voluntary and legislated) in Canada, following an [EPR Action Plan](#) which was developed through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) in 2009. Their most recent [progress report](#) on the Action Plan was conducted in 2014. The Ecofiscal Commission highlights British Columbia as having the most stringent and comprehensive plan, and states, "Alberta is the only province that does not have legislated extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs and is falling behind in its commitments under the Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR." [EPR Canada](#), a non-profit association, also publishes Report Cards – their most recent was released in [2017](#).

How does waste management translate into a greener workplace? The automobile manufacturing industry provides a Canadian example, and in its 2011 Fact Sheet ["Taking Back our Jobs – Taking Back our Environment"](#), the Canadian Auto Workers endorsed EPR, with concise arguments, stating "The future job creation potential is enormous. The motor vehicle industry is one of the best examples of EPR job creation." (The Fact Sheet was republished by Unifor in [2013](#), [here](#)). From the company, the [GM Landfill-free Blueprint](#) (2018) makes a business case for reducing waste and includes the concept of employee engagement.

In September 2018, one of [Canada's Clean50 awards for 2019](#) went to the General Motors Assembly plant in Oshawa Ontario for its ["zero waste to landfill" project](#). The announcement states: "At the core of the success of General Motors Landfill-Free Project at GM Oshawa Assembly Plant initiative lies the fact that the "team" for this project numbers approximately 3,000. it was the employees at the plant who were directly and indirectly part of the successful implementation of their project."

According to a [GM press](#) (February 2018), GM is now diverting 100 per cent waste from landfills at all Canadian manufacturing facilities; St. Catharines Propulsion facility since 2008, and CAMI Assembly since 2014. The St.

Catharines facility is also the proposed site of Ontario's first complete renewable landfill gas industrial co-generation system, which will use landfill gas from an offsite source, delivered via pipeline, to generate electricity and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from the plant by more than 77 per cent. More details are [here](#) . A caveat: although this project was projected to come online in mid-2019, it was initiated under the previous Liberal government, funded by cap and trade revenues through **GreenON Industries**, which is one of the programs cancelled by the current Conservative government.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [Canadian Auto Workers](#), [Extended Producer Responsibility](#), [General Motors](#), [Unifor](#), [Waste management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New climate legislation in Saskatchewan – Prairie Resilience without carbon pricing

Posted on **October 31, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 30, the first Bill introduced to the new session of the Saskatchewan legislature was Bill No. 132—*The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2018* , which, according to [a Regina Leader-Post article](#) , carries on Bill 95, which was introduced in 2009 by the previous government of Brad Wall . The [government's press release](#) states that the new legislation: “provides the regulatory framework for performance standards to reduce industrial greenhouse gas emissions, a provincial technology fund, performance credits and offset credits.... In addition to performance standards and compliance options, these amendments require large emitters to register with the province, provide for administrative efficiencies in governance of the technology fund, and enable associated regulations and standards.” The press release carries on the province's existing climate change strategy from December 2017, titled [Prairie Resilience](#), which rejects carbon pricing.



[“Saskatchewan introduces climate change legislation as feud with Ottawa continues”](#) in the *National Observer* provides a summary; the “feud” referred to was most recently in the news on October 29, [“Doug Ford attacks ‘terrible tax’ on carbon alongside Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe”](#) .

As yet, the text of the Bill is available only through a two-step process: Bills are listed [here](#) , which lists a PDF file “Progress of Bills 2018 – 2019” which includes a live link to Bill 132.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition Summit in Saskatchewan – updated

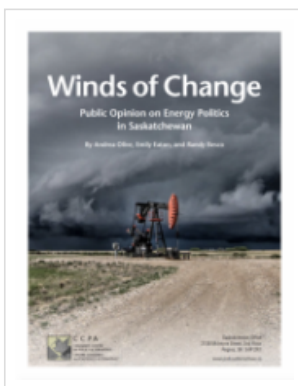
Posted on **October 30, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Although Alberta is the clear leader in oil and gas production in Canada, the province of Saskatchewan ranks second, with about 13% of Canada’s total crude oil production. Saskatchewan also derives approximately 40 per cent of its power from coal. Yet on October 27 and 28, progressive organizations in that province convened an enthusiastic forum, **Just Transitions: Building Saskatchewan’s Next Economy Summit** in Regina. Sessions most related to employment issues included: “Transitioning Employment and Work”, moderated by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and including panels on “Labour and Just Transition” by Unifor, CUPW and SEIU West. There was also a session on “Phasing out Coal”, presented by Climate Justice Saskatoon and Chris Gallaway of the Alberta Federation of Labour. The full list of presentations is [here](#).

Hosting organizations included: **Saskforward**, the Corporate Mapping Project, **Climate Justice Saskatoon**, the **Regina Public Interest Research Group** and **Unifor**.

Local media coverage appeared in the **Regina Leader-Post** newspaper, and several items at CBC-Saskatchewan, including: **“Indigenous perspective must be heard on climate change, Regina conference told”**; **“Regina summit looks at what shift from coal to renewable energy means for future of Sask. Economy”** (specifically reporting on the town of Coronach, home of the Poplar River coal mine and associated Poplar River Generating Station, threatened by the federal government’s goal to phase-out coal generated electricity by 2030); and an Opinion piece by Emily Eaton from the University of Regina **“Beyond ‘jobs versus environment’: Transitions to renewable energy present opportunities for us all”** (Oct. 25).



Emily Eaton was one of the authors of **“Winds of Change: Public Opinion on Energy Politics in Saskatchewan”**, published in April 2018 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Saskatchewan office. Based on a public opinion poll of 500 Saskatchewan adults, the report summarizes the political climate in Saskatchewan and shows that despite the **government’s opposition** to carbon taxes and the Pan-Canada Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, there *is* public support for a transition away from fossil fuels, and for government investment in solar and wind power.

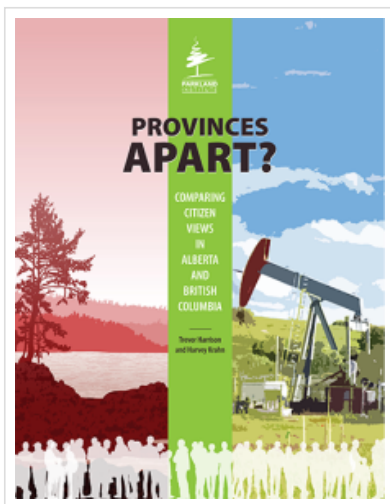
The Saskatchewan event follows the **Just Transition and Good Jobs for Alberta 2018** meetings, held in Edmonton on October 22 and 23, with active participation and sponsorship of USW, Unifor, and the Alberta Federation of Labour. This was the third year of meetings, coordinated by BlueGreen Canada.

Update: In November, Climate Justice Saskatchewan has released a report, *The Future of Coal in Saskatchewan: Bridging the Gap: building bridges between urban environmental groups and coal-producing communities in Saskatchewan*. The report summarizes what was heard during 17 interviews with citizens of the small coal-producing communities of Estevan and Coronach during the spring of 2018, and draws some conclusions which might have application for other social justice and climate justice initiatives. In general, the interviews exposed the unique challenges of each rural community, but found a common sense of uncertainty stemming from a lack of planning and communication about phasing out coal, bound up in wider challenges of rural decline, agricultural trends, and the boom-and-bust cycles of oil and gas.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Just Transition](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

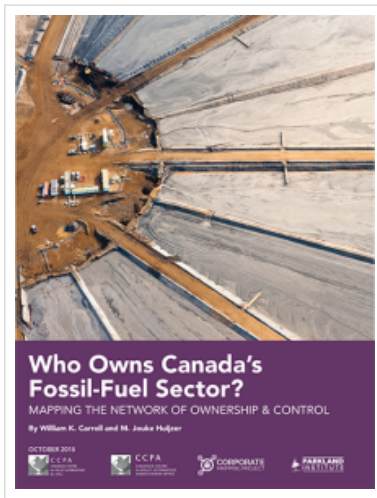
The Fossil fuel industry in Alberta: public opinion, and mapping ownership

Posted on **October 26, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In *Provinces Apart? Comparing Citizen Views in Alberta and British Columbia*, released by the Parkland Institute on October 25, the authors re-visit the data from a survey conducted in February – March 2017, and conclude that what differences exist between citizens of Alberta and British Columbia are attributable more to their political self-identification than to their province, age, or educational status. While the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion was certainly an active issue at the time, the survey pre-dated the bitter political battle and subsequent media attention which ensued from the federal government's purchase of the project, and the Court decision which suspended construction. After a brief review the political events of the most recent Trans Mountain controversy, the authors conclude "the governing and opposition parties in both provinces have exacerbated this partisan divide."

In those calmer days when the survey was conducted, citizens' views on political influence, the fossil fuel industry, climate change, and the role of protests in a democracy were not as divergent as stereotypes tell us. Findings of particular interest: 53% of respondents in Alberta and 69% in B.C. agreed that "we need to move away from using fossil fuels;" 76% in Alberta and 68% in B.C. thought the petroleum industry has too much influence over governments, (fewer than one-third said the same about either environmentalists, labour unions or Indigenous groups).



The Parkland Institute also published *Who Owns Canada's Fossil-Fuel Sector? Mapping the Network of Ownership & Control* in October, as part of the **Corporate Mapping Project**, in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. and Saskatchewan, and the University of Victoria. The analysis covers the period from 2010 to 2015, and demonstrates that the production, ownership and control of the fossil fuel industry is highly concentrated: "The top 25 owners together account for more than 40 per cent of overall revenues during this period." At 16%, foreign corporations are the largest type of majority owners (led by ExxonMobil) ; asset managers and investment funds are the 2nd largest; banks and life insurers are the third-largest type of owner (approximately 12% of revenues), with the big five Canadian banks (RBC, TD, Scotiabank, BMO and CIBC) among the top investors. The federal Canadian government, combined with provincial governments, own 2%. The report provides a wealth of information, including names and ranks of specific companies in the network of ownership and control, points out the importance of divestment campaigns, and "identifies the need to shift from fossil-fuel oligarchy to energy democracy, in which control of economic decisions shifts to people and communities, such as through public ownership of renewables and much greater democratic participation in energy policy."

For more insight into Alberta and its energy economy, the Parkland Institute is hosting a conference, **Alberta 2019: Forces of Change** from November 16 – 18. Presentations include: Opening Keynote, "In the Eye of the Storm", by Lynne Fernandez (Errol Black Chair in Labour Issues, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives- Manitoba); "The Alberta Economy in Context" by Angella MacEwen; "Just Transitions in the Belly of the Beast" by Emily Eaton (University of Regina); and "Boom, Bust, and Consolidation: Corporate Restructuring in the Alberta Oil Sands" by Ian Hussey (Research Manager at Parkland Institute).

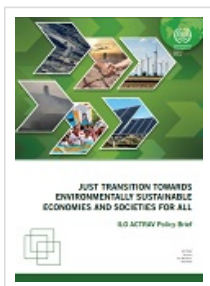


Also from Alberta: the 2018 event from BlueGreen Canada, **Just Transition and Good Jobs for Alberta 2018** was held in Edmonton on October 22 and 23, with active participation and sponsorship of USW, Unifor, and the Alberta Federation of Labour. This is the third annual event – summaries from **2017** and **2016** are here.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [public opinion polls](#), [Transmountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition is essential to a low carbon economy. How can unions contribute?

Posted on **October 25, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On October 22, the International Labour Organization (ILO) released ***Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All***, which argues for the importance of just transition policies – not as an “add-on”, but an integral part of the climate policy and sustainable development policy framework. This Policy Brief, aimed at a labour union audience, reviews the history and fundamental principles of the Just Transition concept, provides case studies which form an impressive catalogue of how just transition has (and in some cases, hasn’t) worked around the world, and concludes with recommendations of how trade unions and workers’ organizations can contribute to the goal of Just Transition to a low carbon economy .

The Just transition case studies are drawn from both from the global North and the global South – specifically, Alberta; Australia; Brazil; California; Chiapas State, Mexico; Europe; India; Indonesia; Phillipines, Ruhr Valley; South Africa; and Vietnam. They reflect interventions at the regional, country, and sectoral level – most frequently the coal industry. In the end, the author concludes that, while a coherent strategy with clear objectives and targets is essential, it can only work properly if supported by the main stakeholders. Cooperation of environmental and labour advocacy groups is extremely important, as is the input of Indigenous people. He further judges that “ 10-12 years seems to be a realistic framework which would also allow time to build up well-founded just transition plans.”

What can trade unions do?: The author’s recommendations are: Be proactive and build just transition strategies for the future; Be involved at all levels; Build coalitions; Manage labour market transitions; and Develop future-oriented innovative approaches. To help unions, the author provides information for “Capacity and network building” on page 10, including the network and databases provided by the **Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW)** project : specifically, the **Green Collective Agreements database** and the **Education and Training materials database** .

Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All was written by Béla Galgóczi, Senior Researcher at the European Trade Union Institute and an Associate of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) research project. The new report is available in **English** and in **French** , published by the ILO Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV), which also publishes the **International Journal of Labour Research**. In May 2018, the ILO Employment Policy Department issued an Employment Research Brief, ***Green Growth, Just Transition and Green Jobs: There’s a Lot we don’t know*** , which summarizes and links to the most recent international studies on these three topics.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **case studies, Green Jobs, ILO, International, Just Transition, labour union policies** | [Leave a reply](#)

Research and opinion support a carbon tax for Canada

Posted on **October 19, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Carbon taxes continue to be a hot topic in Canada for many reasons, including the [October Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report](#), the [Nobel Prize in Economics](#) to William Nordhaus, and the [report from Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer](#) on October 16, which estimates that the cancelling the province's cap and trade program will drive the provincial deficit up by \$3 billion, (\$841 million in the first fiscal year alone). And as provinces rebel against the [federal carbon pricing plans](#), the January 1 2019 deadline approaches, by which the federal government will impose its "backstop" carbon pricing on any province without it own equivalent carbon pricing regime in place.

In response to these developments, there are many responses. Recent articles emphasize William Nordhaus' work: for example, "[Nordhaus Nobel Recognizes What We've Long Known: Carbon pricing works](#)" by Scott Vaughan at the IISD; "[Nobel award recognizes how economic forces can fight climate change](#)" in *The Conversation Canada* (Oct. 9); "[Hurricanes, hog manure and the dire need for carbon pricing](#)" in *The Conversation Canada* (Oct. 14); and "[Opinion: To avoid catastrophic climate change we need carbon pricing](#)" from the [Ecofiscal Commission](#), one of Canada's strongest proponents of carbon pricing. From the horse's mouth: "[After Nobel in Economics, William Nordhaus Talks About Who's Getting His Pollution-Tax Ideas Right](#)" (*New York Times*, Oct. 13), in which William Nordhaus is interviewed by Coral Davenport and states: "... I think the model is British Columbia. .. It would have the right economic effects but politically not be so toxic. ... British Columbia is not only well designed but has been politically successful."

CARBON DIVIDENDS: The issue of political acceptability of carbon taxes generated an academic discussion in "[Overcoming public resistance to carbon taxes](#)" by Carattini, Carvalho and Fankhauser in *WIREs Climate Change* in June 2018. In Canada, a change in vocabulary in taking hold. "[Carbon Dividends could save carbon pricing – and create a new national climate consensus](#)" say Mark Cameron (from Canadians for Clean Prosperity) and David McLaughlin (from the International Institute of Sustainable Development) in the *Globe and Mail*. The [commissioned studies](#) released by [Canadians for Clean Prosperity](#) in September showed that most households, regardless of income level, would receive more money in the form of carbon dividend cheques than they would pay in carbon taxes under the backstop plan. They have produced estimates for Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick, and maintain an online petition at a website called [Canadians for Carbon Dividends](#).

Table 2: Estimated Backstop Revenues, 2019

	100 Percent Coverage (millions)	70 Percent Coverage (millions)	70 Percent Coverage, Excluding Federal Output Based-covered Emissions (millions)	Backstop Revenue Per Person (\$)	As Share of Provincial Own-Source Revenue (percent)	If recycled to Reduce PST rate (percent)
Newfoundland	216	151	148	280	2.3	10 → 8.8
Prince Edward Island ^a	36	25	25	166	2.4	10 → 9.1
New Brunswick	306	214	208	273	3.5	10 → 8.6
Ontario	3,212	2,248	1,899	133	1.5	8 → 7.4
Saskatchewan	1,526	1,068	972	459	4.3	6 → 4.5
Total	5,296	3,746	3,242			

Notes: This exercise excludes Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Nova Scotia, whose cap-and-trade program is assumed to comply in 2019. ^aTo simplify, PEI's narrow OBPS is not taken into account.
Source: Author's calculations based on emissions data from Environment and Climate Change Canada (2018) *National Inventory Report 1990-2016: Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks in Canada* (www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-emissions/inventory.html). Population data from CANSIM Table 510001. Provincial own-source revenues taken from provincial budget documents for 2018/19.

In "[The Rocky Road to Canada-wide Carbon Pricing](#)," released by the C.D. Howe Institute on October 17, author Tracy Snoddon from Wilfred Laurier University offers recommendations on how the revenues should be distributed after January 1, 2019, when the minimum carbon price backstop comes into force. The author estimates carbon revenues of \$ 2.8 billion in 2019 if the backstop was implemented in Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. She recommends that the federal government should impose the backstop price and return the revenues

as an equal per-capita rebate to residents- with the justification that such an approach minimizes intrusion in provincial fiscal matters, reinforces the environmental goals rather than revenue generation, and is most progressive in its distributional impacts. A summary appears in the C.D. Howe [press release](#) and in “[C.D. Howe Institute throws its weight behind federal carbon tax](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (Oct. 19).



Finally, a new organization launched in October. [Put A Price On It Canada](#) promotes carbon pricing as a solution to climate change – and asks “why does Canada need another group fighting for carbon pricing?” The difference: it aspires to be a national network to empower students on university campuses – currently at Simon Fraser University, the University of Ottawa, University of Waterloo, and Carleton University.

So in response to the National Observer Opinion piece on October 18, asking “[Is it time to torch the carbon tax debate?](#)”, the answer seems to be a strong “no”.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [carbon backstop](#), [carbon dividends](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IPCC report prompts emergency debate in Canada’s House of Commons

Posted on [October 16, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The landmark report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October, [Global Warming of 1.5](#), continues to generate debate and reaction around the world. On October 15, Canada’s House of Commons held an emergency debate on Global Warming. Request for the debate was led by [Elizabeth May](#), leader of the Green Party, and was joined by Members of Parliament from the New Democratic and Liberal parties. The Conservatives did not support the request, according to reports by both [CBC](#) and the [National Observer](#). The official Hansard transcript of the Emergency Debate is here [in English](#) and [in French](#). Although the debate fell along partisan lines, it also provided opportunity for Members from across the country to highlight clean economy innovations within their own communities, and many made statements calling for actions, not just more debate.



From [Elizabeth May’s website](#): “The issue tonight is not to debate Canada’s current carbon plan, Canada’s current climate plan. This is not a status quo debate. We should not be scoring political points because one party did this and another party did that. We should be here as humanity, human beings, elected people for our constituencies who know full well that if we do not change what we are doing as a species, we will face an unthinkable world. The good news is we still have a chance to save ourselves.”

Further, she likens the current situation to the crisis of the Dunkirk evacuation in World War 2, and calls for leadership like that shown by Winston Churchill:

“This is when we need our Prime Minister to go to the negotiations in Poland, or to dispatch the Minister of Environment to the negotiations in Poland, and say, “We are stepping up. We are going to rescue everybody. We are going to be the heroes in our own story. We are going to adopt what the IPCC says we must do: 45% reductions by 2030.” We need to tell Canadians that we have hope, to not despair or think it is too late. They should not turn away from the IPCC reports. They should not be afraid because we cannot breathe in British Columbia in the summer because of forest fires. They should not give up. We will rally and marshal every small town, every big city, every Canadian group, rotary clubs, church groups, and we will tell those naysayers who think that climate change is about a cash grab that they are in the way of our future and that they must get out of the way.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Elizabeth May](#), [IPCC Reports](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Manitoba cancels its carbon tax, joining Ontario and Saskatchewan in opposition

Posted on **October 9, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 3, Manitoba’s Premier joined the Premiers of [Ontario](#) and Saskatchewan in opposing carbon taxes. In [“We say no’: Manitoba defies Ottawa by killing its carbon tax plan”](#), the CBC reports that the government will introduce amending legislation in the week of October 8; Its previous legislation, [The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act](#) (March 2018) had set a carbon price of \$25 per ton, and followed the [Made-in-Manitoba Green Plan](#) submitted to fulfill the federal Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change agreement . [“The Drilldown: Carbon tax clash intensifies as Manitoba joins resistance”](#) in *iPolitics* explains the Premier’s reasons; [“Feds on track to impose carbon price on growing number of provinces on Jan. 1”](#), also from *iPolitics*, gives more detail.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [Manitoba](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Urgenda decision upheld: victory for citizens’ climate rights comes just ahead of Juliana v. United States

Posted on **October 9, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On October 9, the Hague Court of Appeal upheld the lower court ruling in the landmark case of [Urgenda Foundation v. The State of Netherlands](#), which in 2015 was the first case in the world to rule that governments have a “duty of care” to protect their citizens against climate change. The 2015 ruling ordered the Dutch government to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by the end of 2020 (compared to 1990 levels). The Urgenda Foundation [press release is here](#); a [compilation of documents](#) by the Foundation, including the text of the decisions, is here and an [English-language Explainer](#) is here. The [article](#) in *Climate Liability News* expands on the global importance of this decision, which has inspired other court challenges in U.S., [Norway](#), [Pakistan](#), [Ireland](#), [Belgium](#), [Colombia](#), [Switzerland](#) and [New Zealand](#).



The Urgenda decision comes just as the highly- publicized **Juliana v. United States** case proceeds to its next court appearance on October 29. *Juliana vs. the United States* was originally filed in Oregon in 2015 under the Obama administration, and argues that the 21 young plaintiffs have constitutional rights to life, liberty and property, which are currently jeopardized by federal climate change policies. It is led by **Our Children's Trust** and has been called “the trial of the century” and has received media attention throughout the ongoing challenges from the federal government.

Posted in **Climate Change Law and Litigation** | Tagged **Climate change Law, Juliana v. United States, Our Children's Trust, Urgenda Decision** | [Leave a reply](#)

Political will and urgent action required to save our planet, IPCC Report warns

Posted on **October 9, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The world's climate science experts have spoken in the landmark report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on October 8. The full title is: ***Global Warming of 1.5 °C: an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty***. That dry title doesn't reflect the importance and impact of this report – the first time that the UN body has modeled the difference between the impacts of the Paris agreement goals of 2°C and 1.5 °C, and an urgent, unanimous challenge by 91 scientists to the policy makers and politicians of the world to act on the solutions outlined in their models. An IPCC official quoted in a **CBC report** strikes the hopeful tone the report tries to achieve: “We have a monumental task in front of us, but it is not impossible... This is our chance to decide what the world is going to look like.”

The official report, commonly called [Global Warming 1.5](#) runs over 700 pages. The [official press release](#) states: “The report finds that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require “rapid and far-reaching” transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching ‘net zero’ around 2050. This means that any remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing CO₂ from the air....Limiting warming to 1.5°C is possible within the laws of chemistry and physics but doing so would require unprecedented changes”. A 34-page [Summary for Policymakers](#) and a 3-page [Headline Statements](#) provide official summaries. *Climate Home News* offers [“37 Things you need to know about 1.5 global warming”](#) and *The Guardian* offers summary and context in [“We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero or face more floods”](#) by Nicholas Stern and [“We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe, warns UN”](#) (also republished in *The National Observer*).

CAN CANADIANS EXPECT URGENT ACTION? : A thorough CBC summary of the report appears in [“UN Report on global warming carries life- or- death warning”](#), and the *Globe and Mail* published [“UN Report on Climate Change calls for urgent action to avert catastrophic climate change”](#) (Oct 8) – yet no official reaction has been released by the federal government of Canada. [“Trudeau’s Big Oil-friendly decisions mean climate chaos”](#) from *Rabble.ca* contrasts the IPCC report with a brief summary of Canada’s recent policy failures. [“No change to Canada’s climate plans as UN report warns of losing battle”](#) appeared in the *National Observer* (Oct. 8). The *National Observer* also posted [“We challenge every Federal and provincial leader to read the IPCC report and tell us what you plan to do”](#) on October 9, characterizing Canada’s current divisions over a national carbon tax as representative of the world’s dilemma – the failure of political will to act on known scientific facts. 350.org Canada also addresses the issue of political will with an [online petition](#) calling for an emergency debate in the House of Commons on Canada’s plan to limit climate change, in light of the IPCC report.

Opinion Pieces are still being written, including: [“To avoid catastrophic climate change, we need carbon pricing”](#) by Dale Beugin and Chris Ragan of the Ecofiscal Commission in the *Globe and Mail* (Oct. 9) which argues that “The best that economics has to offer is telling us we have a key solution right under our noses. Carbon pricing is now a Nobel Prize-winning idea. ”

[“On Climate, Our Choice Is Now Catastrophe or Mere Disaster”](#) by Crawford Kilian in *The Tyee*” modern governments and most of their voters are sleepwalking into catastrophe. If anyone or anything can wake them up, we might have a chance. And if we don’t work hard to turn that catastrophe into a mere disaster, we won’t be able to say nobody warned us. ”

[“Canada’s carbon-tax plan is collapsing just as the planet runs out of time”](#) in the *Washington Post* (Oct. 9)....
” Today, Canadians should take a minute to write to their elected officials provincially and federally and demand that we get the carbon tax done. Every elected official should take a moment to decide how they would like to be remembered. That is, assuming there will be anyone around to remember.”

WELL-INFORMED GLOBAL SUMMARIES : [“ IPCC: Radical Energy Transformation Needed to Avoid 1.5 Degrees Global Warming”](#) and [“Not Just CO₂: These Climate Pollutants Also Must Be Cut to Keep Global Warming to 1.5 Degrees”](#) appeared in *Inside Climate News*. The World Resources Institute published [“8 Things You Need to Know About the IPCC 1.5°C Report”](#), accompanied by a [blog and infographic](#) which explains the consequential difference between 1.5 and 2.0 global warming levels. Climate Action International monitored the discussions leading up to the release of the report: [here is their summary](#) and a compilation of global reactions . A compilation of reactions from the academics at Imperial College and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (LSE) is [here](#).

A brief [Comment](#) was already issued by the policy and communications director of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics and Political Science, which calls the report a “conservative assessment” because it omits discussion of some of the largest risks and their impacts – notably population displacements, migration and possibly conflict, as well as potential climate ‘tipping points’, such as disruption to the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic and shifts in the monsoon in Africa and Asia.

Another key issue: the controversial role of geoengineering, such as carbon capture and storage or “carbon dioxide removal technologies”(CDR) . [“Negative Emissions technologies in the new report on limiting global warming”](#) was

posted at *Legal Planet* (Oct. 8) , pointing out how important geoengineering is in the report's models. The author argues that " The text of the relevant chapter is honest about large-scale negative emissions, when it states: "Most CDR technologies remain largely unproven to date and raise substantial concerns about adverse side-effects on environmental and social sustainability." But the author argues that the message was deliberately watered down in the executive summaries and in the Summary for Policymakers.

On October 4, just before the release of *Global Warming 1.5*, 110 organizations and social movements, led by Friends of the Earth International, released their **Hands Off Mother Earth! Manifesto**, which opposes any geoengineering solutions, including carbon capture and storage.

It's hard to overestimate the importance of this report, and it will draw more and more discussion as the UNFCCC meetings in Katowice, Poland approach in December 2018.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [carbon capture and storage](#), [climate change policies](#), [Climate Science](#), [COP24](#), [geoengineering](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [International](#), [IPCC Reports](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. LNG project approved despite emissions, fracking

Posted on **October 3, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Described as one of the largest infrastructure projects ever in Canada, a \$40-billion liquefied natural gas project in northern British Columbia was approved on October 1, and the five investors – Royal Dutch Shell, Mitsubishi Corp., Malaysian-owned Petronas, PetroChina Co. and Korean Gas Corp. – have stated that construction on the pipeline and a processing plant will begin immediately. According to the **CBC report** , the project is expected to employ as many as 10,000 people in its construction and up to 950 in full-time jobs. The processing plant will be located in Kitimat, which is within the traditional territory of the Haisla First Nation, and which is in favour of the project, as are the elected councils of 25 First Nations communities along the pipeline route. The **B.C. Federation of Labour** also supports the project, as stated in its press release: "The Federation and a number of other unions have been part of the LNG process since 2013....As a part of the former Premier's LNG Working Group, and the new government's Workforce Development Advisory Group with First Nations and LNG Canada, labour pushed for many of the work force provisions that are reflected in today's final investment decision".

That leaves environmental activists in opposition. Although B.C.'s Premier announced the project with as "**B.C.'s new LNG Framework to deliver record investment, world's cleanest LNG facility**" , the project's emissions will represent more than one-quarter of B.C.'s legislated targets for carbon pollution in 2050. Both the **Pembina Institute** and **Clean Energy Canada** note how difficult it will be to reach B.C.'s targets for clean growth (currently under a consultation process), and Pembina warns of the dangers of fracking and of methane emissions associated with natural gas. Reflecting years of opposition, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives wrote "**LNG is incompatible with B.C.'s climate obligations**" (July 11). As far back as 2015, CCPA B.C. published ***A Clear Look at B.C. LNG: Energy Security***,

Environmental Implications, and Economic Potential, by David Hughes. An October 2 Maclean's published an Opinion piece, **"Will LNG Canada increase greenhouse-gas emissions? It's complicated."** which considers (and rejects) the idea that B.C. LNG might have a global benefit if it displaces coal use in China .

And finally, the issue of fossil fuel subsidies, which Canada and other G20 countries have promised to phase out. In **"LNG Canada project called a 'tax giveaway' as B.C. approves massive subsidies"** in *The Narwhal*, author Sarah Cox reports that a senior B.C. government official "pegged the province's total financial incentives for the project at \$5.35 billion", including break on the carbon tax, cheaper electricity rates, a provincial sales tax exemption during the project's five-year construction period, and a natural gas tax credit.

The B.C. Green party, which has to date supported the current minority NDP government through a **Confidence and Supply Agreement**, maintains an online petition called **LNG is not worth it**. Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver issued this **statement** on October 1, expressing disappointment and stating:

"The government does not have our votes to implement this regime.....Despite our profound disappointment on this issue, we have been working closely in good faith with the government to develop a Clean Growth Strategy to aggressively reduce emissions and electrify our economy. The B.C. NDP campaigned to implement a plan to meet our targets and reaffirmed that promise in our Confidence and Supply Agreement. We will hold them to account on this. We will have more to say once that plan becomes public later this year."

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **B.C. Federation of Labour, British Columbia, First Nations, Liquefied Natural Gas, LNG** | **1 Reply**

NAFTA becomes USMCA – what has changed for workers and the environment?

Posted on **October 3, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



— Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland in Mexico City, July 25, 2018. (AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

On September 30, the governments of Canada, the United States and Mexico agreed on a replacement of the North American Free Trade Agreement – the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA). Legislatures in all three countries must now consider and ratify the agreement before it is final; if that happens, it will automatically be reviewed after six years, at which time it will continue for a 16-year period, if all parties agree to that.

What has changed? The new agreement runs to over 1800 pages, including annexes and side letters – a complexity that will take a while to digest. For WCR readers, the major changes of interest relate to the elimination of Chapter 11, (Investor-State Dispute Resolution) for Canada, and a change to auto tariffs, so that, as of 2020, a car will qualify for tariff-free treatment if 75 per cent of its contents are made in North America (an increase from the current NAFTA threshold of 62.5 per cent).

General summaries and reaction: From CBC News **“Buried behind the cows and cars: key changes in NAFTA 2.0”** ; an *iPolitics* article on October 3 is headlined **“Canada can claim at least partial success of progressive agenda in USMCA”** . From the Council of Canadians: **“The Good, the bad and the ugly from NAFTA 2.0”** with #1 in the “good news” category: “at the request of the U.S., there will be no ISDS process between U.S. and Canada”; also on ISDS, **“Canada cheers the end of corporate NAFTA challenges in the new deal”** (*Toronto Star* Oct. 2) . From *The Conversation Canada*: **“Winners and Losers in the new NAFTA”** by Atif Kubursi , Professor Emeritus of Economics, McMaster University, who states “ The most significant achievement by Canadian negotiators is their success in preserving Chapter 19 from the original NAFTA” (which covers dispute resolution re tariffs and countervailing duties).

In the bad news category: An Opinion from Gordon Ritchie in *The Globe and Mail* on Oct. 1 says **“NAFTA gets a new name but little else has changed”** , reflecting a cynicism that the agreement was an exercise in “branding” by President Trump. It has been noted that Article 32.1 would make it difficult for Canada or Mexico to negotiate any separate free-trade agreements with a “non-market country,” (shorthand for China) . And from a broader view, the *New York Times* on October 3, **“For Canada and U.S., ‘That Relationship is Gone’ after bitter NAFTA Talks”** and **“For Canada, a Sigh of relief more than a celebration in new Nafta deal”** (Oct. 1), which chronicles the difficulties of negotiation and includes some unique reactions.

The oil and gas industry lobbied and made gains, mostly in provisions relating to Mexico (which maintains the Investor State Dispute Resolution provisions for oil and gas investment) – explained in **an article in *Grist*** , and explained in more detail in **“Trump’s USMCA delivers big wins to drugmakers, oil companies and tech firms”** in the *Washington Post*. *Energy Mix* echoes the same ideas from a Canadian viewpoint in **“Fossils cheer climate absent as Canada Mexico U.S. reach new trade deal”** (Oct. 3) .

On the key issue of the Environment: The *National Observer* article of October 1 notes that the agreement does not appear to contain the terms “climate change” or “global warming” in any of its chapters, annexes or side letters. The article quotes the Sierra Club in the U.S. : it “includes weak environmental terms that have historically enabled outsourcing of pollution and jobs, fails to make any mention of climate change, and includes special handouts to oil and gas corporations. ...Much of the language appears designed to greenwash the deal, not to rectify NAFTA’s threats to wildlife, ecosystems, or clean air and water.” Sierra Club’s **“Environmental Audit of the new NAFTA deal”** is here . The weaknesses of USMCA on the environmental front are explored in **“Trudeau says he still wants to talk climate change and trade with Trump”** in the *National Observer* (Oct. 1). The Canadian government **Technical Summary of the Negotiated Outcomes: Environment Chapter** states “Climate change remains a priority for Canada, and we remain committed to addressing this issue through ongoing negotiations of a parallel environmental cooperation agreement (ECA).”

Union Reaction to the USMCA: The Canadian Labour Congress welcomes the elimination of Chapter 11 and is “pleased to see the side agreements on labour moved into the main agreement, now subject to a state-to-state dispute resolution process.” in **“Along with key gains in the USMCA, Canada’s unions raise concern”** (Oct. 1) .

Similarly, Canadian Union of Public Employees posted: “CUPE applauds the elimination of Chapter 11, the ISDS (investor-state dispute settlement) mechanism from NAFTA, which CUPE has long fought to have removed, though it is regrettable that Mexico will remain subject to ISDS provisions” in **“NAFTA gets worse for Canadians under USMCA”** (Oct. 1) . CUPE continues: “it is disappointing that the agreement does not meet or even come close to the progressive benchmarks that the Liberal government set for itself on NAFTA.”

The current tariffs against Canadian steel and aluminum remain unaffected by the new USMCA, prompting the United Steelworkers to issue a press release: **“NAFTA Deal a Sell-Out for Canadian Steel, Aluminum Workers”** .

“United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) should offer more protections for workers, says OFL” in a press release (Oct. 2) . “ The OFL calls on the government of Ontario to work alongside their federal counterparts to ensure that the immediate removal of security tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum are a top priority.”

In a surprisingly subdued press release on September 30, auto workers union Unifor was withholding any celebrations until further study of the language of the official agreement, according to **“USMCA framework achieves auto gains: Unifor”**

Official Documents related to the USMCA: Canada's Office of International Trade has compiled Technical summaries of the Chapters and backgrounders at its main website [in English](#) and [in French](#) . The government's overview summary is [in English here](#) ([in French here](#)). Also available, Technnical Summaries of the Negotiated Outcomes: for [Labour](#) ; for [Trade remedies and related dispute settlement \(Chapter 19\)](#) (re countervailing duties and tariffs); for [State-to-State Dispute Settlement](#) ; [Section 232 Side Letters summary re auto industry](#)

The **full text of USMCA** is (so far) available only at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Chapter 23 on [Labour is here](#) ; Chapter 24 on the [Environment is here](#) ; Chapter 31 on [Dispute Settlement is here](#) .

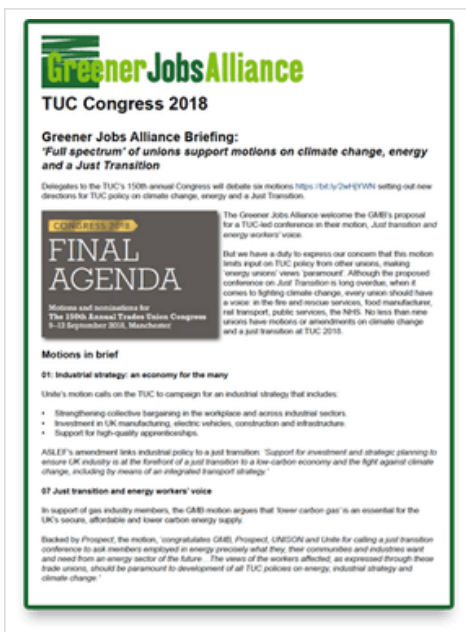


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Controversial motion on Just Transition passed at 2018 TUC Congress

Posted on [October 1, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Delegates gathered in Manchester U.K. for the **2018 Congress** of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Britain's central labour body, in early September, marking its 150th anniversary by returning to the city in which it was founded. Speeches and debates covered a broad range of issues, notably [Brexit](#) , and [diversity and equality](#) among union members .



The [Greener Jobs Alliance Congress Briefing](#) lists and summarizes the six motions which relate to climate change, energy, and Just Transition, including one which has proven controversial. **Motion 07, Just transition and energy workers' voice** was presented by [GMB](#) (which includes workers at the [Hinkley Point](#) nuclear facility amongst its

members); the motion was adopted with minor amendments. It states that “Congress notes that ‘just transition’ is a much-used but often ambiguous term and there is no shortage of voices who believe they are qualified to say what energy workers and communities want and need”, the motion continues with ... “Congress believes that the views of the workers affected, as expressed through these trade unions, should be paramount and central to development of all TUC policies on energy, industrial strategy and climate change, and that the TUC should develop a political and lobbying strategy led by the voices and experiences of energy unions and their members.” “These unions” referred to in the motion are GMB, Prospect, UNISON and Unite.

But the **Greener Jobs Alliance Briefing** calls for a “full spectrum” of unions in the Just Transition debates, stating: “we have a duty to express our concern that this motion limits input on TUC policy from other unions, making ‘energy unions’ views ‘paramount’. Although the proposed conference on Just Transition is long overdue, when it comes to fighting climate change, every union should have a voice: in the fire and rescue services, food manufacturer, rail transport, public services, the NHS. No less than nine unions have motions or amendments on climate change and a just transition at TUC 2018.”

The **Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union group** expressed similar “deep concern” in its blog, saying that the motion “carries the risk of moving backwards from last year’s progress on climate policy (**2017 climate motion**).”

Finally, the **Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)** labelled the motion as “divisive”, according to a **UK DeSmog blog** (Sept. 27) . That same blog notes that the U.K. Labour Party has picked up on the TUC’s motion in its Environmental Policy statement, **Green Transformation** , which states that the Labour Party will “work closely with energy unions to support energy workers and communities” through the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Brexit, Greener Jobs Alliance, Just Transition, labour union policies, Trades Union Congress (TUC), United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

Activists force consultation re Ontario’s cap and trade policy as Environment Commissioner pans government’s actions to date

Posted on **September 27, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In the annual *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Progress Report for 2018*, titled **Climate Action in Ontario: what's next?** , the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has published a blunt critique of the Conservative government’s actions to date.

As was widely reported, the government in Ontario (among other actions) tried to dismantle the province’s cap and trade program after its election, introducing **Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018** on July 25 . The Environmental Commissioner wrote:

“Unfortunately, cap and trade was both complex and poorly communicated; for some, its costs were more obvious than its benefits. Today, cap and trade, the low-carbon programs that it funded, and 752 renewable energy projects have all been swept away, with nothing in their place. The government’s proposed replacement, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act (Bill 4), currently lacks most of the features of a good climate law.... There is no perfect answer, but the best international model for long-term consistency is the United Kingdom’s Climate Change Act. The U.K. Parliament sets legally binding long-term emission limits, plus five-year carbon budgets 12 years in advance, based on non-partisan, expert advice and reporting. Ontario should do the same.”

The Commissioner’s report includes appendices, including [Appendix B: Revenue from cap and trade: What was it used for?](#)

On September 11, environmental activists filed a lawsuit against Bill 4, alleging that it violates the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights because no public consultations were held on the matter. On the same day, a [notice appeared in the Environmental Registry](#), allowing for [comments online](#) or in writing, until October 11. EcoJustice, one of the groups behind the lawsuit, (along with [Greenpeace](#) and the University of Ottawa) has posted a summary of all these developments on September 25 in [“Let Premier Ford know where you stand on climate action”](#), urging comments.

Jumping in to this debate: Canadians for Clean Prosperity, which commissioned a study to examine the costs and benefits of carbon “costs” (e.g. fuel and household heating) in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, in the event that the federal carbon price backstop is triggered in 2019. The author, Dave Sawyer of EnviroEconomics, concludes that most households, regardless of income, would receive more money through rebates than they would pay out through a carbon price, assuming that all fees are rebated to consumers. The report summary is [here](#); the formal report is [Federal Carbon Price Impacts on Households in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario](#). An economist’s (Brendan Frank) explanation of the EnviroEconomics report appears in an EcoFiscal Commission blog [“How carbon dividends affect incentives \(hint: they don’t\)”](#) (Sept. 26).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Ontario](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Circular Economy coalition launched at G7 meetings

Posted on [September 27, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The [Circular Economy Leadership Council](#) (CELC) of Canada was launched at the Halifax meetings of G7 Environment, Energy and Ocean ministers on September 20, when the focus was on plastic pollution of our oceans. The CELC is a Canada-wide, non-profit coalition which includes corporate and NGO leaders, think tanks, and academics, with a dual goal “to eliminate waste and accelerate the reduction of carbon emissions from the Canadian economy.” Their immediate objective is to develop and publish a Circular Economy Roadmap which will serve as a national strategy document. More details appear in their [bilingual brochure](#).

Co-chairs of the coalition are David Hughes, President and CEO of **Natural Step Canada**, and John D. Coyne, Vice-President and General Counsel of **Unilever Canada**. Founding members are listed as: Unilever Canada • IKEA Canada • Loblaw Companies Limited • Walmart Canada • NEI Investments LP • International Institute for Sustainable Development • **National Zero Waste Council** • Smart Prosperity Institute • The Natural Step Canada, and • **Institut EDDEC – Environment, sustainable development and the circular economy** in Quebec. The CELC also declares strong working relationships with two well-established Circular Economy organizations – the **Ellen MacArthur Foundation** based in the U.K., and **Sitra** in Finland, which organized the first World Circular Economy Forum in Helsinki in June 2017, with 1,600 participants from 100 countries. The **2nd World Circular Economy Forum** will take place in Yokohama, Japan on 22-24 October 2018.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Recycling](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations for Canada’s high growth industries, including natural resources and clean technology

Posted on **September 27, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On September 25, the federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development released a report: ***The Innovation and Competitiveness Imperative: Seizing Opportunities for Growth***, with over-arching “signature” proposals in the consolidated report, and specific proposals in individual reports by six “high-growth potential” sectors: **advanced manufacturing**, **agri-food**, **clean technology**, **digital industries**, **health and biosciences**, and **resources of the future**. These six groups had been identified by the **Advisory Council for Economic Growth**, a body which has issued many of its own reports, including the 2017 reports, ***The Path to Prosperity*** and ***Learning Nation: Equipping Canada’s workforce with skills for the future***.

In this latest series of reports, the identified Sector groups were led by “**Economic Strategy Tables**”— which the government characterizes as “a new model for industry-government collaboration”. Each “Table” consisted of a Chair, and approximately 15 industry experts, with consultants McKinsey & Company providing “fact-based research and analysis”. The reports are unmistakably written by management/industry authors (replete with many references to “agility”, “own the podium” and “sandboxes”). A deeper dive into two of the sector reports reveals very substantial recommendations, with common themes of best practice examples from other countries, Canada’s international competitiveness, Indigenous relationships, and attention to workforce issues of skills gaps and diversity.

The **Clean Technology Economic Table Report** proposes: “the ambitious, export-focused target of clean technology becoming one of Canada’s top five exporting industries, nearly tripling the sector’s current value for exports to \$20 billion annually by 2025” – a growth rate of 11.4% per year on average. The report makes recommendations under six categories, including financing, engagement with Indigenous communities in partnership and co-development of clean technology initiatives, increased government procurement, regulation, and workforce issues. Greatest attention is given to the regulatory environment, with proposals for a “Regulatory Sandbox for Water Regulation” and a “Regulatory Sandbox for air quality and methane emissions regulation”. “Ultimately, we will need as much innovation in our public policy tools as

there is in technology to ensure progress on critical economic and environmental objectives.” Regarding workforce issues, the report recognizes that Clean Technology will compete for Scientific, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills, but highlights a particular shortage of soft skills required for entrepreneurship, business development, finance, advocacy, risk management and forecasting. It calls for “work-integrated learning programs”, and better labour market data collection and dissemination. Without ever using the term “Just Transition”, it does call for “Opening streams of these programs for workers to re-skill”, and “Adding new eligibility criteria for these programs to promote an inclusive and diverse workforce”.



The “**Resources of the future**” Table Report examines the mining, forestry and energy industries; the tone is set in the introductory remarks which state: “While resource companies are committed to the highest environmental and safety performance, they are burdened with an inefficient and complex regulatory system that adds cost, delays projects and is not conducive to innovation.” Recommendations are set out in five thematic sections, including “agile regulations, strategic infrastructure, innovation for competitiveness, indigenous people and communities, and attracting and re-skilling talent.

The report notes the established issues of an aging and gender-biased workforce in natural resources and identifies automation and digital skills as a neglected and misunderstood issue in the industry. It proposes a “Resources Skills Council” which, notably, would include labour unions, along with all levels of government, industry associations, universities and polytechnics.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [automation](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [Labour Market Planning](#), [mining industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil Sands update: Trans Mountain will undergo new NEB Review – but watch out for the new Frontier mine

Posted on **September 26, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 21, Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources **announced that the federal government** has begun its path forward after the **Court of Appeal decision** on August 30 which stopped the Trans Mountain Pipeline. The press release states: “we have instructed the National Energy Board (NEB) to reconsider its recommendations, taking into account the effects of project-related marine shipping. The NEB will be required to complete a thorough and prompt review and deliver its report within 22 weeks.”... and “...the NEB will provide participant funding so that the views of Indigenous groups are well represented in the Board’s consideration of marine issues.” The National Energy Board website provides official news of the new Order in Council [here](#).

A CBC report on September 21 summarizes the government action and reactions: “**Ottawa gives pipeline regulator 22 weeks to review Trans Mountain expansion project**”; in it, the Minister promises a further announcement on improved consultations with First Nations (one of the two grounds cited by the Court of Appeal for quashing the project).

Other reactions:

Although her office hasn’t released an official statement, Alberta’s Premier Rachel Notley has taken a hard line in media interviews, as [reported by CBC](#) on Sept 21): “We will not tolerate legal game playing,”... “And should it start to appear that game playing is working, we will hold Ottawa’s feet to the fire.”

From federal Conservative party leader Andrew Scheer: "[Ottawa needs 'special representative' to consult Indigenous groups and save Trans Mountain, says Scheer](#)" (Sept. 24); From B.C.'s Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, a [press release](#) limited to cautious acknowledgement; and from Perry Bellegarde, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, as [quoted in *The Straight*](#) (Sept. 25) : it would be "a win-win-win" to move the terminal from Burnaby to Delta, thus avoiding concerns about tanker traffic in the sensitive Burrard Inlet (but not addressing any concerns to "keep it in the ground").

West Coast Environmental Law has written a [thorough summary of the August Court of Appeal decision](#) , and suggested questions for the coming review. Ottawa is also facing a call from Washington State for improved oil spill protocols for the part of the Trans Mountain pipeline which passes through the Puget Sound, [according to the National Observer](#) (Sept 25).

"Colossal" new oil sands mine: But as all eyes are on the progress of this Trans Mountain review, another enormous oil sands project is under consideration. "[Hearings begin today into a \\$20-billion oilsands mine that's even bigger than the massive Fort Hills](#)" in *The Financial Post* (Sept. 24), reporting the on a five-week, joint-review panel regulatory hearing by [Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency](#) and Alberta Energy Regulator into the development of the Frontier oilsands mine by Teck Resources. *The Narwhal* analysis describes the Frontier mine as " a colossal undertaking that relies on 'relentless' growth in world oil demand at a time of global climate precarity". Read "[One of the largest oilsands mines ever proposed advances to public hearings](#)" from *The Narwhal* for background and discussion of the potential impact, including the economic arguments, for this new development.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Energy policy](#), [Frontier Mine](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fossil fuel subsidies, plastics pollution, circular economy are key topics at the G7 Energy and Environment meetings

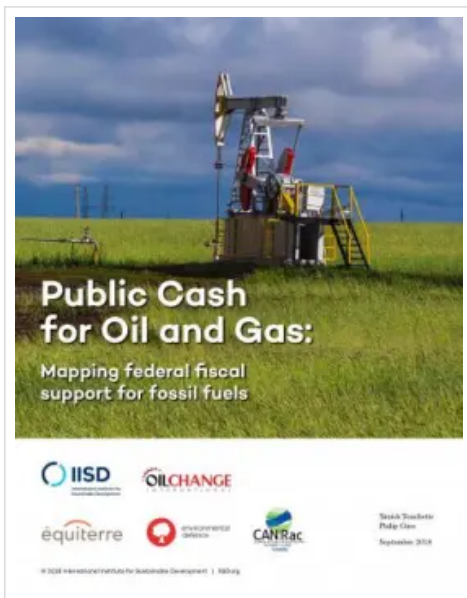
Posted on [September 25, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Following the G7 meetings at Charlevoix Quebec in June 2018, further meetings in Halifax from September 19 to 21 brought together the G7 ministers with responsibilities for Environment, Oceans and Energy. The International Institute (IISD) published a [comprehensive summary](#) of the meetings on September 25, with links to the official Chair's Summary statements. The *National Observer* was one of only a handful of media outlets which reported on these meetings. Their report of September 25, "[Unscrambling the language of Canada's G7 Climate Diplomacy](#)" is a plain language overview of what happened. Environment and Climate Change Canada, as host of the meetings, also published press releases highlighting Canada's commitments: the press release of September 19, titled "[G7 environment meetings in Halifax focus on climate action, and the \\$26 trillion opportunity of clean growth and tackling air pollution](#)" announced a Canadian pledge of \$2 million for the National Adaptation Plan Global Network, to further climate change adaptation in developing countries and \$2 million for a new initiative to empower women entrepreneurs working on climate solutions in the developing world. More broadly, Environment ministers discussed the implementation guidelines for the Paris Agreement on climate change – the Paris Rulebook – in an attempt to move that forward before the scheduled deadline of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP 24) in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018.

On September 20, the [Canadian government's press release](#) states : the Government of Canada committed to diverting at least 75 per cent of the plastic waste from government operations by 2030. It will achieve this by eliminating the use of unnecessary single-use plastics, increasing recycling rates, and leveraging its purchasing decisions to focus on sustainable plastic products. The Government of Canada also announced a \$65 million investment through the World Bank for an international fund to address plastic waste in developing countries. "

A contentious issue was fossil fuel subsidies. An earlier report by the National Observer , "[G7 promise to kill fossil fuel subsidies hangs over Halifax meetings](#)" (September 20) , highlights the topic, which has been a perennial but never-

resolved issue since the **G20 first agreed to phase them out** in 2009. In 2016, the **G7 first set a deadline for ending fossil fuel subsidies** by 2025 ; Energy ministers at the 2018 Halifax meetings reaffirmed that commitment.



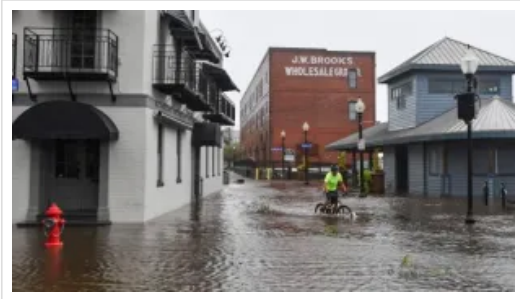
Despite the G7 commitment, “Canada is still the largest provider of subsidies to oil and gas production in the G7 per unit of GDP”, according to the newest report by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), which has published **extensively** on the issue. ***Fossil Fuel Subsidies in Canada: ‘Public Cash for Oil and Gas: Mapping federal fiscal support for fossil fuels***, a September 2018 report was published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), in collaboration with Oil Change International, Equiterre, Environmental Defence, and the Climate Action Network. It also states that overall fossil fuel subsidies declined in Canada in 2016-2018 over 2015, but it attributes this to the impact of oil price fluctuations on the value of deductions, and how companies use tax deductions, rather than any substantive policy reform. In a concluding discussion, the report states that the oil and gas sector will inevitably follow the economic path of the coal industry, and thus, “it is imperative that those in these declining energy sectors are part of the planning” for a Just Transition. Removing subsidies for the sector, could create enough “fiscal space” to fund a just transition for workers and communities.



The Green Budget Coalition also weighed in recently on fossil fuel subsidies in its ***Recommendations for Budget 2019***, which includes a discussion of the history of fossil fuel subsidies in Canada, a rationale for their phase-out, and calls for the government: to provide a transparent accounting of what subsidies are in place to the Parliamentary Budget Office; not to introduce new subsidies; and to legislate a timeline for the phase-out of remaining deductions for fossil fuel exploration and production, and for direct subsidies.

Some workers risk their jobs if they flee disasters. Can unions help?

Posted on [September 21, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



With the well-accepted consensus that [climate change will make extreme weather disasters more likely](#) in Canada and around the world, and with the misery of Hurricane Florence in full view, it is time to consider the dilemma of those who *must* work despite evacuation orders and disaster. A recent AFL-CIO blog (reposted to Portside) summarizes the problem: [“You can be fired for not showing up for work during a hurricane”](#) (Sept. 13) . The blog relates the results of a survey conducted by Central Florida Jobs With Justice following Hurricane Irma in 2017, which found that more than half of survey respondents said they faced disciplinary action or termination if they failed to show up to work during the storm. Others weren’t paid if they if they didn’t report for work – making it an impossible choice between a normal, much-needed paycheque, or tending to their own and their family’s safety. Following Hurricane Irma, a few employers instituted climate leave policies, and in June 2018, the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners passed an [ordinance](#) prohibiting employers from retaliating against employees who comply with evacuation orders during a state of emergency. But for most workers, evacuation is not an option.



A similar situation was reported in the latest newsletter from [Labor Network for Sustainability](#) . The Central Labor Council in Miami conducted a survey and interviews, canvassing labor leaders and coalition partners from AFSCME Florida, IUOE and South Florida Building Trades, Unite HERE, United Teachers of Dade, and the Miami Climate Alliance of community, and environmental groups, to find out their concerns about climate change and health. [Answers](#) reflected the difficulties of working in extreme heat in a surprising number of ways, and also asked the question: “Have extreme weather events like hurricanes, flooding, or high heat impacted your job on a day to day basis?”. Recurring responses included: “Being required to work during a hurricane or bad weather” , and concerns for job security and losing wages, because of a workplace being closed. Other concerns: unsafe workplaces, being required to work excess hours without allowance for caring for one’s own home, and “Not having access to clean, safe drinking water.”

Similar concerns were reported in a December 2017 report [of a survey](#) about the impacts of Hurricane Harvey in Texas, highlighted in the WCR article [“What happens to workers when wildfires and natural disasters hit?”](#) . In that summary, we also featured the impacts on families after the wildfires near Fort McMurray in Alberta in 2016. In the case of Alberta, amendments to the Alberta Employment Standards Code took effect in January 2018, providing [new Personal](#)

and [Family Responsibility Leave](#) of up to 5 days of job protection per year for personal sickness or short-term care of an immediate family member, including attending to personal emergencies.

Until legislation makes such personal leaves universal, consider the job and wage protection in the [2014-2019 Collective Agreement](#) between Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3886 and Royal Roads University in Victoria B.C..

Article 31.8 states:

"a) Should the University, or an area of the University, be closed temporarily due to environmental conditions, utility disruptions, road conditions or other reasons beyond the control of the University, employees shall receive their regular salary (excluding shift differential and weekend premium) during the closure. The University may layoff employees in accordance with the terms of Article 16 if the closure is expected to be for greater than twenty (20) working days.

b) If an employee is called in to work during a temporary closure of the University they will be paid at Overtime rates as per Article 18.02. "

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [green collective bargaining](#), [Hurricanes](#), [job security](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung releases studies of “radical realism” for climate justice

Posted on [September 21, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



In September, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung of Berlin released a compilation of eight reports, titled ***Radical Realism for Climate Justice*** – “a civil society response to the challenge of limiting global warming to 1.5°C while also paving the way for climate justice. Because it’s neither ‘naïve’ nor ‘politically unfeasible’, it is radically realistic.” Individual chapters, each available [from this link](#), are written by a variety of international organizations and individuals. Of particular interest are the two from Canadian authors: ***System Change on a Deadline. Organizing Lessons from Canada’s Leap Manifesto*** and ***Modelling 1.5°C-Compliant Mitigation Scenarios without Carbon Dioxide Removal***, by Christian Holz of Carleton University in Ottawa. Also of especial relevance for Canadians: ***A Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production: The Paris Goals Require No New Expansion and a Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production*** by Oil Change International, and ***Another Energy is Possible*** by Sean Sweeney.

In Chapter 5, ***System Change on a Deadline. Organizing Lessons from Canada's Leap Manifesto*** authors Avi Lewis, Katie McKenna and Rajiv Sicora provide a broad-brush summary of the history and growth of The Leap movement, beginning with its launch in Toronto in 2015, tracing the need for coalition building, and concluding with a statement of its international potential, and its application in Los Angeles.

Chapter 8, ***Modelling 1.5°C-Compliant Mitigation Scenarios without Carbon Dioxide Removal***, is by Christian Holz, a post-doctoral fellow in Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University. His chapter reviews the recent technical studies about Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) and Bioenergy combined with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) technologies, which some see as the route to achieving the 1.5°C global warming target. Holz' assessment is that 1.5°C can be achieved without relying on on these technologies, "if national climate pledges are increased substantially in all countries immediately, international support for climate action in developing countries is scaled up, and mitigation options not commonly included in mainstream climate models are pursued."

Chapter 1, ***A Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production : The Paris Goals Require No New Expansion and a Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production*** by Oil Change International is an update of its 2016 publication, ***The Sky's the Limit***, which makes the "keep it in the ground" case. For Canadians still reeling from the federal government's purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline, this new report is a timely reminder of the dangers of continued investment in exploration and expansion of oil, coal and gas and the need for Just Transition policies.

Another Energy is Possible by Sean Sweeney of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy is a tight summary of his assessment that current energy policies are allowing energy consumption to continue to grow. Sweeney calls for a two-pronged solution: " a shift in policy towards a «public-goods» approach that can liberate climate and energy policy from the chains of the current investor-focused neoliberal dogma, where the private sector must lead.... and ... a shift towards social ownership and management so that energy systems can be restructured and reconfigured to serve social and ecological needs." Sweeney states: " The next energy system must operate within an economic paradigm that is truly needs-based and sustainable."

The other worthy chapters of ***Radical Realism for Climate Justice*** are: ***Zero Waste Circular Economy: A Systemic Game-Changer to Climate Change*** by Mariel Vilella of Zero Waste Europe; ***Degrowth – A Sober Vision of Limiting Warming to 1.5°C*** by Mladen Domazet of the Institute for Political Ecology in Zagreb, Croatia; ***La Via Campesina in Action for Climate Justice*** by the international peasants movement La Via Campesina, and ***Re-Greening the Earth: Protecting the Climate through Ecosystem Restoration*** by Christoph Thies of Greenpeace Germany.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change mitigation](#), [energy democracy](#), [Energy policy](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#), [Leap Manifesto](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour union voices at the Global Climate Action Summit

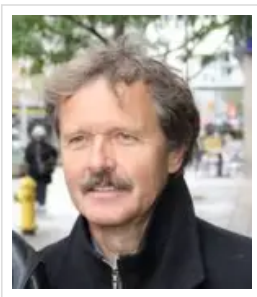
Posted on **September 19, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **Global Climate Action Summit (GCAS)**, which brought together the world's politicians, business leaders, and civil society organizations in San Francisco, concluded on September 14 . The final **Call to Global Climate Action** calls on national governments to urgently step up climate action, including by enhancing their UNFCC Nationally Determined Contributions by 2020. The GCAS **final press release** summarizes the many announcements and 500+ commitments that were made; even more comprehensive is ***A Chronology of Individual Summit and Pre-Summit Announcements***, in which Summit organizers list all important actions and documents, dating back to January 2018. Plans were announced to monitor actions flowing from the Summit at a revamped **Climate Action Portal**, hosted by the UNFCC – focused around an interactive map as the key to aggregated data about climate action by region and sector.



Labour unions at the Summit: Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO, delivered a speech to the Summit on September 13, “*Fight Climate Change the Right way*”, in which he highlighted the passage of **Resolution 55** at the AFL-CIO Convention in October 2017. He emphasized that the climate change/clean energy resolution was adopted unanimously...“with the outspoken support of the unions whose members work in the energy sector. That part is critical—the workers most impacted by a move away from carbon fuels came together and endorsed a plan to save our people and our planet....”

Trumka also spoke on September 12 at **Labor in the Climate Transition: Charting the Roadmap for 2019 and Beyond**, an affiliate event sponsored by the University of California Berkeley Labor Center, along with the California Labor Federation, California Building and Construction Trades Council, Service Employees International Union, IBEW 1245, the International Trades Union Confederation, and BlueGreen Alliance. In that speech, titled **Collective Action and Shared Sacrifice Key to Fighting Climate Change**, Trumka cast the AFL-CIO climate record in a positive light, repeated the success of Resolution 55 at the 2017 Convention, gave a 100% commitment to fighting climate change, and stated: “...we must be open to all methods of reducing carbon emissions—including technologies some environmentalists don’t like.” He concluded: “When the movement to fight climate change ignores the issue of economic justice, or treats it as an afterthought, when we seek to address climate change without respecting the hard work and sacrifice of workers in the energy and manufacturing sectors whose jobs are threatened—we feed the forces who are trying to tear us apart.... If we don’t get this right, we could find that our democracy fails before our climate...as rising fear and rising hate converge on us faster than rising seas.”



The **Berkeley event** also featured panels on Just Transition, chaired by Samantha Smith, Director, Just Transition Centre of the ITUC, and included Gil McGowan, President, Alberta Federation of Labour, as a speaker, and a panel on Energy Efficiency in buildings, which included John Cartwright, President, Toronto & York Region Labour Council (pictured right) as a speaker. Videos of the Berkeley event are [here](#), including one of the Trumka speech.



Finally, as part of the main Summit announcements, the International Transport Federation (ITF) **released a statement** in support of the Green and Healthy Streets Declaration by the **C40 Cities**, which commits signatory cities to procure zero emission buses by 2025 and to ensure that major areas of cities are zero emissions by 2030. (Montreal and Toronto are the two Canadian signatories). The ITF statement, ***Green & Healthy Streets: Transitioning to zero emission transport***, is motivated by the benefits of lowering air pollution and occupational health and safety for transport workers, as well as the economic justice of providing transit opportunities for workers to commute to work.

The ITF and its affiliates commit to: “Working in partnerships with mayors and cities to ensure that the transition to fossil-fuel-free streets is a just transition that creates decent jobs, reduces inequality, and drives inclusion and improvements in the lives of working class and low income people. • Building partnerships with mayors and city authorities to develop and integrate just transition plans that drive decent work and social action, including labour impact assessments, safeguards and job targets for men and women workers. • Mobilising workers knowledge and skills to shape and enhance the supportive actions needed to meet the commitments in the Declaration. • Working in partnerships with mayors and city authorities to deliver a just transition to zero emission buses, including developing plans for relevant worker training.”

Other progress for workplace concerns at the Summit:

Amid the announcements from the formal meetings, one new initiative stands out: the **Pledge for a Just Transition to Decent Jobs**, which commits renewable energy companies to ILO core labor standards and ILO occupational health and safety standards for themselves and their suppliers, as well as social dialogue with workers and unions, wage guarantees, and social protections such as pension and health benefits. The BTeam press release “**Companies step up to Deliver a Just Transition**” lists the signatories, and also quotes Sharan Burrow, Vice-Chair of The B Team and General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, who states: “We will not stand by and see stranded workers or stranded communities.... We have to work together with business, with government and workers. We can build a future that’s about the dignity of work, secure employment and shared prosperity.” The BTeam press release also references ***Just Transition: A Business Guide***, published jointly by the B Team and the Just Transition Centre in May 2018.

Another announcement related to the workplace: 21 companies announced the **Step Up Declaration**, a new alliance “dedicated to harnessing the power of emerging technologies and the fourth industrial revolution to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all economic sectors and ensure a climate turning point by 2020.” The **press release** references “the transformative power of the fourth industrial revolution, which encompasses artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing and the Internet of Things (IoT). In addition, the declaration acknowledges the role its signatories can play in demonstrating and enabling progress both in their immediate spheres of influence and “collaboratively with others— across all sectors of society, including individuals, corporations, civil society, and governments.” Signatories include several established climate leaders: Akamai Technologies, Arm, Autodesk, Bloomberg, BT, Cisco Systems, Ericsson, HP, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Lyft, Nokia, Salesforce, Supermicro, Symantec, Tech Mahindra, Uber, Vigilant, VMware, WeWork, Workday.

Posted in **Business Policy, Government Policy, United States** | Tagged **Business attitudes, California, Green Economy, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Just Transition, labour union policies, Transit** | **Leave a reply**

Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco includes labour meetings

Posted on **September 10, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **Global Climate Action Summit** in San Francisco will gather 4,500 delegates from around the world on September 12 – 14. According to the Summit website, “At GCAS governors and mayors, business, investor and civil society leaders will make bold new announcements that will act as a launch-pad to Take Ambition on climate action to the Next Level while calling on national governments to do the same.” Discussion and statements will be organized around five themes: Healthy Energy Systems, Inclusive Economic Growth, Sustainable Communities, Land and Ocean Stewardship and Transformative Climate Investments.

The University of California Berkeley Labor Center is holding an official “affiliate event” at the Summit, called **Labor in the Climate Transition: Charting the Roadmap for 2019 and Beyond**. The sold-out event will showcase the best practices in worker-friendly climate policy for 2019 and highlight “the importance of labor unions for building sustainable broad-based coalitions that can support strong climate policies at the state, national and international level.” Co-sponsors of the event are the California Labor Federation, California Building and Construction Trades Council, Service Employees International Union, IBEW 1245, the International Trades Union Council, and BlueGreen Alliance.



The global **Rise for Climate action**, led by 350.org, was timed for September 8, to capitalize on the publicity and high profile attendees of the San Francisco Summit. According to *The Guardian's report*, San Francisco alone attracted 30,000 demonstrators, led by Indigenous leaders. The *San Francisco Chronicle* also reported that demonstrations will continue throughout the week, in “**Angry activists plan to crash Jerry Brown’s SF climate summit**” (Sept. 9), and there is an online petition at the “**Brown’s Last Chance**” protest website, calling for the elimination of fossil fuels in the state.

Among the reports/announcements released so far at the Global Climate Summit: **Climate Opportunity: More Jobs; Better Health; Liveable Cities**, which estimates that “by 2030, a boost in urban climate action can prevent approximately 1.3 million premature deaths per year, net generate 13.7 million jobs in cities, and save 40 billion hours of commuters’ time plus billions of dollars in reduced household expenses each year.” The report was published by C40 Cities, The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy and the New Climate Institute; a [press release](#) summarizing the report is here (Sept. 9).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [350.org](#), [California](#), [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Climate Activism](#), [climate change policies](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Coal transition case studies argue for anticipation and early action

Posted on **September 10, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Implementing coal transitions: Insights from case studies of major coal-consuming economies, published on September 5, brings together the main insights from the **Coal Transitions project**, the international research program led by **IDDRI** and **Climate Strategies**. The report provides an overview of the drivers of coal transition across the world (with brief mention of the Powering Past Coal Alliance and Canada), and concludes that coal transition is already happening, and that it is technically feasible and affordable. The report then presents case studies of coal transition in six countries: China, India, Poland, Germany, Australia and South Africa.

The analysis concludes that there are multiple policy options which have proven effective for coal transition, but warns that the meaningful consultation and participation of stakeholders early on in the decision-making process is critical to success. In an **explanatory blog**, lead author Oliver Sartor states that coal transition policies: "... must be context-specific and agreed between the relevant parties. However, the crucial success factor is to anticipate rather than wait until the economics turns against coal. A good preparation can allow for younger eligible workers to be more easily placed into alternative jobs, for older workers to retire naturally, and for tailored worker reconversion and job-transfer programs for workers in the middle of their careers."

In addition to the Synthesis report, national reports for each of the six countries are available from the **IDDRI** [here](#).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Australia, China, coal phase-out, Germany, India, International, Just Transition, Poland, South Africa** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ford government sued by Greenpeace for cancellation of cap and trade without consultation

Posted on **September 10, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Updated September 11:

On September 11, CBC News broke the news that “[Greenpeace suing Ontario government over cancellation of cap-and-trade program](#)” . The lawsuit was filed in Ontario Superior Court by EcoJustice and the University of Ottawa’s Ecojustice Environmental Law Clinic. It asks the Court to quash the legislation, on the grounds that the Conservative government “unlawfully failed” to hold public consultations before cancelling the program, [as required by Ontario’s Environmental Bill of Rights](#). An expedited hearing on the matter has been granted and scheduled for September 21. The EcoJustice press release of September 11 is [here](#) .

At issue is Bill 4, [The Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018](#) , introduced in July to honour a campaign pledge to repeal Ontario’s cap and trade program, authorized through the [Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016](#) of the previous Wynne government. Yet as the *National Observer* reported on August 15, “[Ontario legislature adjourns without adopting Ford government bill to cancel cap and trade](#)” . The article also compiles expert opinion and reaction to the move, and notes that the government will be expected to propose new greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets when the Ontario legislature returns for its fall sitting on Sept. 24.

In “[Ford government does U-turn, expands electric vehicle rebates for Tesla buyers](#)” (Aug. 31), CBC reports on another Court case involving the rookie Ford government. The Court ruled against the government and in favour of Tesla, which had claimed that it had been discriminated against when the government discontinued electric and hybrid vehicle sales incentives. The CBC quotes Sara Singh, an Ontario NDP MP, who stated in August: “This is likely only the first of many decisions against the Ford government’s decision to rip up hundreds of cap-and-trade and green energy contracts.” The *Huffington Post* compiled [a list the legal actions against the government](#), on a variety of fronts, on Sept. 5.

Others who have weighed in on Ford’s climate and energy policies: Climate Action Network, along with 37 signatories, sent an [Open Letter to Premier Ford](#) on August 8. It documents the heat and fire emergencies throughout the province in the summer of 2018, and calls for a public commitment, along with a detailed plan, to achieve Ontario’s existing legislated emissions reduction goals. Environmental Defence maintains [an online petition](#) calling for similar action.

Regarding Ford’s [cuts to renewable energy programs](#): A widely-cited article appeared in *Forbes* magazine: “[Ontario’s Economic Investment Outlook Dims With New Government Energy Actions](#)” (Aug. 13) (and was re-posted by the [Pembina Institute](#)) stating: “In one fell swoop Ontario’s government has dramatically slashed a source of funding for clean transportation infrastructure to help consumers lower travel costs, erased hundreds of clean energy projects to help consumers reduce electricity costs, dimmed the prospects for [jobs and economic growth](#) from clean tech industries, and took a major step backwards in making the province an attractive climate for business and investment today – and into the future.”

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Energy policy](#), [environmental rights](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

German report proposes innovative “Just and In-time” Transition policies

Posted on [September 6, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Just and In-time Climate Policy: Four Initiatives for a Fair Transformation was released on August 31 by the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU). The paper makes innovative proposals for the German climate change policy in an international perspective. The four exemplary initiatives under discussion relate to (1) “the people affected by the structural change towards climate compatibility” (specifically, Just Transition for coal-mining regions), (2) the legal rights of people harmed by climate change (including financial support for citizens bringing climate liability suits), (3) the dignified migration of people who lose their native countries due to climate change, (through the vehicle of an international climate passport), and (4) the creation of financing instruments for just & in-time transformation processes.

Regarding the transitions required by coal phase-out, the paper discusses the concept of Just Transition, but argues that it may be too slow for the emissions reduction challenge the world faces. Instead it uses the term “Just and In-Time” transition, reviewing past structural transition models but concluding that they will not be sufficient. “Purposeful decarbonization requires forward-looking, early, proactive intervention by the state in alliance with other actors.” The report proposes to reach that goal through “an overarching ‘Zero Carbon Mission’ on multiple political levels”- local, regional, national, and international.

Regarding citizens’ legal rights and climate liability, the paper states: “Under certain circumstances, companies that contribute to climate change through emissions can sue for damages in the courts if they are forced by state authorities to close their plants. Yet the legal rights of people affected by massive climate damage vis-à-vis large corporations partly responsible for climate change are completely uncertain. The WBGU recommends that the German Federal Government should support a number of promising pioneer lawsuits, particularly those brought by people and communities harmed by climate change, against major corporations that have a significant responsibility for global warming, and assume the litigation cost risks for these lawsuits. It should furthermore use its influence internationally to ensure that the people affected are given opportunities to take legal action across national borders.”

Regarding climate migration, the report urges the German government to advocate at Katowice for a “climate passport” for climate-driven migrants “as a sign of intergenerational justice and responsibility”, and that “Countries with considerable responsibility for climate change should open their doors as host countries to people with a climate passport.”

Regarding the financial instruments to support transformation, the paper proposes that transition funds be created by pricing greenhouse-gas emissions (e.g. through carbon taxes), and be supplemented by revenue from a reformed inheritance or estate tax. “The transformation funds should accelerate the implementation of the climate and sustainability goals via investments and holdings in key industries, and use the profits generated for early and participatory structural change.” The WBGU also recommends providing support for economically weaker countries to build up their own transformation funds and manage structural change via a facility at the World Bank or regional development banks.

The German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU), an independent, scientific advisory body established by the German government in 1992. The paper **was released** in anticipation of the 24th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Katowice in December. The **German Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment** is also underway now, with the goal of contributing to the COP24 discussion on coal transition planning.

New York state announces new funds for clean energy training, electric vehicles

Posted on [September 6, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo issued a [press release on September 4](#), announcing \$15 million to help promote clean energy workforce development and training programs at various campuses of the State University of New York (SUNY). Some of the programs awarded funding include: a “Solar Ready Vets” program on site at Fort Drum to train veterans transitioning to civilian life in renewable energy ; updates including electrical/solar photovoltaic information for continuing education curricula for architects, engineers, and building and code inspectors at Erie Community College; development of a wind operations technician training program at the Off-Shore Energy Center of SUNY Maritime . These initiatives are part of the [Clean Climate Careers Initiative](#), announced in June 2017, which aims to create 40,000 new, good-paying clean energy jobs by 2020. The Clean Climate Careers Initiative partners the state government with Cornell University’s Workers’ Institute, as well as [Climate Jobs NY](#) , a labour union coalition led by the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York, New York’s Central Labor Council, and the Service Employees International Union.

According to the [latest available report](#) from the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) in Q12018, 3,919 New Yorkers had been trained in a range of energy efficiency and renewable energy courses, through the *Green Jobs – Green New York Act (2009)*. The funding program ended in December 2016, although one training program still continues. The [New York Clean Energy Industry Report for 2017](#) reported that there were 146,000 clean energy jobs in New York State by December 2016 – 110,000 of those in energy efficiency roles.

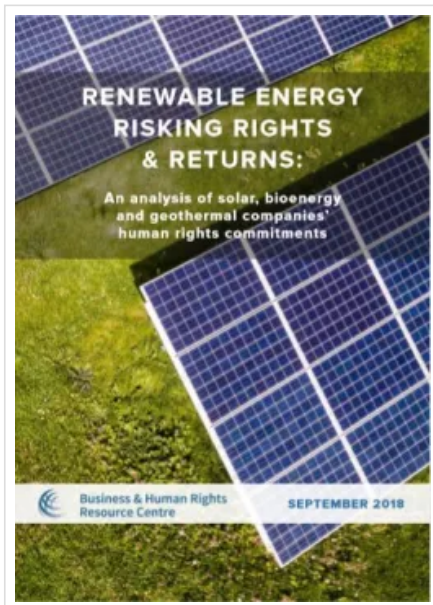


Electric vehicles: Governor Cuomo issued another [press release on September 5](#), announcing that the state will utilize \$127.7 million received from the 2016 Volkswagen diesel emissions settlement to increase the number of electric and clean vehicles, by reducing the cost of new transit and school buses, trucks, and other vehicles, as well as supporting electric vehicle charging equipment. The new proposals are detailed in the [NYS Beneficiary Mitigation Plan](#). The existing [Charge NY](#) program to incentivize electric vehicle adoption is credited with a 67 percent increase in ev’s sold in New York state between 2016 to 2017.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green Jobs](#), [New York State](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Retraining](#), [Training](#), [volkswagen diesel settlement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Global Renewable Energy industry lacks human rights and labour rights protections

Posted on **September 5, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



London-based Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) released a new report on September 5th : ***Renewable Energy Risking Rights & Returns: An analysis of solar, bioenergy & geothermal companies' human rights commitments*** . The report analyses 59 companies' human rights policies and practices on five key areas: human rights commitment, community consultations, grievance mechanisms, labour rights and supply chain monitoring. It concludes that "The current level of commitment by the majority of renewable energy companies is insufficient to prevent, address and mitigate human rights harms, especially as the sector rapidly expands."

Concerning labour rights, only 36% of renewable energy companies were found to have policies committing them to core labour rights such as collective bargaining and freedom of association, 42% commit to the prohibition of child labour and 41% to prohibition of forced labour and modern slavery. An aspect with resonance for Canadians, in light of the recent federal Court of Appeal decision against the Trans Mountain Pipeline, the report found that "less than 30% (17 out of 59) of renewable energy companies have a stated commitment to consultation with communities affected by their projects. Only 8 companies reference indigenous peoples' rights and 4 companies have a commitment to free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities." Overall, 47% of companies do not have basic human rights commitments or processes in place, and only 5 companies met a set of basic criteria on human rights, community consultation and access to remedy. These findings are consistent with a previous BHRRC survey, **reported in 2016**.

Based on its extensive research of the mining industry, BHRRC also states that "failure to respect human rights can result in project delays, legal procedures and costs for renewable energy companies, underlying the urgency to strengthen human rights due diligence." It calls for investors to step up their engagement in renewable energy companies to ensure better respect for human rights.

Read the press release [here](#) for a summary of the report, and explore ongoing monitoring of human rights in the renewable energy sector [here](#).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Geothermal energy](#), [Human Rights](#), [Labour Rights](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International Labour delegates demand Just Transition action by G20 leaders

Posted on **September 5, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

G20 government leaders gathered in Argentina in September under the general theme, “Building consensus for fair and sustainable development”, and within that, the Argentinian leadership has focused on three themes: the future of work, infrastructure for development, and a sustainable food future. Canada’s website regarding the meetings is [here](#).



Of specific interest to WCR readers are the side meetings of the **Labour 20 (L20) Engagement Group**, where international labour union leaders met on September 4 and 5th under the theme: “An Agenda for Global Policy Coherence.” The **L20 press release** on September 5 calls on the G20 Labour Ministers to commit to a nine-point plan, which go beyond past commitments regarding equality, job security, and social protection, and include demands around climate change and Just Transition. The detailed, **10- page statement** is [here](#), with these climate change-related demands:

“The scale of the industrial transformation needed to comply with the climate objectives of the Paris Agreement is colossal but feasible. The transition to a low-carbon economy that keeps the temperature rise under 2°C requires not only massive investment in new and redesigned jobs, skills training, redeployment in new sectors, but also income guarantees and secure pensions. Social dialogue and collective bargaining are central components of the Just Transition, delivering socio-economic results that work better for everyone, building consensus and easing policy implementation.” “We call for coordination between Labour and Environment and Energy Ministers to support and accompany effective climate change policies with employment measures anticipating sectoral transformations, developing green sectors and skills, and providing social protection measures, following the ILO Just Transition Guidelines; and to adapt in order to deal with the impact of climate change on workers, their families, and communities, including increased heat and other extreme weather events on working conditions.”

Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress represented the CLC, which



tweeted at #L20.

A library of all L20 statements, reports and documents is [here](#).

The Group of Twenty (G20) sees itself as the “ leading forum of the world’s major economies that seeks to develop global policies to address today’s most pressing challenges.” Its membership includes the European Union and 19 individual countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. In addition to the government representatives, the following Engagement Groups also meet and issue statements: Business20, Women20, Labour20, Think20, Civil20, Science20 and Youth20 . [News releases](#) summarize discussion and policy statements issued, and for 2018, reflect an emphasis on the digital economy and education and skills training. The press release for the discussions of the official G20 Climate Sustainability Working Group is [here](#) (August 28) .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress](#), [G20](#), [international labour action](#), [Just Transition](#), [L20](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Global Commission proposals for clean growth forecasts 65 million new low-carbon jobs in 2030

Posted on [September 5, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate released its 2018 flagship report at the [G20 meetings in Argentina](#) on September 5 . Under the title, [Unlocking the Inclusive Growth Story of the 21st Century: Accelerating Climate Action in Urgent Times](#) , the report acknowledges that all models are imperfect, but its extensive research and modelling predicts that its “bold climate action” prescription could deliver at least US\$26 trillion in economic benefits through to 2030, and over 65 million new low-carbon jobs in 2030, as well as avoid over 700,000 premature deaths from air pollution. As the final point in its action road map, it calls for Just Transition measures and a role for civil society and trade unions in their creation.

The report is structured around a sectoral approach, focused on energy, cities, food and land use, water, and industry. Across those economic sectors, every chapter hammers the theme of urgency, calling this the world’s “use it or lose it moment”. “The decisions we take over the next 2-3 years are crucial because of the urgency of a changing climate and the unique window of unprecedented structural changes already underway. The world is expected to invest about US\$90 trillion on infrastructure in the period up to 2030, more than the entire current stock today. Investing it wisely will help drive innovation, deliver public health benefits, create a host of new jobs and go a long way to tackling the risks of runaway climate change. Getting it wrong, on the other hand, will lock us into a high-polluting, low productivity, and deeply unequal future. “

[Unlocking the Inclusive Growth Story of the 21st Century](#) calls for the following urgent actions:

1. “governments should put a price on carbon and move toward mandatory climate risk disclosure for major investors and companies.” (Specifically, the carbon price for the G20 economies should be at least US\$40-80 by 2020, with a

predictable pricing pathway to around US\$50-100 by 2030, accompanied by a phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies and harmful agricultural subsidies and tax-breaks by 2025);

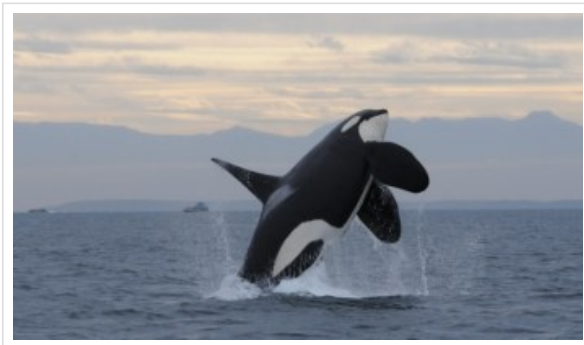
2. all economies should place much greater emphasis on investing in sustainable infrastructure as a central driver of the new growth approach;
3. “the full power of the private sector and innovation needs to be harnessed.” (Specifically, “By 2020, all Fortune 500 companies should have science-based targets that align with the Paris Agreement.” Governments need to change regulations, incentives and tax mechanisms that are a major barrier to implementing a low-carbon and more circular economy, and public-private partnerships should be encouraged.
4. **“a people-centred approach is needed to ensure lasting, equitable growth and a just transition.** It is good economics and good politics.”...“All governments should establish clear Energy Transition Plans to reach net-zero energy systems, and work with energy companies, trade unions, and civil society to ensure a just transition for workers and communities. Successfully diversifying local economies as we shift away from coal and eventually other fossil fuels will require multi-stakeholder dialogue, strategic assistance, re-training, and targeted social protection.”

The **Global Commission** is comprised of government leaders, academics, and business leaders, including Sharan Burrow of the ITUC, and Lord Nicholas Stern. Established in 2013, the Commission published its first, landmark report in the New Climate Economy initiative in 2014: **Better Growth, Better Climate**, which established its position that there is no trade-off between growth and strong climate action. In addition to the annual policy document, international climate issues are published in a Working Paper series, available [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [climate change policies](#), [Energy policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [International](#), [Job Creation](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal Court of Appeal stops Trans Mountain pipeline in its tracks

Posted on **August 31, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



An **August 30 decision by the Federal Court of Appeal** has quashed the approval of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline expansion, directing that the the consultation with First Nations be re-done before the approval can again be considered. The Court’s decision was based on two grounds: 1). Failure to adequately consult with First Nations – characterizing the interaction as more “note-taking” than consultation – and 2) the National Energy Board did not consider the environmental impacts of oil tanker traffic, especially its effect on the Southern Resident Orca Whales. The Court stated:

“The unjustified exclusion of project-related marine shipping from the definition of the project rendered the board’s report impermissibly flawed”. The *National Observer* has summarized the decision thoroughly [here](#), and maintains an ongoing series on “**Kinder Morgan**” [here](#). CBC News produced several stories, including a broad overview, including reactions, in “**After Federal Court quashes Trans Mountain, Rachel Notley pulls out of national climate plan**”. A straightforward, briefer summary appeared in the *Calgary Herald*, “**Five things to know about today’s Trans Mountain Pipeline Court Ruling**”.

Reaction from environmentalists and First Nations is understandably overjoyed. EcoJustice, one of the main legal players in this consolidated case issued a [press release](#) jointly with the Raincoast Conservation Foundation and Living Oceans Society, emphasizing the conservation aspects of the decision. It states: “The past six years have been a hard-fought battle against a project that has come to symbolize some of the defining issues Canadians face at this moment in time: Navigating the ongoing process of reconciliation, mitigating climate change, and protecting the land and water for future generations.” **Climate Action Network** states that “This decision from the Federal Court of Appeal affirms the primacy of Indigenous rights and community consent.” The **David Suzuki Foundation press release** touches on both aspects of the decision, saying “What is clear is that today’s decision sets a new high-water mark in terms of what it means to achieve true reconciliation, with Indigenous Peoples and nature.” From The Narwhal, “**The death of Trans Mountain pipeline signals future of Indigenous rights: Chiefs**” is a good compilation of First Nations response, to be read along with the *Vancouver Sun’s* “**B.C. First Nations Divided on Kinder Morgan Ruling**”.

Another environmentalist reaction: “**This pipeline is dead’: Stand.earth applauds federal court decision on Trans Mountain Pipeline**” which states: “Today’s victory is a vindication for everyone who worked to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline and tanker project — the hundreds of Water Protectors who were arrested in acts of peaceful civil disobedience, the tens of thousands of climate activists who marched against this pipeline, and the millions of Canadians who used their votes to elect candidates committed to creating a better future for Canada and the world.”

What does this mean for Canadian climate policy? Professor David Tindall of University of British Columbia wrote an Opinion piece which appeared in *The Conversation* on August 30, “**Trans Mountain ruling: Victory for environmentalists, but a setback for action on climate change**”. He states: “While environmentalists can claim a victory in delaying the construction of a pipeline that would ship a further 500,000 barrels of oil each day to the Pacific Coast, the court ruling also threatens Canada’s plan to deal adequately with its greenhouse gas emissions.” A fuller discussion of this dilemma appears in “**Trans Mountain pipeline ruling shakes central pillar of Trudeau agenda**” (Aug. 31) in the *National Observer*, and features in the many arguments for “**Why Ottawa should step away from the Trans Mountain pipeline**”, in *Policy Options* in August. (A follow-up to an August 29 **Open Letter** to Prime Minister Trudeau on the topic, from 189 Canadian academics). Finally, “**The Global Rightward Shift on Climate Change**” in *The Atlantic* (Aug. 28) examines Trudeau’s contradictory policies even before the Court decision, in light of the **recent ouster of Australia’s Prime Minister**, partly over energy policies.

The threat to federal climate change policy comes because Alberta’s Premier Rachel Notley, in reaction to the Court’s decision, pulled the province out of the Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, blaming the federal government for “the mess we find ourselves in”. The **Premier’s press release** issues an ultimatum, stating: “... Alberta, and indeed Canada, can’t transition to a lower carbon economy, ...if we can’t provide the jobs and prosperity that comes from getting fair value for our resources....So the time for Canadian niceties is over... First, the federal government must immediately launch an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Even more importantly, Ottawa must immediately recall an emergency session of Parliament to assert its authority and fix the NEB process as it relates to this project to make it clear that marine matters have been and will be dealt in a different forum. Then Ottawa needs to roll up its sleeves and continue its work to protect our coast and improve consultation and accommodation relating to Indigenous peoples in the way they deserve.”

The political context is behind Notley’s response is reported in “**Notley’s in a lot of trouble’: Massive political fallout from Trans Mountain court decision**” in the *Calgary Herald* and in the *Edmonton Journal* (Aug. 31): “**It is a crisis’: Alberta premier withdraws support for federal climate plan after Trans Mountain approval quashed**”. Other Western politicians are quoted in “**‘A hideously expensive white elephant’: Essential quotes on the quashing of the Trans Mountain pipeline approval**” in the *Calgary Herald*. **Reaction from British Columbia’s Premier** was brief, and focused on First Nations rights; **the mayors of Burnaby and Vancouver B.C.** were more enthusiastic (having been part of the applicant group of the case).

What’s Next? The **Prime Minister reiterated federal resolve** to build the pipeline in an interview on August 31, after the decision. Construction has been stopped indefinitely, but a CBC analysis cautions, “**Don’t dig Trans Mountain’s grave just yet**”, and UBC Professor George Hoberg **has predicted** that it will take another 18 months at least for the issue to reach, and be decided, in the Supreme Court of Canada. And in the meantime, in Canada, the **September 8 RISE Global Day of Climate Action** will be a day of celebration.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [First Nations](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [Kinder Morgan pipeline](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Wind energy continues to grow in the U.S.; Solar energy weathers Trump's tariffs

Posted on **August 29, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Wind power capacity has tripled across the United States in just the last decade as prices have plunged and the technology has improved, according to new reports released by the U.S. Department of Energy at the end of August.

Three reports are summarized in [a press release](#) on August 23 , and in [“U.S. Wind Power Is ‘Going All Out’ with Bigger Tech, Falling Prices, Reports Show”](#) by *Inside Climate News* . The full reports are: [2017 Offshore Wind Technologies Market Update August 2018](#) ; [2017 Wind Technologies Market Report](#) ; and [2017 Distributed Wind Market Report](#) .

[“How Much Damage are Trump’s Solar Tariffs Doing to the U.S. Industry?”](#) (Aug. 20) in *Inside Climate News* concludes that the tariffs have had a dampening effect on the industry, but less than expected. The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), using confidential information provided by the companies which are its members, estimates that 9,000 jobs have been affected to date – either by layoffs or prospective jobs that were cancelled. Their initial forecast in January 2018 had been that tariff-related job losses could reach about 23,000 for 2018. The Solar Foundation reported in February 2018 in its [annual Solar Jobs Census](#) that 250,271 Americans worked in solar as of 2017, although the number of workers had declined in 2017 for the first time since 2010. That trend will surely turn around by 2020 when the [new regulations in California](#) take effect, requiring solar panels on almost all new homes.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Solar energy industry](#), [Trade Policy](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Election proposals from Québec Solidaire party forecast 300,000 new green jobs by 2030

Posted on **August 29, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Citizens of Quebec will vote on October 1 in a provincial election, with the leading parties, the Liberals (led by Philippe Couillard) and the Coalition Avenir Québec (led by François Legault) so far emphasizing their economic plans. It is the new, urban-based **Québec Solidaire** party which has raised the profile of the issue of climate change, with its proposal to ban the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2030 – as reported in “**Quebec election promise to ban new gas cars and go electric draws praise and skepticism**” in the *National Observer* (Aug. 28) . The article reports that, the 2030 ban of new gasoline-powered vehicles would be followed by a ban on the sale of new hybrid vehicles in 2040, with the goal of eliminating all gas and hybrid vehicles from Quebec roads by 2050. Quebec’s existing zero-emission vehicle law and regulations – considered trendsetting when passed in 2016 and 2017 – require 10 per cent of new vehicle sales to be low- or zero-emission by 2025.

The full program, **Plan d’investissement en transport collectif** (available in French only) was released on August 28, and further proposes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 48 per cent in 2030 and 95 per cent in 2050, compared to 1990 levels. As well as the ban of conventional cars, the party proposes increased spending on public transport infrastructure, and reduction of public transit costs by half. In launching the Plan, Québec solidaire co-leader Manon Massé said that it would make Quebec a world leader in the fight against climate change, and would be the most important social change in the province since the Quiet Revolution. She also forecast that the Plan would create 300,000 green jobs by 2030.

So far there has been little fanfare for climate change issues from the mainstream parties – a **CBC special feature** summarizes all four provincial party platforms on all issues, including the environment. The right-leaning Coalition Avenir Québec party did **hit the headlines** on August 16 in advance of the campaign start when it proposed the cancellation of the Apuiat wind project, a \$600-million wind energy investment on traditional Innu territory. Reaction focused less on the attack on renewable energy than on what it reflected about the party’s attitude to Indigenous rights, as well as the comparison to the recent cancellation by Doug Ford of the White Pines wind project in Ontario.

The Quebec Federation of Labour released its own **statement on election issues** ; its statement on a green economy, including Just Transition, is available in French only, as **Il faut adopter un plan québécois de transition juste vers une économie verte et « sans pétrole »** .

For English-language coverage, see the *National Observer* ongoing special feature at **Quebec 2018** , or the *Montreal Gazette*, a Postmedia company, which also maintains a **special section of election coverage**.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Quebec](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada launches consultation on vehicle emissions regulations under cloud of Trump rollbacks

Posted on **August 23, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On August 20, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change published a [Discussion Paper](#) to launch consultations on the mid-term evaluation of Canada's light-duty vehicle greenhouse gas emission regulations for the 2022–2025 model years. Public comments may be submitted to ec.infovehiculeetmoteur-vehicleandengineinfo.ec@canada.ca by September 28, 2018. Once comments have been reviewed, if the government determines that regulatory changes are needed, it promises a second consultation period. One of the first off the mark with a response: Clean Energy Canada, with [“Canada should explore stronger vehicle standards to cut pollution and enhance competitiveness”](#).

The mid-term review is required by the 2014 regulations under which Canada currently operates, but it comes at a time when Canada must decide whether to continue to align its fuel efficiency standards with the U.S., as it has done for 20 years, or follow its own path. The current Canadian trajectory is shaped by our GHG reduction commitments under the Paris Agreement, the [Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), and a 2017 commitment to develop a national [Zero-Emissions Vehicle Strategy](#) by 2018.

But in the U.S., on August 2, the Trump administration announced the [Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient Vehicle Rule \(SAFER\)](#), which proposes weakening the EPA's greenhouse gas emissions standards and Department of Transportation's Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for light duty vehicles in model years 2021 through 2025. The proposed rule would also revoke a legal waiver which allows California and 13 other states to set their own pollution standards. Based on arguments made in the document [“Make Cars Great Again”](#), published by the *Wall Street Journal*, the Trump plan claims it will save \$500 billion in “societal costs,” avert thousands of highway fatalities and save consumers an estimated \$2,340 on each new automobile. Most of the Administration's arguments are refuted in [“Five Important points about the Safe Vehicle Rule”](#) by the Sabin School of Law at Columbia University. Other critiques: from Vox: [“Trump is freezing Obama's fuel economy standards. Here's what that could do”](#) (Aug. 2); and [“The EPA refuted its own bizarre justification for rolling back fuel efficiency standards”](#) (Aug. 16); [“Trump administration to freeze fuel-efficiency requirements in move likely to spur legal battle with states”](#) in the *Washington Post* (Aug. 2); [“Trump's Auto Efficiency Rollback: Losing the Climate Fight, 1 MPG at a Time”](#) by *Inside Climate News* (Aug. 2).

What should Canada do? Technical analysis comes in [Automobile production in Canada and implications for Canada's 2025 passenger vehicle greenhouse gas standards](#), released by the International Council on Clean Transportation in April 2018, which analyzes the Canadian vehicle manufacturing market and sales patterns and describes the possible impacts if Canada aligns weakens its greenhouse gas emission standards with the Trump administration, or maintains its existing standards and aligns with California. Other opinions: From Clean Energy Canada on Aug. 2, [“Canada should hold firm and reject Trump's efforts to roll back vehicle standards”](#); or [“On vehicle emissions standards It's time Canada divorced the United States”](#) in *Policy Options* (April 2018); and [“Trump's plan to scare Americans into supporting car pollution”](#) in the *National Observer* (Aug. 7).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [Canada](#), [Emissions Regulations](#), [transportation policy](#), [United States](#), [Vehicle emission standards](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

“Hothouse Earth” and “Losing Earth” reporting missed the point – there is still time to act



Two high-profile news stories appearing in August highlight the perils of climate change journalism: the **“Hothouse Earth”** article, and **“Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change”** in the *New York Times Magazine*. Both prove the old adage that there are two sides to every story; if you only read the original articles, here is some discussion and context to counter the fatalistic news coverage.

“Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene” published in the *Proceedings of the National Academies of Science (PNAS)* on August 6 was widely reported as the **“Hothouse Earth”** article. It reviewed the existing studies about feedback loops which could push the Earth System toward “a planetary threshold” that, if crossed, could prevent stabilization of the climate at intermediate temperatures and cause “continued warming on a “Hothouse Earth” pathway”. *The Guardian* translated the scientific language and quoted some of the authors in **“Domino-effect of climate events could move Earth into a ‘hothouse’ state”** (Aug. 7), but the byline “Leading scientists warn that passing such a point would make efforts to reduce emissions increasingly futile” typifies the sort of fatalistic coverage which followed. One of the worst examples appeared in an Opinion piece from *The Tye* on August 12 **“If We Can’t Stop Hothouse Earth, We’d Better Learn to Live on It”** .

In fact, the original PNAS paper was a call to action, calling for “stewardship of the entire Earth System—biosphere, climate, and societies—and could include decarbonization of the global economy, enhancement of biosphere carbon sinks, behavioral changes, technological innovations, new governance arrangements, and transformed social values.” It was accompanied by a **supplementary document** which included specifics in *Table S5: Human actions that could steer the Earth System onto a ‘Stabilized Earth’ trajectory*. The authors have also been active in promoting their main message: **“World is finally waking up to climate change, says ‘hothouse Earth’ author”** (August 19) in *The Guardian*, in which Hans Joachim Schellnhuber states: “There’s a time to sit down and work at your desk and there’s a time to get up and leave the area where you are comfortable. That time is now.”

Similarly, in **“Hothouse Earth” Co-Author: The Problem is Neoliberal Economics”** by Kate Aronoff in *The Intercept* (Aug. 14) another co-author, Will Steffen states: “the obvious thing we have to do is to get greenhouse gas emissions down as fast as we can. That means that has to be the primary target of policy and economics. You have got to get away from the so-called neoliberal economics.” He suggests something “more like wartime footing” at very fast rates for renewable energy , transportation and agriculture ” .

Others also call for action: Eric Holthaus, in **“Terrified by ‘hothouse Earth’? Don’t despair — do something”** in *The National Observer* (Aug. 7) states “Humanity is now facing the need for critical decisions and actions that could influence our future for centuries, if not millennia” . David Suzuki struck a similar note in **“David Suzuki: Cool solutions mean a hothouse planet isn’t inevitable”** in *The Straight* (August 14) and also in **Rabble.ca** , saying, “The research is profoundly disturbing. But the media coverage often missed or downplayed a crucial element: the solutions the report outlines toward a “stabilized Earth pathway.” Suzuki states: “We must insist that politicians represent the interests of citizens rather than corporations. We must stand up to the fossil fuel industry and climate science deniers.”, and quotes Professor Simon Lewis from University College London and University of Leeds, saying “diagnosing global warming and its consequences is a scientific issue, but solving climate change is about power, money, and political will.”

For a review of other scientific studies : [“Is our planet headed toward a ‘Hothouse’? Here’s what the science does — and doesn’t — say”](#) in the *Washington Post* (Aug. 10) by Richard Betts, a U.K. scientist, who credits the importance of the article but speculates that it has received such outsize press response because of the timing of being released in the midst of the world’s heat waves, and because of the use of the perjorative “hothouse” term.

The second case which needs some context: [“Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change”](#) , published on August 1 in the *New York Times Magazine* . The article was preceded by extensive publicity to establish its importance and authority: “with support from the Pulitzer Center, this two-part article by Nathaniel Rich is based on 18 months of reporting and well over a hundred interviews, documenting the history of climate change science and activism between 1979 and 1989.” Sounds unassailable, and presents a highly detailed historical account, yet criticism followed immediately. From *The Atlantic*, [“The Problem With The New York Times’ Big Story on Climate Change”](#) (Aug. 1) with the byline: “By portraying the early years of climate politics as a tragedy, the magazine lets Republicans and the fossil-fuel industry off the hook”. In an interview in *Democracy Now*, [““Losing Earth”: How Humanity Came to Understand Climate Change & Failed to Act in Time”](#), Amy Goodman invites Nathaniel Rich to refute some of the criticism. Finally, [“Capitalism killed our climate, not human nature”](#) by Naomi Klein appeared in *The Intercept* (Aug. 4), stating: “it is so enraging that the piece is spectacularly wrong in its central thesis.” ... Klein argues that climate activism “suffered from an epic case of historical bad timing... governments were getting together to get serious about reining in the fossil fuel sector, the global neoliberal revolution went supernova, and that project of economic and social reengineering clashed with the imperatives of both climate science and corporate regulation at every turn.” She concludes: “We aren’t losing earth — but the earth is getting so hot so fast that it is on a trajectory to lose a great many of us. In the nick of time, a new political path to safety is presenting itself. This is no moment to bemoan our lost decades. It’s the moment to get the hell on that path.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change in the Media](#), [Climate Science](#), [Journalism](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. consultation on “Clean Growth” policies for transportation, industry, and the built environment

Posted on [August 17, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



While British Columbia is understandably preoccupied with the devastating wildfires raging across the entire province, an engagement process called [Towards a Clean Growth Future in B.C.](#) was launched on July 20, with a short, summertime deadline of August 24.

[Three brief Intentions Papers](#) have been published to solicit public input : [Clean Transportation](#) , which discusses policies to incentivize Zero Emissions Vehicles – including the possibility of a ban the sale of new gasoline and diesel light duty vehicles by 2040; [Clean, Efficient Buildings](#), which proposes five steps to cleaner buildings, including Energy efficiency labeling information, financial incentives, and additional training for workers in energy efficient retrofitting and in the new-build Energy Step code; and [A Clean Growth Program for Industry](#) , which includes the province’s Industrial Incentive under the carbon tax regime and addresses the potential dangers of “carbon leakage”.

Public Submissions [are available online](#) and to date have been submitted by: [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#) (CCPA), written by Marc Lee ; [Closer Commutes](#) ; [The Wilderness Committee](#) ; and [The Pembina](#)

Institute , which at 37 pages is extremely detailed, and includes 5 recommendations relating to Training and Certification for Clean Buildings, including a call for “a construction labour strategy that addresses skilled labour gaps and equity issues in the building industry. Integrate with emerging technology and innovation strategy to foster greater use of automation and prefabrication.”

The West Coast Environmental Law Association (WCEL) also posted a thorough discussion of the Clean Growth proposals on its own website on August 16. “**BC’s decade-delayed climate strategies show why we need legal accountability**” by Andrew Gage notes that the intentions papers are largely built on existing proposals (some dating back to the *2008 Climate Action Team Report*), and that they are not complete, as the government is also developing proposals through its **Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council** and the newly appointed **Emerging Economy Task Force** . (The Wilderness Committee calls the proposals “underwhelming”). Whatever the final policies that flow from these consultations, WCEL emphasizes the importance of demanding accountability, and like Marc Lee in his submission, points to the success of the U.K.’s *Climate Accountability Act (2008)*. WCEL has **previously critiqued** Bill 34, *B.C.’s Climate Change Accountability Act* which received Royal Assent on May 31 2018.

Another commentary, appearing in the *National Observer* (July 27) addresses the weakness of the transportation proposals. “**B.C.’s climate plan needs a push – from you**” refers to the author’s more detailed report, *Transportation Transformation: Building complete communities and a zero-emission transportation system in BC* , which was published by the CCPA in 2011.

The CCPA also published an article on August 2, 2018 in *Policy Note*: “**The Problem with B.C.’s Clean Growth climate rhetoric**” . Author Marc Lee reviews the history of the term “clean growth” and offers his critique, noting that clean growth “promises change without fundamentally disrupting the existing economic and social order.”

Individuals have until August 24 to can email their input to clean.growth@gov.bc.ca .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [British Columbia](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green Building](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [transportation policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green collective agreement language achieved by Canadian Union of Public Employees

Posted on **August 16, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



“**Bargaining language for a green agreement**” , posted to the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) *Table Talk* newsletter on July 25, is a brief article highlighting some of the innovative bargaining done by CUPE locals on the issues of environmental stewardship, transit passes, bicycle reimbursement, sustainable work practices and green procurement. The *Table Talk* article reproduces the actual language of the agreements; for links to the full agreements, and almost 200 others by many unions, go to the **Green Collective Agreements database** maintained by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project (ACW).

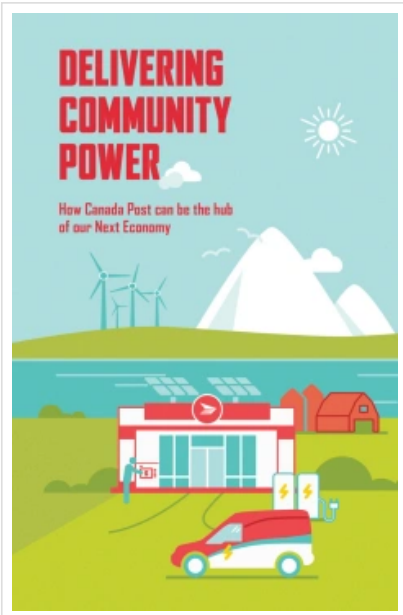
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Canadian Postal Workers Union bargaining for greener operations, postal banking

Posted on **August 16, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The **Canadian Union of Postal Workers** (CUPW) and Canada Post are currently negotiating a new collective agreement, with “**Canada Post hellbent on labour dispute as talks continue, union president says**” in the *Toronto Star* (July 12). If no deal is reached by September 9, a strike or lockout is possible by September 26. An important goal has been to consolidate two agreements into one, and to achieve equity between the Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC) unit and the Urban unit on job security, guaranteed hours of work, and wages, following an **arbitration award in CUPW’s favour** on June 1. Also highly important in this round of negotiations, however, are CUPW demands related to climate change and the environment.



CUPW’s interest in environmental issues is not new. In February 2016, CUPW launched The **Delivering Community Power Initiative** which re-imagines the postal service by leveraging its huge retail network to provide: Charging stations for electric vehicles at post offices; postal banking, especially to rural and indigenous communities; community hubs for digital access and social innovation. In addition, the postal vehicle fleet could be converted to renewable fuels; provide consolidated last-mile delivery service that would ease congestion and pollution in urban centres; and vulnerable people in their own homes could be served with a check-in service by door-to-door mail carriers. The **2012-2016 collective agreement** between CUPW and Canada Post included an Appendix T: Service Expansion and Innovation and Change Committee, which secured the right “to establish and monitor pilot projects which will test the viability of the proposals” to expand services – and from CUPW’s perspective, these could lay the groundwork for its Community Power initiatives.

In the current negotiations, CUPW’s **Negotiating Update** (August 2) states: “We recognize that both Canada Post and CUPW have responsibilities to work together to reduce our environmental impact. We have put forward a bold vision: Delivering Community Power. Our vision will expand services for everyone and generate more revenue while also creating new jobs. It’s interconnected: our environment demand supports the Delivering Community Power campaign, and the campaign’s massive public support will help us in bargaining. “ An updated statement of the Community Power document was released in August: **Delivering Community Power: Postal Service and the Low carbon economy** and in June

CUPW published *It's time for a postal bank for everyone: How a bank in the post office could help you* to present the advantages of postal banking and describe examples from other countries.

The specific environment-related demands, as outlined in *Negotiating Program Bulletin* are :

C.3: Improve Services and Standards to the Public: Expand retail services, delivery hours, banking, and internet and other services. Contract-in all work that CUPW members can perform with no contracting out of work. Maximize work in local communities.

C.22: Green Canada Post Operations and Reduce Emissions with New Services: Require CPC to take measures to reduce its environmental footprint, initiate new environmental services and negotiate joint environmental sustainability committees.

Follow CUPW updates to the current negotiations [here](#) .

CUPW's long history with environmental concerns is outlined by Geoff Bickerton, Meg Gingrich and Sarah Ryan in Chapter 9: "Climate change and work and employment in the Canadian Postal and Courier Sector", in the book *Climate@Work* (2013) . In 2016, Carla Lipsig Mumme of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project (ACW) made a presentation to the federal government's Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, titled *Canada Post and Environmental Leadership* , which made proposals for a Green Plan for Canada Post, drawing on many of the CUPW themes. Canada Post Corporation's latest *Sustainability Report (2016)* reports on existing environmental performance re fleet performance, GHG emissions, landfill waste diversion, paper consumption, and building operations and real estate.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Union of Postal Workers \(CUPW\)](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [green bargaining](#), [postal workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Job protection gets high priority in Germany's Commission on phase-out of brown coal

Posted on [August 15, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

According to a [March 2018 report](#) by Clean Energy Wire, Germany's coal industry, (hard coal and lignite coal), employed approximately 36,000 workers in 2016, in contrast to 160,000 people employed in the wind power industry and 340,000 in the entire renewable energy generation sector. Yet on June 6, Germany's **Special Commission on Growth, Structural Economic Change and Employment** was launched to study and make recommendations for social and economic policy for a phase-out of lignite coal in Germany by the end of 2018. The word "coal" does not appear in its name, reflecting the political tension surrounding the issue. Groups such as The Green Party, WWF Germany and Greenpeace Germany are critical, as summarized in "[Why are German coal workers so powerful, when there are so few?](#)" in *Climate Home News* (Aug. 14) , which states that "saving jobs in the coal sector is its first priority, followed by designing the structural change in the coal regions towards low-carbon economies, with climate protection and coal phase-out coming last."

Although much information about the Commission is in German, Clean Energy Wire (based in Berlin) publishes in English, and is [monitoring the Commission's progress](#) . It has produced two Fact Sheets that are essential reading: 1. [Coal in Germany, a Fact Sheet](#) (Dec. 2017) (full of facts and figures about the industry); and 2. [Germany's Coal Exit Commission, a Fact Sheet](#) – which includes a list of the members of the Commission – representatives from government, industry, academia, environmental groups, and these unions: [German Trade Union Confederation \(DGB\)](#) ; [Ver.di](#) (Service industries) and [IG BCE](#) (mining, chemicals and energy industries). [Position statements](#) from some of the members of the Commission are here ; IG BCE states: "The people in the mining regions do not need an accelerated exit from coal.. The path for a phase out of coal-fired power generation has long been mapped out. What they need is an entry into structural change that secures good industrial work. That's what we will work towards in the commission." From another member, Germanwatch: "The coal exit is aligned with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and has the

potential to be the foundation for a fair structural change and a modernisation of the economy. One hopes that the economic associations involved do not obstruct, but put the opportunities front and centre.”

On August 3 that the Germany's Employment Minister presented a 6-point plan, summarized in **“Employment minister suggests infrastructure projects for coal mining regions”** .

Further background and opinion:

From Euractiv: **“Leaked: Germany's planned coal commission shows little interest for the climate”** (June 1) and **“Germany launches coal commission in a bid to protect climate and jobs”** (June 7)

From DW, **“Germany's mining communities brace themselves for post-coal era”** (June 1) and **“Germany's coal exit: Jobs first, then the climate”** from DW (June 26);

Contrast the European coverage with **“New Commission studies unprecedented, orderly coal phase out for Germany”** in *The Energy Mix* (August 14) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Coal Industry](#), [coal phase-out](#), [Germany](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Job losses feared as Ontario government cancels renewable energy contracts

Posted on **August 10, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On July 13, the Province of Ontario **announced** the immediate cancellation of 758 renewable energy projects, calling them “unnecessary and wasteful” . In **“Inside Ontario's clean energy contract cancellations”** by *GreenTech Media* (July 26), the CEO of the Canadian Solar Industry Association estimates that Ontario will lose 6,000 jobs and half a billion dollars of investment as a result, although the general tone of the article displays confidence in the unstoppable momentum of clean energy. The decision, however, has thrown the industry into confusion, disappointed some consumers, and is seen as a blow to Ontario's reputation amongst investors.

A sampling of reaction: **“Green shift to green slump: How trade decisions and electoral politics are crippling the vision of a clean Canadian power play”** in the *Globe and Mail* (Aug. 3)

“Solar companies may exit Ontario for Alberta after Doug Ford kills rebate program” from CBC News

“Renewable Energy stocks slide as Ontario vows to scrap clean- power projects” in the *Globe and Mail* (July 13)

“Clean power advocates disappointed by defiant in the face of Ford's sweeping cuts” (July 17) in the *National Observer*

“Cancellation of Energy Contracts Punishes Famers, School Boards, Municipalities and First Nations” a press release from the Canadian Solar Industries Association. CanWEA also **responded** to the announcements with a disjointed compilation of links about the benefits of wind energy (July 13) .



One high profile example of the cancelled projects: the White Pines wind project in Prince Edward County, owned by [German company WPD](#), which was first approved in 2010 and was weeks away from completion when it was cancelled by [Bill 2, The Urgent Priorities Act](#). Local reaction appeared in [The Picton Gazette](#), and the *National Observer* published an extensive four part report, [“Inside one Ontario town’s decade long wind war”](#). CBC News published [“Ford government’s plan to cancel wind project could cost taxpayers over \\$100M, company warns”](#), and even the conservative *National Post* published [“John Ivison: Wind turbine decision says Doug Ford’s Ontario is closed for business”](#) (July 23), calling it a “bone-headed” decision. Activist group Leadnow.ca has posted an online petition, [“Save the White Pines project”](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

TUED conferences: A Social Power vision of Just Transition, and U.K. Energy Democracy

Posted on [August 3, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The international alliance of [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy](#) convened two meetings over the summer of 2018, summarized in [Just Transition: A Revolutionary Idea – TUED Bulletin 73](#), which summarizes an international conference held in New York in late May, and [Reclaiming UK Energy: What’s the Plan? – TUED Bulletin 75](#), which summarizes meetings in the U.K. on June 28 and 29 to discuss different approaches to reclaiming the power sector, while honouring climate commitments and addressing energy poverty.

The [Just Transition international conference](#) brought together representatives of 31 unions as well as 15 environmental, community-based, research and policy allies from both the global North and the South. The Program is [here](#); links to videos of the presentations on YouTube are [here](#). In Opening Remarks, Paula Finn, Associate Director of the Center for Labor, Community & Public Policy at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies “highlighted the necessity of confronting frankly and honestly the divisions within the global trade union movement—in particular divisions over “whether unmitigated economic growth and extractive capitalism must be challenged, or we can somehow ride the wave of ‘green jobs’ towards a solution of the climate crisis.” Much of the discussion was based on the TUED’s Working Paper #11, [Trade Unions and Just Transition: The Search for a Transformative Politics](#) (April 2018) by Sean Sweeney and John Treat and available from the Rose Luxemburg Stiftung as part of its [Climate Justice Dossier](#). The Sweeney/Treat paper argues for a “Social Power vision” of Just Transition, which “must be radically democratic and inclusive, and it must hold at its center a recognition that nothing short of a deep socioeconomic and ecological transition will be sufficient for

the challenges our planet currently faces." Watch Sean Sweeney summarize and discuss the paper in a [video of Session 2: Broadening the Just Transition Debate: The Search for a Transformative Politics](#) . Donald LaFleur, Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress, appears as a discussant to the paper at approximately minute 29 of the video.

The second TUED meeting of the summer of 2018 is summarized in [Reclaiming UK Energy: What's the Plan? – TUED Bulletin 75](#) . The forty delegates attending included GMB, UNISON UNITE, PCS, TSSA, Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union, National Education Union, and the Trades Union Congress (TUC), along with allies including the Greener Jobs Alliance, Friends of the Earth Europe and Scotland, Transnational Institute and others from across Europe. The Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of the U.K. Labour Party presented [their current energy platform](#) which focuses on establishing a number of regional public energy companies, and participated in a discussion of union policies and opinion. In addition to the summary from the TUED Bulletin, a summary also appears in the [July/August Newsletter of the Greener Jobs Alliance](#) . Documents on which discussion was based include:

From the TUED: [All, or Something? Towards a "Comprehensive Reclaiming" of the UK Power Sector](#), which argues for establishing a new national public entity that would encompass generation, transmission, distribution and supply.

From Unison: [The need to take into public ownership the customer and retail operations of big 6](#)

From Professor Costas Lapavitsas, the University of London spoke regarding the potential impacts of Brexit on energy nationalization, based on his arguments and observations in ["Jeremy Corbyn's Labour vs. the Single Market."](#) in *Jacobin* (May 2018) .

The many activities and accomplishments of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy are summarized in [New Unions and Regional Advances: A Mid-Year Report — TUED Bulletin 76](#) dated 30 July 2018. Of note : "The first half of 2018 saw three important additions to the TUED network, with the [British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union](#)(BCGEU), the [Amalgamated Transit Union](#) (ATU; US and Canada) and the [Nordic Transport Workers Federation](#) (NTF; headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden). Together these unions represent 560,000 workers." 64 trade union bodies are now members of TUED .



Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [energy democracy](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Against the evidence for its efficiency, Ontario's Cap and Trade program axed

Posted on [August 2, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



In Ontario, newly-elected Premier Doug Ford quickly fulfilled a central campaign promise, as the Province **revoked the cap-and-trade regulations** and prohibited all trading of emission allowances, officially announced on July 3, 2018. A further **July 25 press release** announced the introduction of Bill 4, **The Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018** and claimed that “The average Ontario family will receive \$260 in annual savings thanks to the elimination of the cap-and-trade carbon tax.” All programs currently funded through the cap-and-trade revenues have been cancelled, including the immediate wind-down of the Green Ontario Fund, which funded many energy efficiency incentive programs. The **Cap and Trade Cancellation Act** repeals the **Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016** of the previous Wynne government “and provides for various matters related to the wind down of the Cap and Trade Program.”

Earlier, on July 13, the **province had announced** the cancellation of 758 renewable energy projects, calling them “unnecessary and wasteful” – one notable example, the almost-completed White Pines wind project in Prince Edward County. And on August 2, in addition to **the previously announced court challenge to the federal government’s carbon pricing requirements** under the Pan Canadian Framework, Ontario’s Attorney General **announced a second court challenge** – this time in the Ontario Court of Appeal. **“Doug Ford’s Ontario pursues ‘doomed’ plan to stop Trudeau government’s efforts to fight climate change”** in the *National Observer* (August 2) summarizes the development from a political viewpoint, and the *Globe and Mail’s* editorial is titled: **“Caroline Mulroney’s carbon-tax court challenge is a partisan waste of money”**

Reactions :

“Ford government Attempts to minimize Ontario taxpayer losses after abandoning carbon markets” (July 25) in the *National Observer*;

“Ontario’s fiscal watchdog to probe cancellation of cap and trade, at Horwath’s request” in the *Globe and Mail* (July 24);

From Professor Mark Winfield, York University: **“Doug Ford’s energy shake-up could cost Ontario”** in *The Conversation* (July 25) ;

“Clean power advocates disappointed but defiant in the face of Ford’s sweeping cuts” from the *National Observer* (July 17)

“Solar companies may exit Ontario for Alberta after Doug Ford kills rebate program” from CBC News (June 21) ;

“Scrapping of cap and trade revenues a big loss for Ontario tenants badly in need of apartment retrofits” from ACORN Canada;

“From Cap-and-Trade to White Pines: What Lies Ahead In Ontario’s Energy Sector” from Toronto law firm Gowlings

Before his election but based on the platform statements, **Unifor said** in June : “Workers in Ontario need forward-looking policies with the intention to build a green economy, but instead Ford announced his intention to cancel a successful

program and pick an unnecessary fight with the federal government.... “Workers accept that climate change is real and need our government to lead with a real, predictable plan to reduce emissions and grow green jobs.”

Was there a problem with Ontario’s cap and trade system? The April 2018 WCR article “**New evidence supports benefits of cap and trade policies**” summarized several favourable studies, including *A Progress Report on Ontario’s Cap-and-Trade Program and Climate Change Action Plan: Year One* , published by the Clean Economy Alliance – which concluded that, in the first year of cap-and-trade employment had grown at the same time that Ontario economy grew to a 7-year high. Environmental Defense published “**Carbon pricing has no downside: why are we still arguing about it?**”, which summarized the Clean Economy Alliance report, as well as *No Bad Option: Comparing the Economic Impact of Ontario Carbon Pricing Scenarios* by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, published in April 2018 by CCPA in partnership with the Clean Economy Alliance.

More recently, Dale Beugin, Don Drummond, Glen Hodgson and Mel Cappe asked “**If not carbon pricing in Ontario – which works well – then what, Mr. Ford?**” in a blog published by the Ecofiscal Commission. The purpose of the brief summary is to “correct the record on some of the myths and misunderstandings surrounding carbon pricing. The economic evidence clearly contradicts some of the recent rhetoric coming from Ontario.” Earlier Ecofiscal opinion appeared in “**Tread Carefully: Ontario’s cap-and-trade system meets a fork in the road**” (June 8) , and “**Can Ontario hits its targets without carbon pricing?**” .

In the U.S., economist Marc Hafstead recently published “**Carbon taxes and employment: Rhetoric vs research**” in the Summer Issue of *Resources*, the online newsletter of Resources for the Future (RFF) , stating “Opponents of policies to price carbon will likely continue with the “job-killing” rhetoric, but careful economic analysis suggests that these arguments are seriously exaggerated.” (the brief article is based largely on his academic working paper *Unemployment and Environmental Regulation in General Equilibrium: Considering a US Carbon Tax: Economic Analysis and Dialogue on Carbon Pricing Options*) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New podcast series celebrates women fighting climate change

Posted on **July 30, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A new, optimistic initiative called **Mothers of Invention** was launched in July, led by Mary Robinson, former Prime Minister of Ireland and a well-known climate justice campaigner. Maeve Higgins, an Irish-born comedian is her “sidekick” in a series of podcasts designed to celebrate “amazing women doing remarkable things in pursuit of climate justice.” Through lighthearted, informal conversations, the podcasts educate and inspire with stories of local climate activists – initially focusing on women only, but eventually planned to include men as well. The clear purpose is to motivate individuals with positive examples, rather than a climate change “doom and gloom” message.

Episode 1, All Rise, explores the issue of global climate litigation through interviews with Tessa Khan, Co-Founder of the [Global Climate Litigation network](#); Marjan Minnesma, Director of the [Urgenda Foundation](#) which launched the world's first climate liability lawsuit in the Netherlands; and Kelsey Juliana, Victoria Barrett & Ridhima Pandey – young plaintiffs from the U.S. and India who are supported in lawsuits against their own governments by the [Our Children's Foundation](#). Each episode consists of the podcast interviews and discussion, with links for more information, more involvement, and a chance to donate.

The line up of future “**Mothers**” includes activists from around the world who have focused on land protection, zero waste, fossil fuel divestment, energy poverty, plastic pollution, and environmental racism. The initiative is profiled in *The Guardian* in “[Mary Robinson launches new feminist fight against climate change](#)” (July 24).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [case studies](#), [climate change litigation](#), [Gender](#), [Urgenda Decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Committee issues recommendations for heatwaves – including workplace changes

Posted on **July 30, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On July 26, the U.K.'s Environmental Audit Committee published [Heatwaves: adapting to climate change](#), which examines the developing trend of heatwaves, the responsibility for heatwave protection, how to protect human health and well-being, and effects on productivity and the economy. The final statement on conclusions/recommendations states: *“Heatwaves can result in overheating workplaces and lower employee productivity. In 2010, approximately five million staff days were lost due to overheating above 26°C resulting in economic losses of £770 million. Given that extreme temperature events in Europe are now 10 times more likely than they were in the early 2000s, similar losses will occur more frequently. However, some businesses, particularly smaller businesses, do not have business continuity plans in place. The Government should make businesses aware of the developing threat of heatwaves and the economic consequences. Public Health England should also issue formal guidance to employers to relax dress codes and allow flexible working when heatwave alerts are issued. The Government should consult on introducing maximum workplace temperatures, especially for work that involves significant physical effort. Procurement rules should be updated so that schools and the NHS do not spend public money on infrastructure which is not resilient to heatwaves. The Department for Education should issue guidance for head teachers about safe temperatures in schools and relaxing the school uniform policy as appropriate during hot weather.”* At present, there is no set temperature limit for indoor work, (only that buildings be kept at a “reasonable” temperature) and the government’s [2018 Heatwave Plan](#) makes no mention of employer responsibilities or the dangers of heat stress for workers.



Some of the Committee recommendations echo those contained in the Trades Union Congress publication, [Cool it! Reps guide on dealing with high temperatures in the workplace](#) . It documents examples of heat stress in workplaces, and provides checklists for union representatives in both indoor and outdoor workplaces. The *Cool it!* guide recommends that a maximum indoor temperature be set at 30°C (27°C for those doing strenuous work), and “ a new legal duty on employers to protect outside workers by providing sun protection, water, and to organise work so that employees are not outside during the hottest part of the day.” The guide also takes note of the special circumstances of drivers.

Current heat-related guides and information from the government’s Health and Safety Executive are [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [Heat Stress](#), [labour union policies](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia environmentalists campaign for a moratorium on oil and gas drilling after BP spill

Posted on **July 30, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In late June, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Drilling Board (CNSOPB) issued an incident report – summarized in the National Observer in “ [BP Canada spews thousands of litres of toxic mud during offshore drilling incident near Halifax](#) ” ; CBC reported “ [Mi’kmaq want answers from BP Canada after drilling mud spill off Nova Scotia coast](#) ” (June 26) . Yet on July 23, [the Board issued](#) a notice allowing BP to re-start operations, and describing the terms of an investigation into the incident. CBC summarized it all in “ [BP Canada restarts drilling off Nova Scotia after spill](#) ”.

In response, the Offshore Alliance of Nova Scotia on July 19 sent [Open Letters to Prime Minister Trudeau](#) and [to the Premier of Nova Scotia](#) , stating : “The inadequacies of the current regulatory and impact assessment regime, the failure to consider the latest science (on risk assessment, dispersants, impacts of seismic, added risks of deepwater drilling, ocean acidification, and recovery of the fishery, to name a few), the poor state of public awareness and involvement and the magnitude of the risk to the marine biosphere and to the present and future economic base of Nova Scotia’s coastal communities all demand an up-to-date, thorough public re-examination. We anticipate an inquiry of this nature could take up to two years. In the meantime, there should be a moratorium on all new oil and gas activity offshore respecting the established precautionary principle.” Similar demands had been made in an [Open Letter in June](#) to Canada’s Environment Minister, and names the members of the Offshore Alliance – approximately 20 fisher, social justice and environmental organizations, as well as concerned communities and individuals. They issued their call through the Sierra Club of Canada – the July 19 press release is [here](#) .



Local member organizations of the Offshore Alliance of Nova Scotia include the Clean Ocean Action Committee (COAC), which represents fish plant owners, processors and fishermen’s organizations in southwestern NS, and the [Campaign to Protect Offshore Nova Scotia \(CPONS\)](#) . The CPONS explanatory [Position Paper](#) discusses the issues of what is at stake, and asks “what is regulatory capture?”. The CPONS website includes resources to “[Take Action](#)”, including a

number of petitions and addresses for a letter writing campaign. The Council of Canadians is also monitoring offshore drilling on the East Coast [here](#) , and maintains its own [active petition](#) which calls on the federal government “to stop BP from drilling up to seven exploratory wells and institute a moratorium on oil and gas exploration in offshore Nova Scotia. We further demand an end to proposed changes under Bill C-69 that would grant east coast petroleum boards more power in the environmental assessment process for Atlantic offshore drilling.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Atlantic Canada](#), [Climate Activism](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [offshore oil and gas](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Suicide and heat waves: the mental health effects related to climate change

Posted on **July 27, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



“[Higher temperatures increase suicide rates in the United States and Mexico](#)” was published in *Nature Climate Change* online on July 23, warning that up to 26,000 more people could die by suicide in the United States by 2050 if humans don’t reduce emissions of greenhouse gas pollution. The study has been widely reported and summarized: for example, in *The Atlantic* (July 23). The authors used new statistical techniques, including analysis which correlates social media posts about depression with temperature conditions. Part of this social media analysis is based on the work of Patrick Baylis of the University of British Columbia, whose academic paper “[Temperature and Temperament: Evidence from a Billion Tweets](#)” was published by the Energy Institute at Haas, University of California at Berkeley, in November 2015.

A second article published in July 2018 is “[Associations between high ambient temperatures and heat waves with mental health outcomes: a systematic review](#)” appeared in the British journal *Public Health*. It reports on a literature review of 35 studies, and the authors conclude that: “High ambient temperatures have a range of mental health effects. The strongest evidence was found for increased suicide risk. Limited evidence was found for an increase in heat-related morbidity and mortality among people with known mental health problems. Mental health impacts should be incorporated into plans for the public health response to high temperatures, and as evidence evolves, psychological morbidity and mortality temperature thresholds should be incorporated into hot weather–warning systems.”

A 2014 article examined weekly suicide death totals and anomalies in Toronto between 1986–2009 and Jackson, Mississippi, from 1980–2006. The authors found that for both cities, warmer weeks had an increased likelihood of being associated with high-end suicide totals. “[Association of Weekly Suicide Rates with Temperature Anomalies in Two Different Climate Types](#)” from the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* is [here](#) .

The growing literature about the impacts of climate change on mental health has been summarized in an article in *Forbes* magazine, “[Weather And The Warm Season Are Among Factors Associated With Suicide](#)” (June 2018) and in the April 2018 issue of *Corporate Knights* magazine. The *Corporate Knights* article, “[Deep Impact](#)” is by Professor Helen Berry, the inaugural Professor of Climate Change and Mental Health at the University of Sydney, in Australia. Although her brief overview emphasizes mental health impacts of climate-change related disasters such as floods, it also provides links to recent articles linking mental health with chronic climate conditions such as heat waves and drought. Some examples of Professor Berry’s research: “[The importance of humidity in the relationship between heat and population mental health: Evidence from Australia](#)” in *PLoS One* (2016); “[The Effect of Extreme Heat on Mental Health – Evidence from Australia](#)” from the *International Journal of Epidemiology* (restricted access) (2015); and “[Morbidity and mortality during heatwaves in Metropolitan Adelaide](#)” in the *Medical Journal of Australia* (2007).

Professor Berry and co-author Dominic Peel provoked public discussion in 2015 with an article in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, “[Worrying about climate change: is it responsible to promote public debate?](#)”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and mental health](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Heat Stress](#), [suicide](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Heat waves: How well are workers protected ?

Posted on [July 18, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The heat waves that have gripped much of the world in June and July have also been manifest in Canada, where as many as 70 people died in Quebec (mostly in Montreal), as temperatures stayed at over 40 degrees Celsius with the humidex. Many more are likely to have died, but Health Canada does not keep statistics on heat related deaths. In their [July 7 press release](#) on the topic, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment quote figures from the [Climate Atlas of Canada](#) which state: “Before 2005, Montreal had, on average, 8 days per year with temperatures over 30 degrees C. With climate change, it is predicted that Montreal will experience more than 50 days per year with extreme temperatures by 2050.” For Toronto, the prediction is for 55 days per year with temperatures over 30 degrees after 2050.

In general, public attention and interventions are normally directed to the most vulnerable in the population: the aged, chronically ill, homeless and those living alone, as in “[Doctors urge population to stay cool after dozens die during heat wave in Central Canada](#)” in the *National Observer* (July 10). But what about workers, who may not have the option to “cool off”?

On July 17, the U.S. advocacy group Public Citizen published [Extreme Heat and Unprotected Workers](#), describing the state of regulation in the U.S., current and historical statistics on heat-related illness and death, particularly for construction and farm workers, the likely exacerbation of the situation due to climate change, and making the case for a federal heat stress standard. One example: The report states that from 1992 to 2016, heat killed 783 workers in the U.S. and seriously injured nearly 70,000. Based on this hard-hitting analysis, Public Citizen, along with United Farm Workers Foundation and

Farmworker Justice, joined more than 130 public health and environmental groups in [submitting a petition](#) to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, calling for the agency to require employers to protect their workers from heat by imposing mandatory rest breaks, hydration and access to shade or cooled spaces, among other measures. The report is summarized by *Inside Climate News* in “[Heat Wave Safety: 130 Groups Call for Protections for Farm, Construction Workers](#)” .

In a [July article in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*](#), published by the U.S. Centres for Disease Control (CDC) , researchers recommend using a heat index of 85 degrees F as a threshold for potentially hazardous worker heat stress, rather than the current U.S. standard of 91 degrees F (32.8C). They base this recommendation on a review of 25 incidents of outdoor occupational heat-related illnesses, including 14 deaths, that were investigated by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) between 2011 and 2016. They found a risk of illness at a heat index of just 29.4 C (85 F) – and 6 deaths happened below 90 degrees F. The authors also noted: “Employers often obtain heat index information from publicly broadcasted weather reports or forecasts that do not necessarily reflect conditions at their work sites.” Other recommendations from the article: “ a comprehensive heat-related illness prevention program should include an acclimatization schedule for newly hired workers and unacclimatized long-term workers (e.g., during early-season heat waves), training for workers and supervisors about symptom recognition and first aid (e.g., aggressive cooling of presumed heat stroke victims before medical professionals arrive), engineering and administrative controls to reduce heat stress, medical surveillance, and provision of fluids and shady areas for rest breaks.”

In Canada, Professor Glenn Kenny of the University of Ottawa is an expert on the effects of heat stress on older people, and on workers. Some of the studies on which he has collaborated: “[Heat Exposure in the Canadian Workplace](#)” (2010) in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* , in which he points out the strengths and weaknesses of the Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) based upon Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), the standard used in most Canadian jurisdictions; “[Do the Threshold Limit Values for work in hot conditions adequately protect workers?](#)” (2016) ; and “[An evaluation of the physiological strain experienced by electrical utility workers in North America](#)” (2015) in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene* .

What are the existing heat standards for workers? A fact sheet from The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), [Temperature conditions: Legislation](#) , provides a summary chart of Canadian legislation, ranging from Alberta, (which has guidelines only), to Ontario, which has the most specific standards, set out in clause 25(2)(h) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* . Also useful: CCOHS [Fact Sheet: Humidex and work](#) and [Thermal Comfort for Office work](#). From the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) – [Humidex Based Heat Response Plan](#) (2014).

In the U.S., Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) maintains a [web portal for working in indoor and outdoor heat](#) and the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health portal on heat stress](#) is here. NIOSH also publishes information on [Hazards to Outdoor Workers](#) which includes heat, sun exposure, vector-borne diseases by ticks, mosquitos, and a separate fact sheet for Lyme disease (none of which have been updated since 2010) . In February 2016, the NIOSH published [Criteria for a Recommended Standard: Occupational Exposure to Heat and Hot Environments](#), which updated the previous version from 1986.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [Heat Stress](#), [outdoor workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Government campaign claims Trans Mountain pipeline is a “bridge to a greener tomorrow” – economists and citizens disagree

Posted on **July 12, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— #keepcanaddaworking social media campaign

Now that the [government of Canada has bought the Trans Mountain pipeline project](#) from Texas-based Kinder Morgan, the governments of Alberta and Canada have launched a public relations campaign to “sell” the deal to Canadians. The [Keep Canada Working](#) television and social media campaign promotes the familiar Liberal government message that “Developing the economy and protecting the environment are two things that can happen side by side – without choosing one over the other”, and argues that “The Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion funds green investments, shifts the transportation of oil away from more carbon intensive methods like rail or truck, and provides a bridge to a greener tomorrow.” The full “Climate Action” defense is [here](#) .

The “Jobs and the Economy” claims are [here](#), including endorsements by politicians and includes a quote from Stephen Hunt, Director of the United Steelworkers District 3: “Members of the United Steelworkers are proud that the pipeline will be using Canadian-made USW-built pipe.” The other positive job arguments are sourced from an [April 2018 Globe and Mail article](#) by the CEO of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the [corporate website of Trans Mountain](#), which are in turn based on an unnamed Conference Board of Canada report .

What do other economists say about the benefits of the Trans Mountain pipeline? In February 2018, the Parkland Institute summarized and critiqued the economic arguments in a still-useful blog “[Let’s share the actual facts about the Trans Mountain Pipeline](#)” , and Canadian economist Robyn Allan has written [numerous articles](#) critical of the Trans Mountain project for the *National Observer*, most recently “[Premier Notley’s claimed \\$15 billion annual benefit from Trans Mountain exposed as false by her own budget](#)” (June 7 2018). Other more detailed publications since the May 2018 purchase by the government: “[Canada’s Folly: Government Purchase of Trans Mountain Pipeline Risks an Increase in National Budget Deficit by 36%, Ensures a 637% Gain by Kinder Morgan](#)”, published by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, describes the fiscal and financial risks and calls for more public disclosure of those details before the Purchase Agreement is finalized in August. Similarly, [The view from Taxpayer Mountain](#) (June 2018) from the West Coast Environmental Law Association links to the actual [Purchase Agreement](#) and reviews Canada’s obligations and risks. On June 26, Greenpeace USA has published [Tar Sands Tanker Superhighway Threatens Pacific Coast Waters](#) highlighting the dangers of a potential oil spill on the environment, and on coastal economies. At risk: the \$60 billion coastal economy of Washington, Oregon and California, which currently supports over 150,000 jobs in commercial fishing and over 525,000 jobs in coastal tourism, and in the British Columbia Lower Mainland, Greenpeace estimates there are 320,000 workers in industries that rely on a clean coastline.

On the issue of climate change impacts, a widely-cited discussion paper, [Confronting Carbon lock-in: Canada’s oil sands](#) (June 2018) from the Stockholm Environment Institute, concludes that “The continued expansion of Canada’s oil sands is likely to contribute to carbon lock-in and a long-term oversupply of oil, slowing the world’s transition to a low-carbon future.” And still valuable reading: David Hughes’ [Can Canada Expand Oil and Gas Production, Build Pipelines and Keep Its Climate Change Commitments?](#) (June 2016) from the Corporate Mapping Project , and from Jeff Rubin, [Evaluating the Need for Pipelines: A False Narrative for the Canadian Economy](#) (September 2017).



Demonstrations continue: Vancouver housing activist Jean Swanson's argues that the billions spent on Kinder Morgan would be better used for social housing, job creation, and renewable energy in ["Why I got arrested protesting the Kinder Morgan pipeline"](#) in *The Tyee*, July 11. Twelve Greenpeace activists mounted an "aerial blockade" for Trans Mountain oil tankers by hanging from a bridge above the water on July 3 and 4. And on July 11, CBC reported ["Secwepemc First Nation's 'Tiny House Warriors' occupy provincial park in Trans Mountain protest"](#). The Tiny House Warrior movement began in 2017, near Kamloops, to block the pipeline by re-establishing village sites and asserting authority over Secwepemc First Nations unceded Territories.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate change policy](#), [First Nations](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Kinder Morgan pipeline](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#), [United Steelworkers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. government releases strategy to reduce transportation emissions, stimulate clean vehicle manufacturing

Posted on **July 9, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.K. Committee on Climate Change (CCC) submitted its 2018 annual report to the British Parliament on June 28, marking ten years since the *Climate Change Act* became law in 2008. On the plus side, the report highlights a decoupling of economic growth: since 1990, emissions have fallen by 43% and the economy has grown by over 70%. Since 2008, the UK has achieved a 59% reduction in emissions from electricity generation. Yet despite that progress, other sectors, notably transport, agriculture and the built environment, have not achieved reductions – transport emissions have actually grown and at 28% of total UK emissions, are now the single largest emitter. [Reducing UK emissions – 2018 Progress Report to Parliament](#) outlines four high-level, messages for government and calls for immediate policy action in residential energy efficiency, development of Carbon Capture and Storage, and stronger consumer incentives for electric vehicles.



No sooner said than done: on July 9, the British Ministry of Transport [released](#) a long-awaited document, *The Road to Zero Strategy*, with the goal that all new cars and vans will be effectively zero emission by 2040, at which time the government will end the sale of new conventional gas and diesel cars and vans. [The press release highlights and summarizes the proposals](#). Some specifics: commitment to continue consumer purchase incentives for plug-in cars, vans, taxis and motorcycles; commitment that all the central Government car fleet will be zero emissions by 2030; the launch of a £400 million Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund and as much as £500 incentive for electric vehicle owners to help them install a charge point at their home; increasing the grant level of the existing incentives for Workplace Charging stations.

Stimulating the motor vehicle industry: Notably, the strategy aims to improve emissions in road transport in the U.K. while putting the U.K. “at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles.” Measures announced to support industry include: public investment in auto technology R & D, including £246 million to research next generation battery technology; and working with the industry training group, [Institute of the Motor Industry](#), “to ensure the UK’s workforce of mechanics are well trained and have the skills they need to repair these vehicles safely, delivering for consumers”.

However, “Road to Zero or Road to Nowhere: Government revs up green vehicle ‘ambition’” in *Business Green* newsletter compiles reaction from business and environmental sources, all of which agree that the 2040 target date is too late. The quote from the Policy Director of Green Alliance sums up reaction: “It’s rare for the oil industry, mayors and environmentalists to agree on something, but we all think 2040 is far too late for a ban on conventional vehicles...Moving it to 2030 and setting a zero emissions vehicles mandate would encourage car companies to build electric cars in the UK, and give the country a head start on its competitors across Europe. While there are some welcome measures, including on charging infrastructure, the Road to Zero strategy is on cruise control. As it stands, it won’t help the UK build a world leading clean automotive industry.”

The full [Road to Zero](#) policy document is here; the accompanying technical report, [Transport Energy Model](#) provides data about the GHG emissions, energy requirements, and pollution associated with cars, trucks and double decker buses using conventional fossil fuels as well as biofuels, hydrogen, and electricity.

Posted in [Business Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green Infrastructure](#), [transportation policy](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia announces consultation for coastal protection legislation

Posted on **July 5, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Lighthouse at Brier Island, Nova Scotia, from Government of Canada website

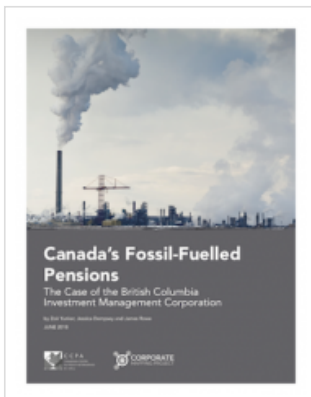
Just after the Nova Scotia Minister of Energy [announced](#) funding for geoscience research on June 20 to support the \$11.8 million Offshore Growth Project to encourage oil and gas development, the Minister of the Environment made good on [an election promise from 2017](#) with the [launch](#) of a consultation process to consider coastline protection, allowing the period from June 26 to August 17 for the public to respond to [an online survey](#). Discussion will focus on [The Coastal Protection Legislation: Consultation Document](#), which addresses the complexity of the legislative situation – both federal and provincial legislation – and addresses three questions: 1. How to define a “Coastal Protection Zone”? 2. How to restrict certain activities within the Coastal Protection Zone? and 3. What provisions are required for monitoring and compliance? The document states: “Fishing and aquaculture will be exempt, but how do we define this exemption? What other economic activities must we keep out of the way of?”

The Ecology Action Centre in Halifax announced the consultation with this neutral [press release](#); CBC News summarized it with “Nova Scotia seeks public input on legislation to protect coastlines” CBC News, and the *Halifax Chronicle* published an Editorial on July 3, “Coastal construction rules needed to curtail climate calamities”, calling for the government to allow more time for public input.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Fisheries Industry](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Ocean Protection](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New report calls on B.C. Pension Fund management to divest from fossil fuels, reinvest in renewables

Posted on **July 4, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The [British Columbia Investment Management Corporation \(BCI\)](#) is the fourth largest pension fund manager in Canada, and controls capital of \$135.5 billion, including the pension funds of the province's public employees. A June report asks the question: is BCI investing funds in ways that support the shift to a two degree C global warming limit? The answer is "no", and in fact, fossil fuel investments have been increasing, according to the authors of [Canada's Fossil-Fuelled Pensions: The Case of the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation](#) . For example, BCI boosted its investment in Kinder Morgan, owner of the Trans-Mountain pipeline, to \$65.3 million in 2017 from \$36.7 million in 2016.

An [article in the Victoria B.C. Times Colonist newspaper](#) summarizes the study and includes reaction from one of the authors, James Rowe, an associate professor at University of Victoria. Rowe states: "BCI claims to be a responsible investor. ...But we find some hypocrisy in that we don't find any good signs they are investing with climate change in mind." The article also quotes an email from BCI, which defends the investment in Kinder Morgan, as "a passive investment held inside funds designed to track Canadian and global markets." Further, it states, "BCI does invest in oil and gas companies, but that particular sector accounts for a significant portion of the Canadian economy. It's about 20 per cent of the composite index on the Toronto Stock Exchange." For more from BCI, see their website which provides their [2017 Responsible Investing Annual Report](#) , as well as a [Responsible Investing Newsletter](#), with the [most recent issue](#) (Oct. 2017) devoted to "Transparency and Disclosure".

[Canada's Fossil-Fuelled Pensions: The Case of the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation](#) makes the following recommendations so that BCI can align its investments with the 2°C limit:

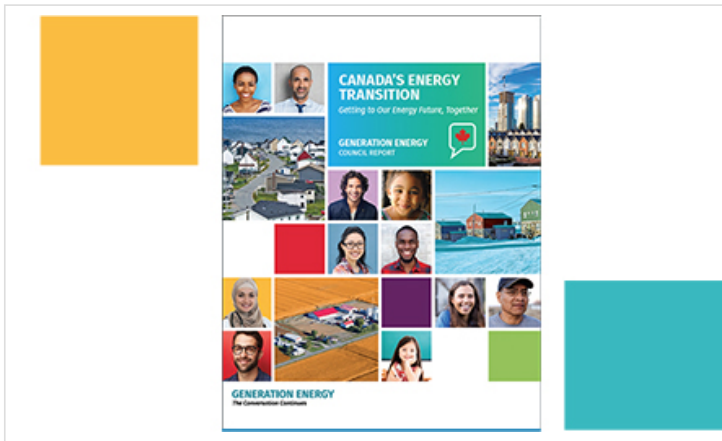
1. "A portfolio-wide climate change risk analysis to determine the impact of fossil fuels on BCI's public equity investments in the context of the 2°C limit. And, subsequent disclosure of all findings to pension members.
2. Divestment. The surest way to address the financial and moral risks associated with investing in the fossil fuel industry is to start the process of divestment: freezing any new investment and developing a plan to first remove high-risk companies from portfolios, particularly coal and oil sands producers, and then moving toward sector-wide divestment.
3. Reinvest divested funds in more sustainable stocks. The International Energy Agency estimates that trillions of dollars of investment are needed in the renewables sector to support the transition away from fossil fuels."

The report is part of the [Corporate Mapping Project \(CMP\)](#), jointly led by the University of Victoria, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Parkland Institute. CMP is a research and public engagement initiative investigating power dynamics within the fossil fuel industry.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Divestment](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Council delivers recommendations for Canada's energy transition, including "cleaner oil and gas"

Posted on [June 28, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The federal government established a [Generation Energy consultation](#) process in 2017, to inform an energy policy for a low-carbon future. That process concluded when the appointed Generation Energy Council presented its [Report](#) to Canada's Minister of Natural Resources on June 28. The report, titled *Canada's Energy Transition: Getting to our Energy Future, Together*, identifies "four pathways that collectively will lead to the affordable, sustainable energy future": waste less energy, switch to clean power, use more renewable fuels, and produce cleaner oil and gas. The report outlines concrete actions, milestones for each of these pathways – most problematic of which is the pathway cleaner oil and gas. Each pathway also includes a general statement re the "tools" required, giving passing mention to "Skill and Talent Attraction and Development".

The priorities for the "cleaner oil and gas" pathway include: "reducing emissions per unit of oil or natural gas produced; • improving the cost competitiveness of Canadian oil and gas; and • expanding the scope of value-added oil and gas products and services for both domestic and export markets." The report lauds the potential of Carbon Capture Use and Storage (CCUS), as well as the economic value of the petrochemical industry. Amongst the milestones in this pathway: "By 2025, reduce methane emissions by 40 to 45 percent from 2012 levels, with ongoing improvements thereafter... By 2030, reduce life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions for oil sands extraction to levels lower than competing crudes in global markets... Develop a trusted and effective regulatory system, including a life-cycle approach to greenhouse gas emissions, as measured by objective third party assessment of key attributes relative to competing jurisdictions... By 2030, a more diversified mix of oil and gas products, services and solutions to domestic and global markets has a measurably significant impact on industry and government revenues."

The Council was co-chaired by Merran Smith (Clean Energy Canada and Simon Fraser University) and Linda Coady (Enbridge Canada); members are listed [here](#). The Council heard from over 380,000 Canadians in an online discussion forum and in person. An impressive archive of submissions and commissioned studies, some previously published and some unique, is [available here](#). Authors include government departments, academics, business and industry associations, and think tanks.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [carbon capture and storage](#), [Clean energy industry](#), [electricity sector](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Energy policy](#), [Methane Emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to lead a workplace discussion on climate change

Posted on **June 28, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In June, the National Environment program of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE/SCFP) shared online the materials for a workshop on [How to lead a workplace discussion on Climate Change](#) . The materials consist of a 28-slide PowerPoint presentation, Speaking notes and Tips for facilitators, in English and [French versions](#) . It provides labour-focused information and interactive discussion tools on “how climate change is affecting our planet, our communities and our economy”, and although the content is specific to CUPE – presenting examples from CUPE jobs and CUPE policy statements, it offers an excellent model for other unions.

CUPE has a long history of climate change related educational materials, including: [Healthy, Clean & GREEN: A Workers' Action Guide to a Greener Workplace](#) (2015), which encourages workplace behaviours such as waste reduction, environmental committees and environmental audits; [How to form a workplace environment Committee](#) ; and an online, [interactive Eco-audit tool](#) to workers score their workplace behaviours related to energy conservation, recycling, water use, cleaning products, transportation, and workplace meetings. A very early document was the [CUPE Green Bargaining Guide](#) , published in 2008 and which provided examples of collective agreement language on many issues, including conservation, commuting, and establishing an environment committee . Most of these examples have also been incorporated in the [ACW Green Collective Agreements database](#), [here](#).

The [Canadian Union of Public Employees \(CUPE/SCFP\)](#) is Canada's largest union, with over 650,000 members in every province, representing workers in health care, emergency services, education, early learning and child care, municipalities, social services, libraries, utilities, transportation, airlines and more. All CUPE materials are available in English or French.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [CUPE](#), [green collective bargaining](#), [labour education materials](#), [labour union policies](#), [Workplace Environment Committees](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Expert Panel proposes 54 measures for climate adaptation

Posted on [June 28, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Results was commissioned by the federal government in August 2017, and on June 26, the Panel released its report, [Measuring Progress on Adaptation and Climate Resilience](#).

The [press release](#) is [here](#) , the [French version](#) is [here](#) .

The mandate of the Expert Panel was to propose indicators to the Government of Canada to measure the overall progress on adaptation and climate resilience, aligned with the thematic pillars of the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#). Accordingly, the Panel winnowed down their recommendations to 54 indicators, presented in five themes/chapters: Protecting and Improving Human Health and Well-Being; Supporting Particularly Vulnerable Regions; Reducing Climate-Related Hazards and Disaster Risks; Building Climate Resilience through Infrastructure; and Translating Scientific Information and Indigenous Knowledge into Action. [“It's essential that Canadians act now' on climate change: federal report”](#) appeared in the [National Observer](#) as a summary.

Stepping briefly beyond the adaptation mandate, the report also states: “While the focus for this report is on monitoring and evaluating progress on climate change adaptation, the Expert Panel stresses the importance of Canada's role in mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and advocates for resilience measures that reflect the transition to a low carbon society.”

The Chair of the Expert Panel was Dr. Blair Feltmate, Head of the [Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo, Ontario](#). The [Panel members](#), listed [here](#), were drawn from academia, Indigenous organizations and governments, the private sector, municipal government, NGO's and the youth organization [Starfish Canada](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Adaptation](#), [Climate Preparedness](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Converting fleets to electric vehicles: examples include buses, UPS delivery, and the U.S. Postal Service

Posted on **June 27, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The federal government's announcement of [new fuel-efficiency standards for light-duty trucks and buses](#) on June 14 presents an opportunity for electric vehicles in Canada, according to an article by Clean Energy Canada. "[Electric buses and trucks a big \(rig\) opportunity for Canadian innovators](#)" argues that the new regulations will limit the lifespan of heavy- and medium-duty trucks in Canada, by requiring the older, more polluting vehicles to be replaced by cleaner vehicles. The article provides an overview of examples.



Canadian examples: An article from *Corporate Knights* magazine in January 2018: "[The e-bus revolution has arrived](#)". In March, Winnipeg Transit released the [first Report](#) on its [Bus Electrification Demonstration Project](#) which began in 2015 (summarized by the CBC [here](#)). Winnipeg is home to the New Flyer Industries, which manufactures the [battery-electric buses in use](#). The government of Quebec announced its [Sustainable Mobility Plan](#) in April 2018, with an emphasis on transit and electrification. New Flyer buses, along with those from Nova Bus from Quebec are being tested in the [Pan-Ontario](#) and [Pan-Canadian Electric Bus Demonstration and Integration Trials](#), launched in April 2018 and coordinated by Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC- CRITUC). Their [CUTRIC-CRITUC news site](#) provides updates; their 2018 Biennial Forum, [Building Low-Carbon Smart Mobility Projects Across Canada](#), gathered industry players in Montreal, June 21 and 22.

U.S. News: A June 21 article in the *New York Times* cites many examples of electric fleet conversion. "[Buses, Delivery Vans and Garbage Trucks Are the Electric Vehicles Next Door](#)" in the (June 21) highlights the Antelope Valley Transit Authority in Los Angeles County, which intends to replace all diesel buses with 80 fully-electric ones in 2018; the Chicago Transit Authority (planning to buy 20 electric buses); San Francisco (will convert to electric-only bus procurement starting in 2025, aiming for an [all-electric fleet by 2035](#)), as well as the Los Angeles Sanitation department for garbage trucks, Duke Energy for pick-up trucks. An article in *Cleantechnica*, "[UPS Places Order For 950 Workhorse N-GEN Electric Delivery Vans](#)" describes Workhorse products, which include the [N-GEN vans](#) sold to UPS and which are also competing (with partner VT Hackney) in the US Postal Service procurement process for [Next Generation Delivery Vehicles](#). The N-GEN vans offer an option to include the [Horsefly autonomous delivery drones](#).



The Transportation Electrification Accord (TEA) was officially launched in Portland, Oregon at the EV Roadmap 11 conference on June 19. In fact, the Accord was first signed in November 2017, according to the [Sierra Club](#) press release

which describes it and lists the original signatories, including the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers District Nine](#), Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, as well as [Plug In America](#), and industry organizations Advanced Energy Economy, Energy Foundation, Enervee, Illinois Citizens Utility Board, Proterra, and Siemens. Honda and General Motors signed on at the June 19 launch.

The “Accord” is a voluntary statement of eleven principles, meant to educate policymakers and inspire change. The first two principles are: 1. There is a clear case on both policy and regulatory grounds for electrifying transportation, which can provide benefits to all consumers (including the socioeconomically disadvantaged), advance economic development, create jobs, provide grid services, integrate more renewable energy, and cut air pollution and greenhouse gases.

2. Electrified transportation should include not only light-duty passenger vehicles, but also heavy-duty vehicles (e.g., transit buses and delivery trucks), as well as off-road equipment (e.g., airport and port electrification equipment).

Globally: A March 2018 report from Bloomberg New Energy Finance and the C-40 Leadership Initiative provides a great overview of statistics and analysis: [Electric buses in cities](#) and demonstrates the strength of China’s leadership. The city of Shensen has been seen as the poster child of this strength – for example, read the blog from the World Resources Institute in April 2018 “[How did Shenshen China build the world’s largest electric bus fleet?](#)”. The *Global EV Outlook 2018* released by the International Energy Association at the end of May focuses mostly on the growth of personal vehicles, but reported that the stock of electric buses rose from 345,000 in 2016 to 370,000 in 2017 , (with electric two-wheelers at 250 million). Growth has been driven almost entirely by China, which accounts for more than 99% of both electric bus and two-wheeler stock.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [alternative fuel vehicles](#), [China](#), [electric buses](#), [electric trucks](#), [Electric Vehicles](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal government sets out new requirements for Infrastructure funds – climate lens, community benefits

Posted on [June 25, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Investing in Canada Plan](#) of the federal government will invest more than \$180 billion over 12 years for public transit projects, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation, and Canada’s rural and northern communities. Two recent press releases define how the program funds will be awarded: at the start of June , [Infrastructure Canada announced](#) that proposals under the Investing in Canada program, as well as the [Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund](#), and those submitted to the [Smart Cities Challenge](#), will be required to use a “climate lens”, to assess “how their projects will contribute to or reduce carbon pollution, and to consider climate change risks in the location, design, and planned operation of a project.” The General Guidance document for Climate Lens [is here](#) .

A [second press release](#), on June 22, announced a new Community Employment Benefits requirement – under which applicants for major projects will be required to set targets for training and employment opportunities for at least three groups targeted by the CEB initiative: Indigenous peoples, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, youth, apprentices, and recent immigrants, as well as procurement opportunities for small-to-medium sized businesses and social enterprises. The [General Guidance document](#) for Community Enterprise Benefits explains the administrative details.



Ontario became the first Canadian jurisdiction to promote community benefits, through the *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act 2015* , and in May 2018, the province announced five new community benefits projects under its Long-term Infrastructure plan.

Engage and Empower , an April 2018 report from the Mowat Centre at University of Toronto, discusses the Ontario Community Benefits framework, and sets out principles which are applicable outside Ontario. It states: “it is essential to engage that community to understand the types of benefits that are most aligned with its priority needs, and to continue this engagement throughout the project as impacts are being measured and evaluated. This process of defining and engaging the community requires an ongoing relationship built on trust and collaboration ... It is critical that governments avoid an overly prescriptive approach and recognize, instead, that communities are dynamic and robust ecosystems – with existing networks and capabilities – and desire autonomy in the process of defining, articulating and negotiating the benefits to accrue through an infrastructure project.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Community benefits](#), [community benefits agreements](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Standing Committee recommendations for a greener built environment include training

Posted on **June 22, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 18, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development presented their latest and 17th report, *Better Buildings for a Low-Carbon Future* . The Committee mandate included the collective of

residences, commercial buildings, and institutional buildings – which are responsible for approximately 12% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

The research for the Standing Committee report began in February 2018 and consisted of four meetings, during which Committee members heard from 19 witnesses and received five written briefs from witnesses – including government officials, industry associations such as the Building Owners and Managers Association, real estate developers such as Landmark Homes, Canada Green Building Council, Passive House Canada – but no labour unions or worker organizations. Testimony is available from [this link](#), and a [Brief from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada](#) has also been made public.

The report summarizes the provisions related to the built environment in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Energy and Climate Change, also available in the federal [2018 Status Report on the Framework](#), discusses the building codes in Canada, and addresses the unique situations of heritage buildings and buildings in Canada's North. The Committee makes 21 specific recommendations, including:

#1 “the National Research Council, working with the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes, publish the national model energy codes for both new and existing buildings as soon as possible, and for existing buildings no later than fiscal year 2022-23”;

#4 “The Committee recommends that Employment and Social Development Canada **ensure that programs exist or are established to address the labour transition required so that skilled personnel are available to implement netzero energy ready codes**;

#6 “The Committee recommends that Infrastructure Canada work to provide significant funding in order to accelerate energy retrofits of commercial, institutional, and multi-residential buildings in the public and private sectors, such as through the Canada Infrastructure Bank”;

#10 “The Committee recommends that Natural Resources Canada, the National Research Council, and Environment and Climate Change Canada **include building operator and building inspector training as part of federal funding, research, and incentive programs aimed at improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment**”;

#16 “The Committee requests that the federal government focus more attention on its Greening Government Strategy and report back to the Committee on its progress by the end of 2018 .”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Building Codes](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Training](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Doug Ford has begun to dismantle Ontario's climate leadership – Step 1, exit the cap-and-trade agreement

Posted on [June 21, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



As a result of the provincial election on June 7, Progressive Conservative leader Doug Ford will take power as the premier of Ontario on June 29, 2018. Even before that hand-over date, he has begun to make the changes many feared – announcing on June 15 that [Ontario will exit the cap and trade market](#) of the Western Climate Initiative (which includes California and Quebec) and on June 19, [cancelling the \\$377-million Green Ontario Fund](#), financed by the proceeds of cap-and-trade auctions and which provided consumer incentives for energy efficiency improvements. On June 21, [he committed to keep the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station](#) in operation until 2024 – in the name of protecting 4,500 local jobs and an additional 3,000 jobs province-wide. Some general articles about the Ford government appeared in *The Tyee* “[Green hopes, NDP fears, and PC Dreams: The challenges that await Ontario in Ford Nation](#)” (June 15); “[What does a Doug Ford victory mean for the climate?](#)” in *The Narwhal* (by DeSmog Canada), and “[Doug Ford’s Environmental policies light on details, advocates say](#)” on CBC News (June 13).

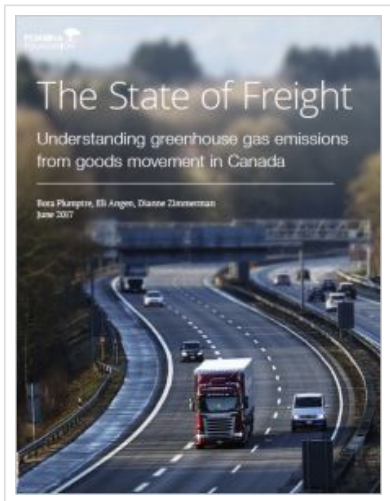
Ford’s decision to end the cap and trade market has many implications – the possibility of lawsuits from investors and companies who had bought carbon credits, as well as a direct confrontation with the federal government, which requires all provinces to enact carbon pricing by 2019, under the Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Energy and Climate Change. Additionally, the federal government just passed Bill C-74, which includes Part 5: [The Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act](#) on June 14, the day before Ford’s announcement. For discussion of the carbon pricing issue, see “[Ontario’s Doug Ford says the province is abandoning its price on carbon pollution](#)” in the National Observer (June 15); “[PC’s will end Ontario cap and trade program, Ford vows](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (June 15). An official reaction from Environmental Defence is [here](#), with more detail in their blog, “[What you need to know about Ontario’s carbon pricing drama](#)”. From the Ecofiscal Commission, “[Tread Carefully: Ontario’s cap-and-trade system meets a fork in the road](#)” (June 8), and “[Can Ontario hit its targets without carbon pricing?](#)” (June 21), which discusses the two remaining options for reducing emissions: regulations and incentives. Finally, the arguments are summed up in the Unifor press release, “[Unifor urges Premier-designate Doug Ford to maintain the cap and trade system](#)”: “Workers in Ontario need forward-looking policies with the intention to build a green economy, but instead Ford announced his intention to cancel a successful program and pick an unnecessary fight with the federal government.... Workers accept that climate change is real and need our government to lead with a real, predictable plan to reduce emissions and grow green jobs.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [Ontario](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New fuel regulations aim to reduce emissions from Canada’s freight industry

Posted on [June 20, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

With freight transportation producing approximately 10 percent of Canada's total emissions, on June 14, Canada's Environment and Climate Change Minister [announced](#) new carbon-pollution regulations for heavy-duty vehicles, defined as "school buses, transport tractors and trailers, garbage trucks, delivery vans, and larger pick-up trucks". The regulations begin in 2020, and become increasingly stringent with each passing year – with a goal to reduce carbon pollution by approximately 6 million tonnes a year by 2030.



The Pembina Institute [welcomes the regulations here](#), with reference to its detailed report on the issue: *State of Freight* (June 2017), and also an OpEd from *Policy Options* in April 2018, "[On vehicle emissions standards, it's time Canada divorced the U.S.](#)". "[McKenna touts new climate pollution controls for large trucks and buses](#)" in the *National Observer* (June 14) includes a discussion of the Canada-U.S. alignment over fuel standards.

In May, the Conference Board of Canada released [Greening Freight: Pathways to GHG Reductions in the Trucking Sector](#), which recommends several ways to help reduce emissions from freight transport, including the adoption of established fuel-saving technologies, carbon pricing, and disruptive technologies such as electric zero-emission and driverless trucks. The report is available from [this link](#) (free, registration required).

Also on this topic, an article by researchers from the University of British Columbia's Clean Energy Research Centre appeared in the April 2018 issue of *Energy Policy*. "[Electrification of road freight transport: Policy implications in British Columbia](#)" concludes that all-electric trucks could reduce 64% of the emissions from road freight transport in the province by 2040, if 65% of trucks ran on 100% hydroelectric power. However, the demand created would overwhelm the supply available – therefore, the authors call for new policies "to support diversified renewable [electricity generation](#) and low-carbon pathways. For example, [carbon capture and sequestration](#) coupled with provincial reserves of natural gas can enable low-carbon [hydrogen production](#) and decrease the electricity requirements for zero-emission vehicles in B.C." An [article](#) on the CBC website summarizes the academic article.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [alternative fuel vehicles](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Fuel Efficiency](#), [Low Carbon Fuel Standard](#), [Trucking Industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How local government policies can encourage energy efficiency jobs and training

Posted on [June 20, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Through the Local Government Lens: Developing the Energy Efficiency Workforce, is a report released on June 13 by the American Council for an Energy- Efficient Economy (ACEEE). It cites data from the *2018 U.S. Energy & Employment Report*, which reported that there are 2.25 million efficiency jobs in the U.S. currently – 1.27 million of which are in the construction trades, followed by 450,000 in professional and business services. The report dives more deeply into the demographics and characteristics of the energy efficiency workforce, and discusses the unique challenges of workforce development policies – the need to replace a retiring workforce, funding uncertainty for job creation and infrastructure, a need to encourage diversity, and a complex set of stakeholders, given that there is no single educational or skills path for efficiency workers. The report includes unions and union-led training in its discussion of stakeholders and in its recommended strategies for workforce development policies.

Case studies with various approaches are presented from across the U.S., with the sole Canadian example of Vancouver, B.C. For example: Boston, where training in energy building management is provided to city and utility workers at local community colleges; New Orleans, where the city coordinates with U.S. Green Building Council, local community colleges, the New Orleans Office of Supplier Diversity, and the Urban League of Louisiana to provide efficiency-related training to low-income community members and minority- and women-owned businesses; and Los Angeles, which has established a Cleantech Incubator to attract new businesses and private-sector investment to the city. Other U.S. cities discussed are New York City, Orlando Florida, and Columbus Ohio.



Vancouver, B.C. launched several initiatives to teach skills required to build in accordance with its [Zero Emissions Building Plan](#), approved in 2016. The city plans to subsidize training for builders and developers to learn more about passive house design standards, technical building requirements, economic and energy impacts, and energy modeling tools. Vancouver will also contribute funds to the [Zero Emissions Building Centre of Excellence](#), a nonprofit-run collaborative platform that will compile and disseminate zero-emission building educational resources to the local building industry.

A [blog](#) summarizes the report; it is available free from [this link](#), registration is required.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Construction Industry](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Green Jobs](#), [local job creation](#), [Municipal Government](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recognition of the mental health impacts of flooding and wildfires in Canada – B.C. offers support

Posted on [June 18, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A June 2018 report from the [Intact Centre for Climate Adaptation](#) at the University of Waterloo presents statistics about the rising financial costs of weather-related disasters in Canada, and profiles the results of 100 door-to-door interviews with households in flooded communities around Burlington Ontario. *After the Flood: The Impact of Climate on Mental Health and Lost Time From Work* found that members of households which had been flooded experienced significantly more worry and stress than non-flooded households, and the worry and stress persisted even up to 3 years after the event. *After the Flood* also reported that 56% of flooded households had at least one working member who took time off work, and that the average time lost was seven days per flooded household (10 times greater than the average absenteeism for non-flooded workers).

The report cites official documents concerning the growing financial costs of disasters for example, the 2016 report from Canada's Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, *Estimates of the Average Annual Cost for Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements due to Weather Events* and includes a bibliography of the growing international public health literature concerning the health effects of weather disasters.



Other official recognition of the rising dangers of extreme weather events: in May 2018, the Province of British Columbia, under the leadership of Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, [announced mental health support services](#) for those who might be impacted by re-living their experiences from the record-breaking 2017 wildfire season. In partnership with the B.C. branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the program directs people to support services through a [Facebook campaign](#) called Talk in Tough Times, and a phone-based support program.

Federally, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities [announced](#) the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund in May 2018, a 10-year national program that will invest \$2 billion in infrastructure projects such as diversion channels, wetland restorations, wildfire barriers and setback levees, to help communities better withstand natural hazards such as floods, wildfires, seismic events and droughts.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [absenteeism](#), [British Columbia](#), [climate change and mental health](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [forest fires](#), [natural disasters](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

German unions call for mass retraining to support the electrification of vehicle manufacturing by 2030

Posted on [June 18, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 7, the European unions [IG Metall](#) and [IndustriAll Europe](#) released a report which models the employment impacts of the possible fuel efficiency standards required to further decarbonize the European automotive industry. The report,

whose title translates as *Effects of vehicle electrification on employment in Germany*, presents three scenarios: the first, close to existing regulations, will require a 2030 automotive fleet consisting of 15% plug-in hybrids and 25% battery-electric vehicles, and is forecast to result in an 11% loss of employment by 2030, or 67,000 jobs. The second and third scenarios predict even more job loss – 108,000 or 210,000 across Europe.

In a [press release announcing the study](#), the automotive advisor of IG Metall and chairman of the automotive committee of IndustriAll Europe says: “We fully support the evolution towards a new automotive paradigm, but this has to happen in a socially acceptable way. It will require the combination of industrial and employment strategies. Mass training programmes will be needed while ambitious reconversion plans should avoid the decline of regions.... In this respect we should not forget that many regions all over Europe are heavily integrated in the automotive supply chains. Equally, we should not forget that thousands of SMEs producing conventional components are at risk as they miss the necessary financial resources, the research capacity and the technologies to invest in alternative products. Also, the aftermarket and its 4m jobs will be severely disrupted as electric vehicles require much less maintenance”.

The report is not available in English, but is summarized in the press releases [by IndustriAll](#) and [by IG Metal](#) (in German, use the “translate” feature) . It was initiated by IG Metall, along with car manufacturers BMW, Volkswagen and Daimler, automotive suppliers Robert Bosch, ZF Friedrichshafen, Schaeffler, and Mahle and the German Association of the Automotive Industry. Research was conducted by the [Fraunhofer Institute](#) for Ergonomics and Organization (IAO) in Stuttgart , using data from the companies involved.



In March 2018, IndustriAll announced that it was one of the stakeholders in a newly-approved EU Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills in the automotive industry (part of the New Skills Agenda for Europe). The [March press release](#) characterized the automotive sector as “in turmoil because of so many structural changes taking place at the same time: the ever stricter emission standards and the resulting quest for alternative powertrains, the digitalisation of production processes, automated driving, the increasing connectivity of cars with the outside world, development of mobility as a service.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [autonomous vehicles](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [employment impacts](#), [Germany](#) | [1 Reply](#)

G7 Summit makes some progress on Just Transition, plastics pollution – but not on fossil fuel subsidies

Posted on [June 11, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



With the chaos emanating from Donald Trump's performance at the [G7 Summit](#) hosted by Canada on June 8 and 9, it would be easy to miss the news about one of the five Summit themes : [Working Together on Climate Change, Oceans, and Clean Energy](#) . But according to a brief statement by Canada's Climate Action Network, [G7 Stands its Ground](#) : "The G7 should be congratulated for publicly acknowledging for the first time the need for a just transition.....Canada showed leadership by stickhandling this climate outcome as the G7 host. "

In contrast to the Final Communiqué of 2017, which contained only one paragraph on climate change, the [2018 Official Communiqué](#) includes four lengthy paragraphs (#23 – 27, including #26 which is the independent statement of the United States). Included: "Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the European Union reaffirm their strong commitment to implement the Paris Agreement, through ambitious climate action; in particular through reducing emissions while stimulating innovation, enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening and financing resilience and reducing vulnerability; as well as **ensuring a just transition**, including increasing efforts to mobilize climate finance from a wide variety of sources. Also, Recognizing that healthy oceans and seas directly support the livelihoods, food security and economic prosperity of billions of people, We endorse the [Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities](#), and will improve oceans knowledge, promote sustainable oceans and fisheries, support resilient coasts and coastal communities and address ocean plastic waste and marine litter. Recognizing that plastics play an important role in our economy and daily lives but that the current approach to producing, using, managing and disposing of plastics and poses a significant threat to the marine environment, to livelihoods and potentially to human health, we the Leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the European Union endorse the [Ocean Plastics Charter](#)."

Background: As usual, several reports and position statements were released in advance of the international meetings. The Climate and Energy Working Group of the G7 Global Task Force, (a broad coalition of over 40 civil society organisations) released their [Recommendations](#) on a full range of climate change issues, and a separate Brief titled [It's Time for G7 countries to commit to Just Transition](#) , which concluding with this: "Canada, as President of the G7, and building on the work of the Task Force on the Just Transition for Canadian Coal-Power Workers and Communities has the opportunity to elevate this discussion, and promote mainstreaming of just transition principles across all G7 priorities and discussions for the upcoming years."

Other position statements: [The Global Investor statement to G7 leaders](#), signed by 319 investors representing more than USD \$28 trillion in assets , and a [Statement from the We Mean Business Coalition](#) . Both business-oriented groups affirm their commitment to the Paris Agreement and made recommendations.

Are the G7 on track to phase out fossil fuel subsidies by 2025?

Read more at:
odi.org/g7-scorecard

#G7scorecard

Canada wastes over \$4 billion a year supporting fossil fuels.

Despite leading in ending support for fossil fuel-based power, Canada scores worst in ending support for oil and gas production.

Logos: ODI, IISD, OILCHANGE

Also, from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Oil Change International (OCI), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Global Subsidies Initiative (GSI) : the *G7 Fossil Fuel Subsidy Report Card* , released on June 4 . It states that G7 governments continue to provide at least \$100 billion in subsidies to the production and use of coal, oil and gas, and ranks the G7 countries according to seven indicators: transparency; pledges and commitments; ending support for coal mining; ending support for exploration; ending support for oil and gas production; ending support for fossil fuel-based power; and ending support for fossil fuel use. Using these categories, [Canada ranked 3rd](#) out of the G7 countries overall, after France (1st) and Germany (2nd), followed by U.K., Italy, Japan, and the U.S. (7th). This, against the backdrop of an [Ekos Research public opinion poll](#) from March 2018 that shows Canadians want an end to fossil fuel subsidies in virtually every part of the country and across gender, age, region, education, and income. For a new discussion of the issue and the *Scorecard* report, see "[Canada leads G7 in oil and gas subsidies](#)" in *The Narwhal*.

The *National Observer* coverage of the entire G7 Summit is [here](#), with a focus on the trade dispute, but including "[G7 still negotiating as clock runs down on climate commitments](#)" and "[McKenna praises IKEA move to ban single-use plastics by 2020](#)" , which discusses the broader issue.

Reactions : A compilation of reactions appears in "[G7 Leaders isolate Trump on Climate](#)" in *The Energy Mix*, and CAN-RAC released a position paper in response *Shaping the Future: A new vision for civil society and the G7* .

Environmentalists, including [Greenpeace](#), called the Plastics Charter inadequate because it is voluntary, and focuses on recycling and repurposing, rather than reduction or an outright ban on single-use plastics. The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada (CIAC) and the Canadian Plastics Industry Association (CPIA) [released a statement of support](#) of the Ocean Plastics Charter on June 10 , also stating that its members: " had committed to goals of 100 per cent of plastics packaging being recyclable or recoverable by 2030 and 100 per cent of plastics packaging being reused, recycled, or recovered by 2040."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [G7](#), [International cooperation](#), [Just Transition](#), [Ocean Protection](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [Plastics Industry](#), [Water pollution](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian government spends \$4.5 billion taxpayers' dollars to buy Trans Mountain pipeline project and push expansion ahead

Posted on **May 29, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Despite strenuous and prolonged opposition from environmental and Indigenous activists in Canada and internationally, and two days before a deadline imposed by Texas corporation Kinder Morgan, Canada's Liberal government announced on May 29 that it will spend \$4.5 billion to buy the existing Trans Mountain pipeline and its associated infrastructure, so that a pipeline expansion can proceed under the ownership of a Crown corporation. The press release is [here](#) ; details of the transaction are here in a [Backgrounder](#) ; the text of the speech by Finance Minister Bill Morneau is [here](#) . Repeating the mantra of the Trudeau government, Morneau claims that the project is in the national interest, will preserve jobs, will reassure investors and improve the price for Canadian oil by expanding its market beyond the U.S. Morneau says the federal government does not plan to be a long-term owner and is in negotiations with interested investors, including Indigenous communities, pension funds (notably the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board) and the Alberta government.



In fact, the expansion pipeline, if built, would almost triple the amount of dilbit transported from Alberta to the British Columbia coast, from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels a day, and increase tanker traffic off B.C.'s coast from approximately five to 34 tankers a month. As recently as May 24, an [Open Letter](#) coordinated by Oil Change International and signed by over [200 groups](#) summed up the situation, stating there is a "... clear contradiction between Prime Minister Trudeau's unchecked support for the Kinder Morgan pipeline project and his commitments to Indigenous reconciliation through the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and his obligation to address climate change through the Paris Agreement." The letter notes that currently planned Canadian oil production would use up 16% of the world's carbon budget to keep temperatures below 1.5 degrees, or 7% of the budget for 2 degrees. Canada has less than 0.5% of the world's population.

Today's initial reaction to the government's decision has called it "astounding", "shameful", and an "historic blunder". From the CBC: "[Liberals to buy Trans Mountain pipeline for \\$4.5B to ensure expansion is built](#)" and "[Bill Morneau's Kinder Morgan surprise comes with huge price tag, lots of political risk: Chris Hall](#)". From *The National Observer* "[Trudeau government to buy troubled Trans Mountain pipeline for \\$4.5 billion](#)" ; "[BC Will Continue Legal Strategy to Oppose Pipeline After Federal Purchase, Premier Says](#)" in *The Tyee* . Toronto's *Globe and Mail* posted at least 6 items on the decision , including an [Explainer](#) , and Jeff Rubin's Opinion: "[Morneau had better options for Canada's Energy sector](#)" .

From Greenpeace Canada: "[Federal government volunteers to "captain the Titanic of tar sands oil pipelines" and risks \\$4.5B of Canadians' money in the process](#)" ; and [West Coast Environmental Law](#) reaction points out that "There are currently 14 legal challenges before the Federal Court of Appeal, alleging that the government failed in its constitutional duty to consult First Nations about the Trans Mountain project, and that the federal review had other regulatory flaws. Success in just one of those challenges could derail the underlying federal approvals."

In the *Victoria Times Colonist*, “Green Party Leader May calls pipeline decision ‘historic blunder’” ; John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia, released an [official statement](#) , and a jubilant Alberta Premier Rachel Notley is profiled in the CBC story, “Pick up those tools, folks, we have a pipeline to build,’ Alberta premier says “. Reaction from B.C. First Nations leaders is compiled in this [CBC story](#).

Social media reaction, as compiled by CBC , is [here](#) . The Dogwood Initiative has mounted a “Time for Bill Morneau to go” [online petition here](#) ; SumofUs has an [online petition here](#) , to urge the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board not to invest in Kinder Morgan. Direct emails can be sent to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca . Opposition continues and the story is not over.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [Climate change policy](#), [First Nations](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Oil pipelines](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

British Columbia sets new GHG reduction targets, reviews environmental assessment process

Posted on **May 24, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Amidst the noise and fury of the B.C.-Alberta feud over the Kinder Morgan TransMountain pipeline, the province of British Columbia is moving forward with reform of its climate change policies. On April 25, the [B.C. Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council released a detailed letter](#) to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy , describing the Council's principles, supporting much of the government's current direction, and making recommendations, based on the 2015 recommendations of the province's Climate Leadership Team. Shortly thereafter, on May 7, a [government press release](#) committed to a new provincial climate action strategy to be released in autumn 2018, including plans for GHG emission reduction for buildings and communities, industry and transportation sectors.

With that same press release, the government announced [Bill 34, the Climate Change Accountability Act](#), which amends the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act \(2007\)](#), repealing the emissions reduction target for 2020 (generally deemed unachievable) and sets new targets: reduction of GHG's by 40% from 2007 levels by 2030, 60% by 2040, and 80% by 2050. Accountability looms large in the responses to Bill 34. The [Pembina Institute](#) notes the failure of recent GHG emissions reductions, and calls for “a robust accountability mechanism to ensure history doesn't repeat itself”. In addition, Pembina notes that any development of emissions-intensive industries, such as liquefied natural gas, would jeopardize the province's climate progress.

In “[Looking for accountability in BC's Climate Change Accountability Act](#)”, West Coast Environment Law reviews B.C.'s emissions reduction progress , summarizes responses by other environmental groups to Bill 34, and recommends how the government can incorporate principles of accountability and transparency in its new policies. Similar concerns are discussed in “[A Carbon Budget Framework for BC: Achieving accountability and oversight](#)” by Marc Lee, in CCPA's *Policy Notes* (May 22).

Another policy issue under review in B.C. is environmental assessment, with a 12-member advisory committee [appointed in March 2018](#), a public discussion paper promised for May, and reforms to come in Fall. The government portal to the “Revitalization” process is [here](#) ; “[B.C. Moves Ahead With Review of Controversial Environmental Assessment Process](#)” (Mar 8) summarizes the situation. On May 9, twenty-three environmental, legal, social justice and community organizations released [Achieving Sustainability: A Vision for Next-Generation Environmental Assessment in British Columbia](#) , which calls for an independent environmental assessment body which will involve the public, and require decision-makers to demonstrate that their decisions are based on science and Indigenous knowledge. [A summary](#), with links to more detailed discussion is provided by West Coast Environmental Law. Analysis and practical examples are provided by Sarah Cox in “[Time For a Fix: B.C. Looks at Overhaul of Reviews for Mines, Dams and Pipelines](#)”, which appeared in April in the newly-named newsletter from DeSmog Canada, *The Narwhal*.

Unifor calls for federal leadership in Just Transition and a role for collectively-bargained protections

Posted on **May 24, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



More than sixty members of Unifor met federal Members of Parliament in Ottawa on May 24, to convey the union's positions on four major issues: pharmacare, child care, public control of airports, and Just Transition. The press release is [here](#) ; the four page Just Transition backgrounder is [here](#) . In it, the union expresses its broad support of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and carbon pricing, calls for federal policy leadership to ensure that workers do not bear the brunt of climate change-induced industrial restructuring, and offers specific recommendations.

[Unifor's Recommendations](#) are noteworthy in that they explicitly call for a role for collective bargaining (or worker representation in non-unionized workplaces). From the text: "Unifor sees two potential avenues to finance Just Transition. The first means is through the new federal carbon tax, which need not be entirely revenue neutral. A portion of the proceeds could be used to create a 'Green Economy Bank' or some such fiscal mechanism. The second option is to bolster the Low Carbon Economy Fund, which is already explicitly committed to job creation, but should be geared towards good, green job creation, and widen its mission." Unifor calls for "Labour market impact assessments to monitor the emergent effects of climate related policy; Community benefit agreements, to support regions that are more heavily dependent on carbon-intensive economic activities; The promotion of green economy retraining and skills upgrading, through appropriate funding for postsecondary institutions. This includes mandatory apprenticeship ratio's linked to college training programs and skills trades certification processes; Preferential hiring for carbon-displaced workers, including relocation assistance; Income support, employment insurance flexibility and pension bridging for workers in carbon-intensive economic regions and industries; Tax credits, accelerated depreciation, grants and/or investment support for firms and industries that bear an extraordinary burden of change; **In unionized workplaces, there needs to be a role carved out for the bargaining agent in negotiating and facilitating workplace transition. In non-unionized workplaces we need to envisage a role for workers to provide input on adjustment processes and procedures.**"

[Unifor](#) is Canada's largest private sector union, with more than 315,000 members across the country in climate-vulnerable sectors such as energy, mining, fishing, as well as automobile and auto parts manufacturing. Some of its existing collective agreements, compiled in the [ACW database](#), have long-established workplace environment committees.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [green collective bargaining](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Retraining](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. energy employment report: statistics by gender, age, race, and union status

Posted on **May 22, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The *2018 U.S. Energy & Employment Report (USEER)* was released in May, reporting that the traditional Energy and Energy Efficiency sectors employ approximately 6.5 million Americans, with a job growth rate of approximately 133,000 net new jobs in 2017 – approximately 7% of total U.S. new job growth. The report provides detailed employment data for energy sectors including Electric Power Generation and Fuels Production (including biofuels, solar, wind, hydro and nuclear) and Electricity Transmission, Distribution and Storage. It also includes two energy end-use sectors: Energy Efficiency and Motor Vehicle production (including alternative fuel vehicles and parts production). It is important to note that, unlike many other sources, this survey includes only direct jobs, and not indirect and induced jobs.

In addition to overall employment totals, the report provides an in-depth view of the hiring difficulty, in-demand occupations, and demographic composition of the workforce – including breakdowns by gender, age, race and by union composition. As an example for solar electric power generation: “about a third of the solar workforce in 2017 was female, roughly two in ten workers are Hispanic or Latino, and under one in ten are Asian or are Black or African American. In 2017, solar projects involving PV technologies had a higher concentration of workers aged 55 and over, compared to CSP technologies.”

The previous USEER reports for 2016 and 2017 were compiled and published by the U.S. Department of Energy. In 2018, under the Trump Administration, two non-profit organizations, the National Association of State Energy Officials and the [Energy Futures Initiative](#), took over the task of compiling the data, using the identical survey instrument developed by the DOE. Timing was coordinated so that year over year comparisons with the previous surveys are possible. Peer review of the report was performed by Robert Pollin, (Political Economy Research Institute) and James Barrett, (Visiting Fellow, American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy). The overview website, with free data tables at the state level, is [here](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [Clean energy industry](#), [Electric power generation](#), [Gender](#), [Job Creation](#), [Labour Market](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to increase women`s representation in green industries

Posted on **May 17, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Two new reports were released in May in the Smart Prosperity Clean Economy Working Paper Series. *Identifying Promising Policies and Practices for Promoting Gender Equity in Global Green Employment* by Bipasha Baruah, synthesizes and analyses existing literature on women's employment in manufacturing, construction and transportation – “brown” sectors which are important in the transition to a green economy. From the paper: “The literature points to four overarching barriers that exist for women who seek to enter and remain in these fields: lack of information and awareness about employment in these sectors, gender bias and gender stereotyping, masculinist work culture and working conditions, and violence against women. ... Most policies designed to address women's underrepresentation in these fields tend to be reactive responses that do not engage adequately with broader societal structures and institutions that produce and maintain inequality. Improving lighting in construction sites in order to prevent sexual assaults against women and requiring women to work in pairs instead of alone are classic examples of reactive policies that end up reinforcing social hierarchies rather than challenging them... Raising broader societal awareness about the benefits of gender equity, and about women's equal entitlement to employment in all fields, is as crucial as policy reforms and state or corporate actions that protect women's interests and facilitate their agency.” The discussion includes interesting observations about women's challenges in engineering professions and in apprenticeships.

The second paper, also by Bipasha Baruah, is *Creating and Optimizing Employment Opportunities for Women in the Clean Energy Sector in Canada*. This paper has been released previously and was highlighted in April 2018 in the *Work and Climate Change Report*, along with *Women and Climate Change Impacts and Action in Canada: Feminist, Indigenous and Intersectional Perspectives*, published by Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces in Canada, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience. Both reports note the underrepresentation of women in the clean energy industry and call for improvements in workforce training and hiring; the working paper by Bipasha Baruah emphasizes the need for change in societal attitudes.

The publisher, Smart Prosperity is based at the University of Ottawa, and announced major new funding at the end of March 2018, which will enable new research in a “Greening Growth Partnership” initiative. [Click here](#) for information about the funding and the international experts who will be participating in Smart Prosperity research.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Construction Industry](#), [disadvantaged workers](#), [First Nations](#), [Gender Equality](#), [Women in Renewable Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ILO Report projects 18 million net new jobs in a green economy, and highlights policy role for social actors, including unions

Posted on **May 16, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The International Labor Organization [released](#) its annual *World Employment and Social Outlook Report* for 2018 on May 14, with the theme: *Greening with Jobs*. In an economy where global warming is limited to 2°C, the report projects job losses and job creation, both within and amongst sectors, to 2030. A net increase of approximately 18 million jobs globally will result from adoption of sustainable practices, such as changes in the energy mix, the projected growth in the use of electric vehicles, and increases in energy efficiency in existing and future buildings.

This landmark report also includes analysis and discussion of climate impacts on working conditions, job quality, and productivity, (including estimates of impacts of extreme weather conditions), and the need for social dialogue and a legal and policy framework which promotes just transition. Of particular interest is the discussion of the role of social dialogue, which includes examples of green provisions in international and national agreements – and on page 94, highlights green provisions in Canadian collective agreements, based on [the database compiled by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project](#).

Other key findings from [the press release](#) :

Of the 163 economic sectors analysed, only 14 will suffer employment losses of more than 10,000 jobs worldwide – hardest hit: petroleum extraction and petroleum refining (1 million or more jobs).

2.5 million jobs will be created in renewables-based electricity, offsetting some 400,000 jobs lost in fossil fuel-based electricity generation.

6 million jobs can be created by transitioning towards a 'circular economy' which includes activities like recycling, repair, rent and remanufacture.

A 5-page summary is available in [English](#) and in [French](#). The full report, [Greening with Jobs](#), is [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [decent work](#), [green bargaining](#), [Green Economy](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [international agreements](#), [Just Transition](#), [social dialogue](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ETUC Guide to best practices for union impact on EU climate change and Just Transition policies

Posted on **May 15, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



At a [conference](#) in Brussels on May 15, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) released *Involving trade unions in Climate action to build a Just transition*, a Guide which makes the arguments for why unions should care about climate change, and provides recommendations and best practice examples from unions in the European Union. The ETUC press release summary is [here](#), in which the ETUC General Secretary states: “The ETUC’s new guide is about the policies, initiatives and governance involved in a just transition. At the end of the day our key message is that there is no just transition without workers participation. Imposed solutions do not work, we need dialogue to make climate progress.” A YouTube summary from ETUC is [here](#).

The 48-page guide is packed with information and examples where trade unions have made impacts on national policies. It began with a questionnaire circulated to ETUC affiliates, and also includes insights from five workshops involving experts from EU unions and “relevant institutions”, organized around five thematic areas: employment and working conditions; governance and trade union participation; education; training and skills; social protection; and internal capacity building for trade union organizations (how to mobilize and prepare unionists to engage in the transition).

The Guide offers analysis about the role of trade unions, and states that union involvement in climate change policy development is on the rise, though it varies widely across EU member countries. The main message is that a Just Transition requires workers’ participation and dialogue. Some of the specific thematic recommendations include:

Promote economic diversification in regions and industries most affected by the transition;

Negotiate agreements at sectoral and company level to map the future evolution of skills needs and the creation of sectoral skills councils, using the ETUC guide on *“Restructuring and collective competences”* (2013) ;

At sectoral and workplace levels, extend the scope of collective bargaining to green transition issues to discuss the impact on employment and wages of the decarbonisation process and the impacts on skills needs and health and safety at work;

Establish dialogue with all relevant stakeholders and regional authorities to identify and manage the social impacts of climate policies;

In line with the [ILO guidelines on a just transition](#) , promote the establishment of adequate social protection systems based on the principles of universality, equal treatment and continuity, providing healthcare, income security and social services;

Encourage internal union capacity and increase members’ participation by developing and strengthening a network of green representatives at the workplace level, and involve workers in concrete actions aiming to reduce the environmental footprint of their company.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [case studies](#), [European Trade Union Confederation \(ETUC\)](#), [European Union](#), [green bargaining](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Air pollution savings by substituting Videoconferencing for airline travel

Posted on **May 14, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

According to a ranking by Project Drawdown, businesses around the world could eliminate 82 billion hours of air travel time for employees by substituting travel to meetings with high-quality video conferencing systems – a work practice with the potential to cut atmospheric carbon dioxide by 1.99 gigatons by 2050. This solution, dubbed Telepresence, is ranked as 63rd out of 100 solutions to global warming in the [Project Drawdown study](#) which compares the cost and GHG savings of three adoption scenarios (ranging from 16% – 50%) in the period 2020-2050.

[Project Drawdown](#) describes its work as “the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming”. In an April 25 [New York Times interview](#), Paul Hawkin, Project Drawdown’s executive director, states: “A primary goal of Drawdown is to help people who feel overwhelmed by gloom-and-doom messages see that reversing global warming is bursting with possibility: walkable cities, afforestation, bamboo, high-rises built of wood, marine permaculture, multistrata agroforestry, clean cookstoves, plant-rich diet, assisting women smallholders, regenerative agriculture, supporting girls’ ongoing education, smart glass, in-stream hydro, on and on.” The solutions have been proposed and researched by an international collaboration of “geologists, engineers, agronomists, researchers, fellows, writers, climatologists, biologists, botanists, economists, financial analysts, architects, companies, agencies, NGOs, activists, and other experts”.

The complete list of 100 proposals was published by Penguin Books in 2017 and is available at the [Project Drawdown website](#). Canadian news outlet [The Energy Mix](#) is currently posting excerpts from Project Drawdown, and highlighted Telepresence in its May 11 issue.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [air travel](#), [business travel](#), [Project Drawdown](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Workforce implications of innovation in Canada’s Forest Sector

Posted on **May 8, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On May 4th, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources released its report, [Value-added products in Canada’s forest sector: cultivating innovation for a competitive bioeconomy](#). The report is the latest discussion of advancing Canadian value-added forest products and a forest-sourced bioeconomy, and addresses five themes: (1) protecting Canadian forests and primary resources (which recognizes the threats of climate change and beetle infestation); (2) advancing industrial integration, innovation and talent development; (3) strengthening partnerships with Indigenous peoples; (4) maximizing market opportunities in Canada and abroad; and (5) a case study on building with wood, with a focus on advanced mass timber construction.

Discussion of the issue of training and talent development (beginning on page 18), calls for more internships and employment opportunities for engineering and science students and highly trained post-graduates; the need to develop a well-educated forest-sector workforce in rural areas; and the need for diversity and gender equity. Employment implications are present in the discussion of wood-based construction of homes, where witnesses talk about transforming wood construction from a craft-based industry to a more mainstream manufacturing process, where “prefabrication in a factory environment would make wood construction more cost competitive and less wasteful, with greater potential for automation, customization and design accuracy.” The report also provides a case study of two Canadian examples of “tall wood buildings”: including Brock Commons, a new 18-storey student residence at the University of British Columbia, and Origine, a 13-storey building in Quebec City’s Pointe-auxLièvres eco-district.

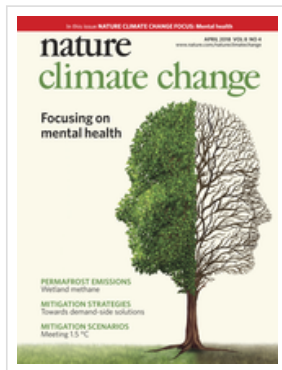
The United Steelworkers, who represent over 18,000 forestry workers after their 2004 merger with the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada (IWA), presented a [Brief to the Committee](#) in November 2017. The Brief identifies the main challenges facing the sector, as low harvest volumes, insufficient infrastructure funding, and decreasing raw log exports, and concludes that, although it's a provincial jurisdiction, "The Steelworkers submit that Canada needs a national forestry strategy that recognizes while the challenges within the lumber, pulp, paper, or value added sector are unique, ... the whole sector is highly integrated, and dependent on each facet of the sector succeeding." The Brief also states "The costs that the industry as a whole faces will further increase with the federal government's plan to roll out a \$50/tonne price on carbon by 2022. This new carbon pricing regime will not only risk further impacting tight margins in regions like Ontario, but also risks leading to carbon leakage. Canadian companies are now operating in the southern USA which does not have a carbon pricing regime."

Unifor, which represents approximately 24,000 forest workers, also issued a report (not submitted to the Committee) in October 2017: [The Future of Forestry: A Workers Perspective for Successful, Sustainable and Just Forestry](#). A key message from Unifor is the need to involve workers in a national policy-making process: "forestry ministers must lead efforts to bring together business, government, labour, Indigenous leaders, environmental organizations and community leaders in a reinstated National Forestry Council." Also on this topic, a 2017 report by the Innovation Committee of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, [A Forest Bioeconomy Framework for Canada](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Leakage](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [Unifor](#), [United Steelworkers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New research on climate change impacts on mental health

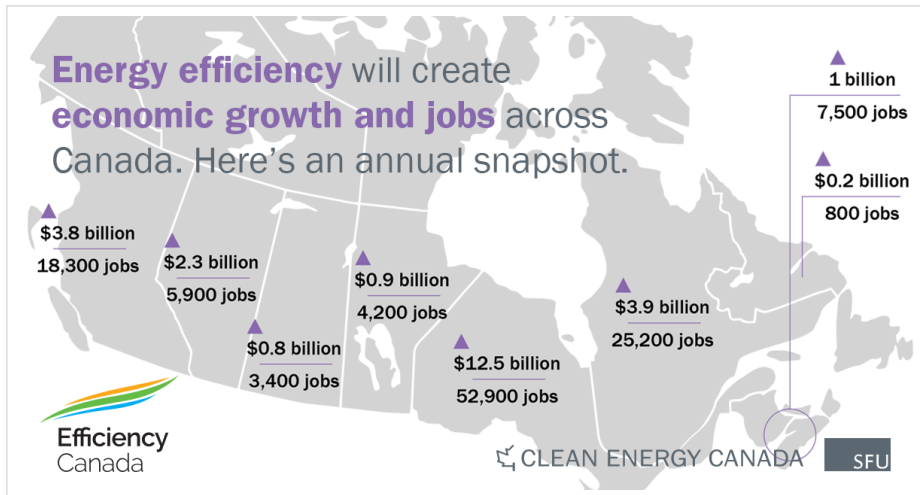
Posted on **May 8, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The April Issue of [Nature Climate Change](#) focuses on the relationship between climate change and mental health. The [introductory editorial](#) summarizes the three articles on the topic and makes the case that 1. Mental health issues are often neglected in the general research about the health impacts of climate change, and 2. more research is needed. (Please note that all articles have restricted access and are available only for a fee.) The first article in the issue, "[Ecological grief as a mental health response to climate change-related loss](#)" discusses the personal grief experienced by people as their natural world changes, illustrated by the experiences of Indigenous people in Northern Canada and the Australian wheatbelt. The second article, "[The case for systems thinking about climate change and mental health](#)" examines the current state of research about climate change and mental health from a policy perspective, arguing for a more epidemiological research. The third article, "[Mental health risk and resilience among climate scientists](#)" discusses whether climate scientists themselves face unique mental health risks because they are immersed in depressing information. Dr. Susan Clayton, author of the third article, is also co-author of the influential 2014 report [Beyond Storms & Droughts: The Psychological Impacts of Climate Change](#), published by the American Psychological Association and ecoAmerica. In March 2017, the APA, ecoAmerica and Climate for Health updated [Beyond Storms & Droughts](#) with [Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance](#).

Energy efficiency programs can create 118,000 jobs per year in Canada, says new report

Posted on **May 4, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A new report from a new

organization: on May 3, Clean Energy Canada [announced](#) that it had partnered with a new national policy organization, [Efficiency Canada](#), to publish a study of the economic impacts of energy efficiency for Canada. The report's title tells the story: *Less is More: A win for the economy, jobs, consumers, and our climate: energy efficiency is Canada's unsung hero*

There are two scenarios reported: The first, modelling energy efficiency programs in the Pan-Canadian Framework ("PCF") , estimates that every \$1 spent on energy efficiency programs generates \$7 of GDP, and an average of 118,000 jobs per year will be created between 2017 and 2030. Jobs would be spread across the country and the economy, with about half of new jobs produced in the construction, trade and manufacturing sectors, peaking in 2027 and 2028. The overall economic impact is largely driven by energy cost savings – for consumers, \$1.4 billion per year (which translates into \$114 per year per household). For business, industry and institutions, the savings are estimated at \$3.2 billion each year. Importantly, the PCF energy efficiency programs could reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by approximately 52 Mt by 2030, or 25% of Canada's Paris commitments.

For the second, more ambitious policy scenario, "PCF+", the net increase in GDP grows to \$595 billion, employment gains are over 2,443,500 job-years in total from 2017 to 2030, and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by 79 Mt, or 39% of Canada's Paris commitment.

Less is More is only 8 pages long. The detailed results, as well as explanation of the modelling assumptions, are found in the [Technical Report](#) , produced by Dunsky Energy Consulting of Montreal, commissioned by [Clean Energy Canada](#) and [Efficiency Canada](#). The technical report modelled the net economic impacts of energy efficiency measures related to homes, buildings and industry (not included: the transportation sector, nor electrification and fuel switching in the building sector). Modelling was done for two scenarios: implementation of programs in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (PCF), and a PCF+ scenario, which includes all the PCF programs plus "best in class" efficiency efforts , derived from exemplary programs across North America.

[Efficiency Canada](#) , the national policy organization launched on May 3, is based at Carleton University in Ottawa and is the new incarnation of the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance. From the new website: "Efficiency Canada advocates to make our country a global leader in energy efficiency. We convene people from across Canada's economy to work together to advance policies required to take full advantage of energy efficiency. And we communicate the best research out there to

build a more productive economy, sustainable environment, and socially just Canada.” To read their full story, go to their webpage, [Who is Efficiency Canada ?](#)

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Energy policy](#), [Job Creation](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Corporate Disclosure of climate change risks, and shareholder action by BCGEU on sustainability

Posted on **May 2, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The British Columbia Government and Services Employees' Union (BCGEU) issued a [press release](#) on April 20 to announce its partnership with the global advocacy group [SumOfUs](#) (Fighting for people over profits). Over the summer, on behalf of BCGEU, SumOfUs will file proposals at annual general meetings of Canadian companies, calling for greater fairness in corporate governance and increased scrutiny around human rights and labour practices as well as of the impacts of deforestation.

BCGEU President Stephanie Smith stated “As a union, we need to make sure that funds our members count on, such as the strike fund, are financially healthy and this requires careful and responsible investment decisions. ... Calling for greater corporate responsibility as a shareholder is not only financially prudent, but it allows us to pursue our values as a labour union as well.” This is not the first time BCGEU has taken initiative – in 2014, the union [divested its strike fund and general reserves from fossil fuel equities](#), and saw an increase in values.

With a similar strategy, the [Fonds de Solidarité des Travailleurs du Québec \(FTQ\)](#), empowered SHARE (Shareholder Association for Research and Education), to file a [shareholder proposal](#) at the April 27 annual meeting of Imperial Oil, requesting better disclosure on its exposure to and management of water-related risks in its oil and gas operations.

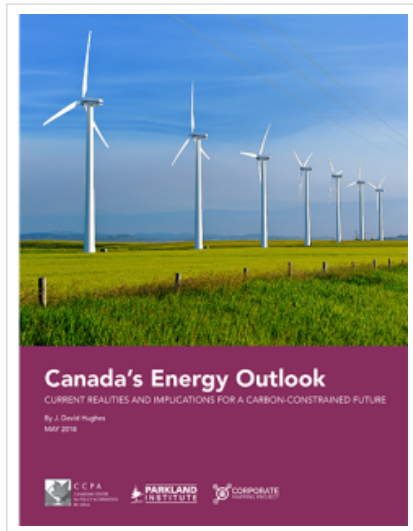
Even Canada's financial regulators are moving in the direction of increased transparency and disclosure for corporations. The Canadian Securities Administration, concluding a process which had stretched out for over a year, issued a [press release](#) on April 5, announcing *CSA Staff Notice 51-354 Report on Climate change-related Disclosure Project*. The report announced its intention to consider new disclosure requirements relating to material risks and opportunities and “how issuers oversee the identification, assessment and management of material risks. This would include, for example, emerging or evolving risks and opportunities arising from climate change, potential barriers to free trade, cyber security and disruptive technologies.”

And on April 12, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change [announced](#) the creation of an Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance. Part of the mandate of the Expert Panel will be to explore the issue of voluntary standards for corporate disclosure of the financial risks associated with climate change, and to provide recommendations to the federal government by the fall of 2018. Full Terms of Reference are [here](#). The Expert Panel is expected to build upon the work of the CSA Task Force, and the earlier, international Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCDF), led by Michael Bloomberg, and chaired by Mark Carney. Canada's new Expert Panel will be chaired by Tiff Macklem, Dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management and former Senior Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada; the other three members are Andy Chisholm, member of the Board of Directors of the Royal Bank of Canada; Kim Thomassin, Executive Vice-President, Legal Affairs and Secretariat, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec; and Barbara Zvan, Chief Risk and Strategy Officer, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.

For context on the issue of corporate disclosure, read “[Investigation finds nearly half of Canadian failing to Disclose Climate-Related Risk](#)” from the *National Observer* (April 5), and, in the opposite direction in the United States, In ‘[Attack on Shareholder Rights](#),’ SEC Seeks to Sideline Activist Investors .

Facts, not politics: Parkland Institute report plans for Canada's transition from fossil fuels

Posted on **May 2, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On May 1, the Parkland Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives co-released the latest report for the Corporate Mapping Project. *Canada's Energy Outlook: Current Realities and Implications for a Carbon-constrained Future* is described in the [press release](#) as “ a definitive guide to Canada’s current energy realities and their implications for a sustainable future, taking a detailed look at Canadian energy consumption, renewable and non-renewable energy supply, the state of Canada’s resources and revenues, and what it all means for emissions-reduction planning.”

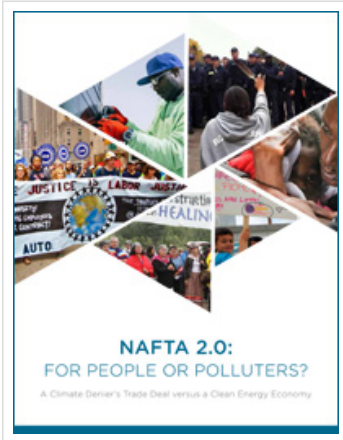
The title of the press release is instructive: “[Pipeline feud underscores need for evidence-based energy strategy](#)” – *Canada's Energy Outlook* is an attempt to inject facts into the current emotion-charged debate about the TransMountain pipeline and the role of oil and gas in Canada; in doing so, it counters many of the pro-pipeline claims, including the job creation claims. For example, Chapter 2, “Non-renewable energy supply, resources and revenue” states: “Oil and gas jobs are a relatively minor overall component of the Canadian economy: 2.2% of Canada’s workforce was employed in oil, gas and coal production, distribution and construction in 2015. Of these jobs, 52% were involved in construction, most of which were of a temporary nature. In Alberta, 6.3% of jobs were involved in fossil fuel production and distribution, and a further 6.6% in related construction.”

A commentary titled “[Politics versus the future: Canada's Orwellian energy standoff](#)” discusses the pro-pipeline arguments being made by Alberta and the federal government in light of their incompatibility with our emissions reductions targets, but acknowledges the insufficiency of our renewable energy supply as yet. It concludes: “ Some environmental groups assert that it will be relatively easy to swap out fossil fuels for renewable energy – wind, solar, biomass, biofuels and geothermal energy. That is unlikely given the scale of such a transition. Renewable energy can certainly be scaled up a lot, along with geothermal energy for heating and cooling, but we will likely need fossil fuels for decades to come as we make the transition.”

The report was written by David Hughes, an earth scientist, well-known energy expert, and author of several related reports, including *Can Canada Expand Oil and Gas Production, Build Pipelines and Keep Its Climate Change Commitments?* (2016).

New voices calling for climate change protections in NAFTA 2.0 – updated on May 7

Posted on **April 30, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



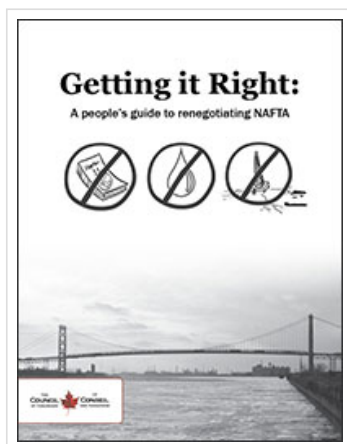
Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, arrived in Washington on May 7 for final “make or break” talks about NAFTA, according to a [CBC report](#). Below, some reports reflecting concerns from Canada's labour and climate change communities.

On April 17, the Sierra Club, the Council of Canadians, and Greenpeace Mexico released a new report, *NAFTA 2.0: For People Or Polluters? A Climate Denier's Trade Deal versus a Clean Energy Economy*. In this report, economists from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico document the obstacles to climate progress in the current North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations, and propose climate, labour, and human rights protections in line with the Paris Accord. Canadian contributor Gordon Laxer, founder of the Parkland Institute, states: “NAFTA's little-known ‘proportionality’ rule locks Canada into perpetual production of climate-polluting tar sands oil and fracked gas, while giving corporate polluters a permanent green light to build tar sands oil pipelines to the U.S.” The *NAFTA 2.0* report urges elimination of the proportionality rule, elimination of the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) tribunals under Chapter 11, and elimination of rules regarding regulatory cooperation that could be used to delay, weaken, or halt new climate policies, or to pressure Canada and Mexico to adopt the weaker climate standards favoured by the Trump administration. *NAFTA 2.0: For People or Polluters?* was written and researched by Dr. Frank Ackerman (Synapse Energy Economics, U.S.), Dr. Alejandro Álvarez Béjar (Professor, National Autonomous University of Mexico), Dr. Gordon Laxer, (Founding Director, Parkland Institute, University of Alberta, Canada), and Ben Beachy (Director of the Sierra Club's [Responsible Trade Program](#), U.S.). A summary appears in a [Sierra Club Blog](#).



— Chrystia Freeland,
Minister of Foreign
Affairs

On May 2, Canada's labour, climate, and social justice communities sent a joint [Open Letter](#) to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, stating their twelve shared principles and values on very specific NAFTA issues. They conclude: "An alternative model of trade must be rooted in principles of equity, the primacy of human rights — including the rights of Indigenous peoples, women and girls, workers, migrants, farmers, and communities — and social and ecological justice. Furthermore, if Canada wishes to be an international champion of action on climate change, its trade policy must be compatible with its climate objectives." "[Chrystia Freeland urged to be a climate champion at NAFTA talks](#)" (*National Observer*, May 2) summarizes the letter and quotes from an interview on the issue with Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). The CLC was one of 8 labour unions and 47 organizations to sign the Open Letter. The others include Canadian Union of Public Employees, CWA-Canada, National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), Public Service Alliance of Canada, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, United Steelworkers, and Unifor amongst unions; Climate Action Network-Canada, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Citizens Climate Lobby Canada, Oxfam Canada, and other social justice groups.



The Council of Canadians have maintained a long-standing campaign against NAFTA, especially the ISDS provisions. Their website on the issue is [here](#); their own guide to the NAFTA Negotiations, [Getting it Right: A People's Guide to renegotiating NAFTA](#) was published in October 2017 and agrees with the new Sierra Club report in most respects, including elimination of the ISDS, and incorporation of workers' rights.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis acts as the administrative lead in the [Trade and Investment Research Project \(TIRP\)](#), a coalition of NGO and labour unions. CCPA published [Canada's Track Record Under NAFTA Chapter 11](#) (January 2018) which tracks the cases and penalties Canada has paid under the existing ISDS provisions, and [Renegotiating NAFTA: CCPA submission to Global Affairs Canada on the renegotiation and modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement](#) (July 2017).

The International Institute for Sustainable Development has published [Can Investor-State Dispute Settlement Be Good for the Environment?](#) which reviews the European Energy Charter Treaty as well as NAFTA; [Environmental and Public Interest Considerations in NAFTA Renegotiation](#) (November 2017); and [A Wish List for an Environmentally friendly NAFTA](#) (April 2018) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Free Trade](#), [Investor-State Dispute Settlement \(ISDS\)](#), [NAFTA](#), [NAFTA Chapter 11](#), [Trade Policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Occupational health risks created by climate change: U.S. doctors get Guidelines, France releases expert report

Posted on April 30, 2018 by elizabethperry493



- Warmer temperatures have brought the Black-legged tick to Ontario, bringing an increase of Lyme's Disease, especially for outdoor workers.

A Guidance Document was released by the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine in February 2018. *Responsibilities of the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Provider in the Treatment and Prevention of Climate Change-Related Health Problems* (also appearing in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*) is intended to set standards for physicians specializing in workplace health. The Guidance Document provides concise and very current information about the direct physical impacts related to climate change (heat stress and ultraviolet exposure, air quality, and allergic sensitivities) as well as indirect impacts (disaster zone exposure, stress and mental health, and waterborne and vector-borne disease). Most of this information is not new: two previous major reports have covered the same ground: The *Lancet Countdown Report for 2017*, (which links climate change and specific health conditions for the population at large, not just workers, and which included a [report for Canada](#)), and the landmark U.S. Global Change Research Program report, *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment* (2016).

What is important about this new Guidance Document? It focuses on the workplace, and sets standards for the role of occupational health physicians which include a responsibility to protect workers. For example: "Provide guidance to the employers on how to protect working populations in the outdoors or in the field who are potentially exposed to the extreme temperatures.... Quickly identify employees with acute and chronic cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses within the organization who will be significantly affected by increasing temperature and worsening air quality, an increase in ozone, particulate matter, and high pollen countProvide effective guidance to employers about seasonal activity and address the increasing risk of vector-borne disease among the working population.... Deliver support to the employees at risk for mental illness due to disasters, loss, and migration by providing more comprehensive programs through their employment.... The article concludes with: "OEM providers are called to be on the forefront of emerging health issues pertaining to working populations including climate change. The competent OEM provider should address individual and organizational factors that impact the health and productivity of workers as well as create policies that ensure a healthy workforce."

There is also a call to action in a new report from France's Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety. The full [expert analysis](#) is available only in French; an English abstract is [here](#). The report predicts the occupational risks associated with climate change, from now till 2050, and identifies the main drivers of change: rising temperatures, changes in the biological and chemical environment, and a change in the frequency and intensity of extreme events. **What's new in this report?** It highlights the breadth of impact of climate change, stating that it will affect

all occupational risks, except those associated with noise and artificial radiation. The report also makes recommendations, urging immediate workplace awareness campaigns and training about the health effects of climate change, with a preventive focus. From the [English summary](#): “The Agency especially recommends encouraging all the parties concerned to immediately start integrating the climate change impacts that are already perceptible, or that can be anticipated, in their occupational risk assessment approaches, in order to deploy suitable preventive measures.” The full report (in French only): *Évaluation des risques induits par le changement climatique sur la santé des travailleurs* (262 pages) is dated January 2018 but released in April. It was requested by France’s Directorate General for Health and the Directorate General for Labour, to support the country’s 2011 National Adaptation to Climate Change Action Plan (PNACC).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [climate change and mental health](#), [France](#), [health care providers](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Training](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Unions well-represented on Canada’s new Task Force on Just Transition – including Co-Chair Hassan Yussuff, President of the CLC

Posted on [April 25, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Hassan Yussuff, President,
Canadian Labour Congress

On April 25, Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change [announced](#) the members of the the Just Transition Task Force for Canadian Coal-Power Workers and Communities, to be co-chaired by Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and Lois Corbett, Executive Director of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick. Biographies are [here](#) , revealing that six of the eleven members of the Task Force are unionists: two from the CLC, the Alberta Federation of Labour, United Steelworkers, Unifor, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The [press release](#) by the Canadian Labour Congress states: “The world is watching. By launching this task force, Canada has the opportunity to set an international example on how to implement progressive policy to reduce emissions while keeping people and communities at the centre”. A [National Observer article](#) provides context and background about the members of the Task Force, and some quotes from the press conference which announced it. A [CBC report](#) also includes a video of the press conference.

The full [Terms of Reference](#) for the Just Transition Task Force were originally published in February 2018, and include a mandate to make recommendations to the Minister via an interim report and a final report due at the end of 2018. Members of the Task Force will meet with government officials at the local and provincial level, workers, stakeholders, academics, and also make site visits to coal plants and communities that will be affected by the accelerated phase-out of coal power in Canada. The Task Force will no doubt benefit from the work of Alberta’s [Advisory Panel on Coal Communities](#) , which also examined the impacts on communities and workers of an end to coal-fired electricity by 2030, and proposed strategies

to support workers through the transition. The Alberta Panel issued its recommendations in a brief report, titled [Supporting Workers and Communities](#) in November 2017, resulting in a number of provincial programs, described [here](#).

At the international level, Canada has been active since joining with the United Kingdom to launch the [Powering Past Coal Alliance](#) in November 2017 at the Conference of the Parties (COP23), in Bonn in 2017. Updates on that initiative are available from this [link](#). As of April 2018, there are over 60 countries and private businesses in the alliance. An [April 2018 release reports](#) that Canada and the U.K. will collaborate with Bloomberg Philanthropies on the goals of the Alliance, including to produce research and case studies on the issue. Also, at the One Planet Summit in December 2017, Canada announced its partnership with the World Bank Group and the International Trade Union Confederation, to accelerate the transition from coal-fired electricity to clean sources in developing countries.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Powering Past Coal Alliance](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Quebec unveils its Vision 2030 for sustainable mobility and transportation

Posted on [April 20, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On April 17, Quebec's Liberal Premier Philippe Couillard announced the government's *Vision 2030*, a 12-year strategy to increase sustainable mobility. The official government information is available only in French, [here](#). Information in the English language is available from the [Liberal Party of Quebec press release](#), and a [Montreal Gazette report](#). The government will invest \$9.7 billion (\$2.9 billion of which is new funding) to provide Quebecers with a 20% reduction in average commuting time, 20% reduction in commuting costs, and access to at least four types of sustainable mobility by 2030 for 70% of the population. Investments will be made in a light-rail electric train line for Montreal and an extension of the métro's Blue Line; as well as transit services to Montreal's suburbs. (The government had already called for tenders for 300 additional hybrid buses for Montreal in January 2018). Future projects also include a tramway system for Quebec City, and transit alternatives for the regions, outside the two main cities. As environmental benefits, the province aims to achieve a 40% reduction in the amount of fuel consumed for transportation, with a 37.5% reduction in transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions over 1990 levels.

Although the majority of the plan addresses personal transportation, it also sets a goal to increase the goods shipped at ports and intermodal rail terminals by 25%, and promises an increase in the province's annual sales of transportation equipment from \$10 billion to \$15 billion.

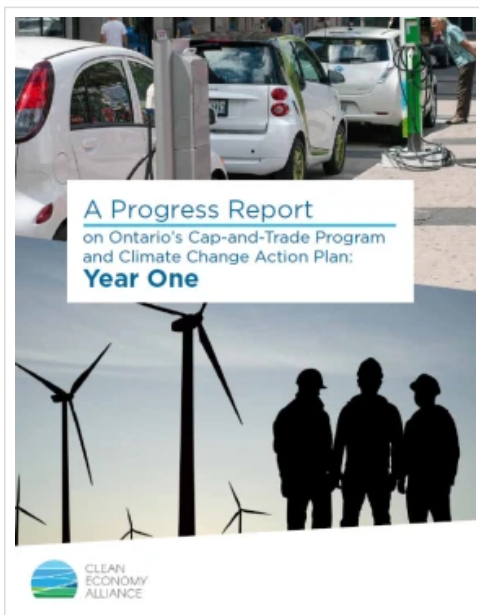
Premier Couillard is calling the initiative "the James Bay of our era" – referring to the transformative hydro development of the 1970's.

New evidence supports benefits of cap and trade policies – an important issue for Ontario voters

Posted on **April 19, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With a June 2018 election approaching in Ontario, climate change policies and the cap and trade program are already emerging as key issues. Several relevant reports have been published since the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario addressed these issues in her audit report, *Ontario's Climate Act: From Plan to Progress* in January 2018.

The government's own [progress report on the 5-year Climate Change Action Plan](#) was released on March 14, and includes an evaluation of the policies and projects funded through Ontario's cap and trade program. One such program is the "Low Carbon Building Skills" initiative [announced in August 2017](#) under the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, which aims to improve training for low carbon building projects – including retrofits, green construction and building operations. Other highlighted initiatives relate to hospital energy efficiency; building and school retrofits; social housing; research into climate change impacts on building codes.



A more independent view comes in *A Progress Report on Ontario's Cap-and-Trade Program and Climate Change Action Plan: Year One*, published by the [Clean Economy Alliance](#) – an alliance of Ontario's businesses, clean technology firms, industry associations, labour unions, farmers, health advocates and environmental organizations. In answering its key question, "Is there any evidence that cap-and-trade has hurt Ontario's economy or cost jobs?" the report concludes that "Rather than shedding jobs, Ontario added 155,000 jobs between January 2017 and December 2017 – the first year of cap-and-trade. Gains were driven by employment growth in wholesale and retail trade, professional services and manufacturing. Cap-and-trade doesn't appear to have hurt economic growth either. 2017 marked a 7-year high in Ontario's GDP growth. Forecasters including RBC, TD Bank and the Conference Board of Canada agree that in 2018, economic growth will slow slightly, but will remain strong." The report card evaluates impact on emissions reduction, as well as implementation rates by policy area (transportation, buildings and homes, land use planning, and "others"). It concludes with a brief case study of the incentives for electric vehicles – noting that 2017 was the first year that more electric vehicles (EVs) were sold in Ontario than in any other province.

On April 10, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario released another relevant report: the 2018 Energy Conservation Progress report, *Making Connections: Straight Talk about Electricity in Ontario*. In this statistically-dense report, she acknowledges that the province's electricity system was 96 per cent emission-free in 2017, but warns that the province will fall short of its 2030 carbon reduction target unless consumer behaviour changes: "Looking ahead, much more conservation and low-carbon electricity will be needed to displace fossil fuels as the climate crisis continues to worsen. Ontario is not yet preparing seriously for this future."

With the explicit purpose of informing the policy discussion before and after the Ontario election in June 2018, [Ontario 360](#) has been established at the University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance, as an "independent, non-partisan, and fact-based" resource. On April 18, their [first briefing on Climate Policy](#) was published, written by Trevor Tombe, associate professor of economics at the University of Calgary. The briefing reviews the cap-and-trade system and the various initiatives which have been funded by its proceeds, and provides a top-level explanation of the merits of carbon pricing in general, with a comparison of cap and trade and carbon taxes. His conclusion: "while the evidence finds that pricing should be the backbone of any credible climate policy in Ontario, it is not a magic wand. There are areas where it may not be administratively feasible, and therefore narrow complementary policies should also be on the table. And even where pricing is appropriate, reasonable people will disagree over the appropriate price level and coverage. But whatever path forward future governments choose, they should strive for transparency in costs and benefits, clarity in the goals a policy is trying to achieve, and flexibility as new evidence emerges."

Finally, a related report from the United States was released on April 17, evaluating the economic and environmental impacts of the cap and trade markets of the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) (RGGI) in the U.S. from 2015-2017 . [The Economic Impacts of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on Nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States](#) found that the nine states which form the network gained \$1.4 billion in economic benefits over the past three years because of the way they invested proceeds, with the biggest payoffs (including in new jobs) coming from investments in energy efficiency programs. In the same period, there has been no damage to the reliability of the electricity grid, nor a net increase in electricity bills. [The Economic Impacts of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on Nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States](#) was produced by [The Analysis Group](#) , who also were responsible for two previous evaluations since the RGGI launched in 2009, available [here](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Infrastructure Canada invests in public transit and requires Community Employment Benefits agreements

Posted on [April 17, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

An April 11 article in the *National Observer*, "[After massive investments , Trudeau government puts public transit on track](#)" attempts to explain the political and bureaucratic tangle of the [Canada Infrastructure Plan](#) in the wake of a series of press releases by the federal government. Those press releases have announced \$33 billion in funding for infrastructure projects through bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories, with the lion's share – \$20.1 billion – going to public transit. The *National Observer* [article](#) also profiles some public transit projects already announced or in progress: the 12.5-kilometre, 13 stations Ottawa light rail project; a \$365 million plan to extend the Montreal's [Blue Line](#) for five stops; [Calgary's Green Line LRT](#); Victoria B.C.'s plan to improve resilience against seismic activity; and new electric and hybrid buses for Gatineau and Laval, Quebec, and London Ontario. Another excellent update of Canada's public transit appeared in *Corporate Knights* magazine in January 2018, "[The e-bus revolution has arrived](#)". And in March, Winnipeg Transit released its report on electrification of its bus fleet- summarized by the CBC [here](#) ; Winnipeg is home to the New Flyer Industries, which manufactures the [battery-electric buses in use](#).

Public transit is obviously good for reducing Canada's transportation-related GHG emissions, and investments at this scale are obviously important sources of job creation. The [Bilateral Letter of Agreement with Ontario](#) states: " a Climate Lens will

be applied to these federal investments, and a Community Employment Benefits Reporting Framework will be applied for relevant programs under the Investing in Canada Plan. Both the Climate Lens and the Community Employment Benefits Reporting Framework will be developed in consultation with provinces, territories, municipalities and other stakeholders over the next few months and will be embedded in the integrated bilateral agreements once completed.” Community benefits agreements are already in place in [some transit construction projects](#) in Toronto, and Ontario passed the [Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015](#), which states: “Infrastructure planning and investment should promote community benefits to improve the well-being of a community affected by the project, such as local job creation and training opportunities”.

For inspiration on another side of the issue, read the recent article, “[Connecting green transit and great manufacturing jobs](#)” in *Portside* on April 14. It provides a very detailed case study of the fight to bring domestic, union jobs to light rail manufacturing in Los Angeles, a campaign spearheaded by [Jobs to Move America \(JMA\)](#). From their website, JMA “is dedicated to ensuring that the billions of public dollars spent on American infrastructure create better results for our communities: good jobs, cleaner equipment, and more opportunity for historically marginalized people.” Their [website](#) provides research papers and news updates.



— New Flyer Electric Bus, Winnipeg Manitoba. Image from <http://winnipegtransit.com/en/major-projects/electric-bus-demonstration/>

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Community benefits](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [New Flyer Industries](#), [Transit](#), [Transit Policy](#), [transportation equipment manufacturing](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New forum launched to discuss the equity and justice dimensions of Just Transition

Posted on **April 17, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On April 13, the Just Transition Research Collaborative launched a Just Transition(s) Online Forum, whose purpose is enrich discussion of climate change with equity and justice concerns – specifically focused on the growing debate about Just Transition, and from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences. According to the introduction: “Through a combination of concrete case studies and more conceptual analyses, the forum acts as a shared space for academics and other interested parties to share their views (and voice their concerns) on the Just Transition, its meanings, its current uses and its potential. We want this space to be as interactive as possible, so please feel free to share your reactions or Just Transition-related stories and analyses.”

Of the four items published to the Forum so far, three of the authors are associated with the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project: 1. Dmitri Stevis posted “[\(Re\)claiming Just Transition](#)”, which notes “the concept’s growing popularity has actually led to an expansion of its meanings.” Professor Stevis sees this as “a challenge for stakeholders as it makes it more difficult to clearly identify what Just Transition stands for, who is behind it and what is the underlying theory of change. Is Just Transition simply another “buzzword”? Should we take it seriously? Can it play a positive role in the international climate and sustainable development debates?” He concludes, “It is, therefore, important to think about it systematically so that we can, at the very least, differentiate initiatives that co-opt and dilute its promise from initiatives that contribute to a global politics of social and ecological emancipation.”

The second article is by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, with [“Who Deserves a Just Transition?”](#) , which focuses on Canada and is based on his recent report [Making decarbonization work for workers: Policies for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy in Canada](#). The third ACW research associate, Roman Felli, argues [“A Just Transition Must Include Climate Change Adaptation”](#) . He uses the example of collective bargaining by UNIA, a Swiss construction union, and argues that unions need to anticipate how climate change will impact the work of their members, concluding with, “What are you doing about it in your union?”

The fourth article to date, [“Just Transitions as a process with communities, not for communities”](#) is by Rebecca Shelton, and highlights the transitions made by the coal communities of Kentucky.

The Just Transition Research Collaborative plans to release a State-of-the-art report on Just Transition in December 2018. The [Just Transition\(s\) Online Forum](#) is hosted jointly by the [United Nations Research Institute for Social Development](#), the [University of London Institute in Paris](#), the [International Social Science Council](#), and [Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

First Nations communities trading dirty diesel for renewable energy

Posted on [April 17, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

First Nations' commitment to renewable energy is described in [Growing Indigenous Power: A Review of Indigenous Involvement and Resources to further Renewable Energy Development across Canada](#) released in February 2018 by TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative. The report highlights examples of renewable energy projects, describes the potential benefits for communities, and outlines supportive policies and programs in each province. In the section on workforce issues, the report states: “Whether a community is partnering with a developer and/or hiring a construction firm for their own project, it is important to insist, in writing, on a certain number of employment positions. After working with a developer on a wind project, Millbrook and Eskasoni First Nations (Nova Scotia) developed a database of skilled community members and had them join the union, to address employment issues.” The report contains a unique bibliography of articles and reports from lesser-known Indigenous and local sources.

The [National Observer](#) publishes frequent updates on the issue of First Nations and renewable energy in British Columbia, which they have compiled into a Special Report titled [First Nations Forward](#). Highlights from the series include [“First Nations powering up B.C.”](#) (Dec. 2017), and most recently, [“In brighter news, a clean energy success story: Skidegate on the way to becoming a “city of the future”](#) (April 9). Also in British Columbia, the [Upper Nicola Band](#) in the southern Interior will vote in April on a proposal to build a solar farm project which, if approved, will be 15 times larger than the current largest solar farm in British Columbia (a converted mine site at [Kimberley](#)) . [CBC profiled the proposed new project](#) in March. [DeSmog Canada](#) also profiled the Upper Nicola Project, and in November 2017 published [“This B.C. First Nation is harnessing small-scale hydro to get off diesel.”](#)

[“How green energy is changing one Alberta First Nation”](#) in the [Toronto Star](#) (April 10) profiles a solar project at Louis Bull First Nation, south of Edmonton. It was initiated under the [Alberta Indigenous Solar Program](#) , one of several provincial grant programs to encourage renewable energy and energy efficiency amongst First Nations. On April 5, [Alberta's Renewable Electricity Program was announced](#) – a 3-phase program which the government claims will attract approximately \$10 billion in new private investment. By 2030, it is also expected to create about 7,000 jobs in a wide range of fields, including construction, electrical and mechanical engineering, project management, as well as jobs for IT specialists, field technicians, electricians and mechanics. Phase 2 will include a competition for renewable energy projects which are at least 25% owned by First Nations.

On March 22, the Ontario government [announced](#) : “The federal and Ontario governments are partnering with 22 First Nations to provide funding for Wataynikaneyap Power to connect 16 remote First Nations communities in Northern Ontario

to the provincial power grid.....When complete in 2023, the Wataynikaneyap Power Grid Connection Project will be the largest Indigenous-led and Indigenous-owned infrastructure project in Ontario history. It will mean thousands of people will no longer have to rely on dirty diesel fuel to meet their energy needs.” The [Wataynikaneyap Power website](#) offers a series of press releases that chronicle the years-long development of this initiative, in partnership with [FortisOntario](#) . The [most recent press release](#) on March 22 states that the goal is to establish “a viable transmission business to be eventually owned and operated 100% by First Nations. In addition to the significant savings associated with the avoided cost of diesel generation, the Project is estimated to create 769 jobs during construction and nearly \$900 million in socio-economic value. These include lower greenhouse gas emissions (more than 6.6 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent GHG emissions are estimated to be avoided), as well as improved health of community members, and ongoing benefits from increased economic growth.” Also of interest, a [2017 press release](#) from FortisOntario : “Over \$2 Million Announced For Wataynikaneyap Transmission Project First Nations Training Program .”

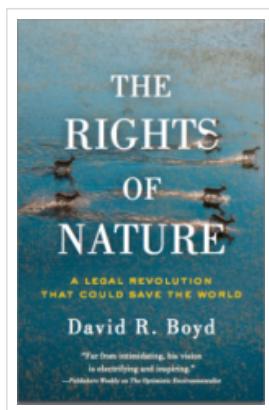
Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [electricity sector](#), [First Nations](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Proposed Environmental Bill of Rights includes whistleblowing protection for Alberta workers

Posted on [April 17, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Capping a [series of related reports](#) on the topic , the Alberta Environment Law Centre published [Environmental Rights in Alberta: An annotated Environmental Bill of Rights for Alberta](#) in March. The report consists of model provisions for a statute, along with annotations providing background information. Amongst the proposed provisions is protection from reprisals for employees (Whistleblower protection) – which would expand protection from reprisals beyond the existing Alberta legislation, the [Public Interest Disclosure \(Whistleblower\) Protection Act](#), which protects government employees only.

To encourage broad public participation on environmental issues, the report also addresses the issue of Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP suits) – “A SLAPP suit is a claim for monetary damages against individuals who have dealt with a government body on an issue of public interest or concern. It is a meritless action filed by a plaintiff whose primary goal is not to win the case but rather to silence or intimidate citizens who have participated in proceedings regarding public policy or public decision making.”



From the introduction: “It should be noted at the outset that the Environmental Law Centre drew greatly from [David Boyd's](#) enormous academic contributions in this area. In particular, his article [Elements of an Effective Environmental Bill of Rights](#) was an invaluable resource in designing our model EBR” . Boyd’s most recent book is [The Rights of Nature: A Legal Revolution that Could Save the World](#) (Toronto: 2017, ECW Press).

EPA roll back of fuel economy standards and what it means for Canada

Posted on [April 17, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On April 3, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced its decision in a midterm evaluation of the fuel-economy standards for light vehicles manufactured in 2022-2025. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt issued his [Final Determination](#), supported by a 38-page analysis – which overturned the evidence of a 1,200-page draft [Technical Assessment Report](#) completed under President Obama in 2016. This opens up the uncertainty of a new rule-making process, with vehement opposition from the State of California, which is entitled to set its own emissions standards, as well as other players in the U.S., including over 50 mayors and state Attorney Generals from across the U.S., who issued their own [Local Leaders Clean Car Declaration](#). The Declaration states: “Whatever decisions the Administration may make, we are committed to using our market power and our regulatory authority to ensure that the vehicle fleets deployed in our jurisdictions fully meet or exceed the promises made by the auto industry in 2012.” Within the auto industry, parts-makers represented by the Automotive Technology Leadership Group (including the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association, the Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association, and the Aluminum Association) [support the existing standards](#). The Alliance for Automobile Manufacturers trade group, which represents Toyota, Ford, General Motors, Fiat Chrysler, BMW, Mercedes, and Volkswagen, have pushed for lower standards since the Trump inauguration.

All of this matters for Canada for at least two reasons: 1). 95% of vehicles manufactured in Canada are exported to the U.S., and thus our fuel emissions regulations have been developed in collaboration with the U.S. EPA – most recently to govern production for 2017 – 2025 models, and 2). transportation represents the 2nd highest source of emissions in Canada. The [WCR surveyed Canadian reaction](#) in March 2017, when Donald Trump first authorized the EPA review. Now, with the decision published, recent reaction appears in [“Canada in tough position if Trump Administration lessens vehicle standards”](#) in the *Globe and Mail* (April 1); the *National Observer* [“Scott Pruitt delivers another Trump-era shock to Canada’s climate change plan”](#) (April 2); [“Trump’s fuel economy rollback leaves Trudeau in a bind: Follow the U.S., or take a stand”](#) (April 3) in the *Toronto Star*, which quotes the the [Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers’ Association](#), as saying that “both Canadian consumers and climate efforts could be harmed if Trudeau decides to maintain a higher standard for Canada than Trump does for the U.S.”. Unifor, representing most Canadian auto workers, has not issued a reaction yet, although president Jerry Dias was quoted in March 2017 in [“Auto workers union takes aim at Trump’s examination of fuel standards”](#) in the *Globe and Mail*, stating that he “would fight any attempt to roll back environmentally friendly regulations in the auto industry”.

For well-informed U.S. reaction, see [“Stronger fuel standards make sense, even when gas prices are low”](#) in *The Conversation*; [“Why EPA’s Effort to Weaken Fuel Efficiency Standards Could be Trump’s Most Climate-Damaging Move Yet”](#) in *Inside Climate News* (April 2); from the American Council for an Energy- Efficient Economy [“EPA fails to do Its homework on light-duty standards”](#); and [“Auto Alliance Pushed Climate Denial to Get Trump Admin to Abandon Obama Fuel Efficiency Standards”](#) in *DeSmog* (April 2).

Even before the Kinder Morgan fight, Canada is falling short on its climate goals

Posted on **April 17, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As we have noted in [previous posts in the WCR](#) , many voices have warned that Canada's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions is falling short of its commitments under the Paris Agreement. Three recent reports provide more evidence.

On March 27, *Perspectives on Climate Change Action in Canada—A Collaborative Report from Auditors General—March 2018* was released by the federal Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development and for the first time ever, compiles the findings of the federal and provincial Auditors –General, with the exception of Quebec, which did not participate. The results are presented for each province, and summarized as: Seven out of 12 provincial and territorial governments did not have overall targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; governments have different targets from each other, and of those that have targets, only two (New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) are on track to meet their targets. Most governments had not fully assessed climate change risks, and their plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions consist of high-level goals, with little guidance on how to implement actions. At the federal level, the report states: “ even though Environment and Climate Change Canada was the federal lead on climate change, the Department did not provide the leadership, guidance, and tools to other departments and agencies to help them assess their risks and adapt to climate change. Moreover, only 5 federal departments and agencies of the 19 examined undertook comprehensive assessments of the climate change risks to their mandates.” There was limited coordination of climate change action within most governments. Some governments were not reporting on progress in a regular and timely manner.

The second analysis is from the Pembina Institute, which partnered with the Energy Innovation of San Francisco to develop the Energy Policy Simulator (EPS), an economic modelling tool to evaluate the effectiveness and costs of energy and climate policies for Canada. *Enhancing Canada's Climate Commitments: Building on the Pan-Canadian Framework* applies the Energy Policy Simulator to three different policy scenarios, including the [Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) , and concludes “ that even if the PCF is fully implemented, 2030 emissions will exceed Canada's goal by 161 million metric tons (MMT), a gap 3.7 times larger than the 44 MMT shortfall predicted by Canada's government. Extending and strengthening PCF policies would allow Canada to come much closer to its target, save money, and save human lives.” The Energy Policy Simulator is offered [here](#) as a free, open-source app available for other researchers to use.

Finally, the devil is in the details when author Barry Saxifrage of the *National Observer* took a close look at the federal government's report to the UNFCCC in December 2017, the *7th National Communications report*. In “[Canada's climate gap twice as big as claimed – 59 million tonne carbon snafu](#)” (March 27) , the author contends that “The Trudeau government says its proposed climate policies will get Canada to within 66 million tonnes of our 2030 climate target. That's already a big gap, but the federal accounting also assumes we can subtract a huge chunk of Canada's emissions.” That “huge chunk” refers to a further 59 MtCO₂ of carbon emissions which the government omits to tally as part of our Canadian emissions, presuming that offsets will be purchased by Ontario and Quebec through their participation in the cap and trade market of the Western Climate Initiative with California. So far, the U.S. has not agreed to such an arrangement.

On a more optimistic note, a new report states: “Canada can reach its 2030 target if the federal, provincial and territorial governments implement climate policies in a timely and rigorous way. The Pan-Canadian Framework has the policy tools needed to achieve the target but measures will have to be ratcheted up to fill the 66 million tonne gap.” In [Canada’s Climate Change Commitments: Deep Enough?](#), authors Dave Sawyer and Chris Bataille use economic modelling to show that Canada could honour its Paris GHG reduction commitment (30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030) and still achieve GDP growth of at least 38 per cent. They compare this to a GDP growth of 39% if Canada took no action to reduce greenhouse gases. The report calls for transformation changes, specifically: Building exclusively net-zero energy homes, i.e. buildings that generate as much energy as they consume. • The electrification of transportation, so that cars, trucks and trains can be powered by renewable energy rather than oil, which contributes to climate change. • Wholesale shifts away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. • Driving down energy needs by making industry, buildings and vehicles more energy efficient. • Embracing the full potential of energy storage to maximize the use of renewable electricity and building infrastructure to trade that electricity between jurisdictions.

[Canada’s Climate Change Commitments: Deep Enough?](#) was released on April 12 jointly by four environmental advocacy organizations: Environmental Defence, Climate Action Network, The Pembina Institute, and the Conservation Council Of New Brunswick.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Unions supporting Pension Plan Divestment with practical guides

Posted on **April 16, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In Spring 2018, the [Labor Network for Sustainability](#) and [DivestInvest Network](#) jointly released a new guide: [Should your union’s pension fund divest from fossil fuels? A guide for trade unionists](#). The guide begins with an introduction to union pension plans in the U.S., including how they are governed, and the legal and administrative safeguards designed to protect members’ money. It also recounts the role of union pension fund divestment in the South African struggle against Apartheid, describes the current global campaign for divestment from fossil fuels, and how and why unions are participating in that movement. The final section of the guide provides practical guidelines for union divestment campaigns.

Inspiration and a practical example of such a campaign can be found in the article “[How New York City Won Divestment from Fossil Fuels](#)”. The article, originally posted in *Portside*, is written by Nancy Romer, a member of the Environmental Justice Working Group of the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York and an activist in the divestment campaign which led to the January 2018 decision by New York City to divest \$5 billion of its pension funds (and to sue ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips).

The *Guide* and Nancy Romer’s article are available at a new [Divest/Invest Hub](#) on the LNS website, with plans for more campaign case studies and sample resolutions to be added. Guides with similar aims have been produced in the U.K.: for public sector unions: [Local Government Pension Funds – Divest From Carbon Campaign: A UNISON Guide](#) (January 2018); in 2017, Friends of the Earth-U.K. published [Briefing: Local government pensions: Fossil fuel divestment](#) and Friends of the Earth- Scotland published [Divest Reinvest: Scottish Council Pensions for a Future worth living in](#). The Public and Commercial Services Union published [Divest to Reinvest](#) in 2016.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Divestment](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [labour union policies](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Gender equity practices needed in the Canada's renewable energy sector

Posted on **April 16, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report argues that Canada's renewable energy and aligned "climate prosperity" initiatives are perpetuating employment and income inequities for women in Canada, and calls for the renewable energy sector—a major area of action on climate change—to incorporate gender equity practices in workforce training, hiring, and management. *Women and Climate Change Impacts and Action in Canada: Feminist, Indigenous and Intersectional Perspectives* states that in countries such as Canada, United States, Spain, Germany, and Italy, women hold only 20-25% of jobs in the sector, and the vast majority of these jobs are lower paid, non-technical, administrative and public relations positions. Further, while women face social-economic barriers that leave them bearing the brunt of climate change impacts, they are denied a role in developing policies and programs to mitigate climate change. *Women and Climate Change Impacts and Action in Canada* makes a unique contribution in examining the roles and knowledge of Indigenous women, and calls for solidarity across women's groups to advance the paradigm shifts necessary to achieve gender mainstreaming and climate justice in Canada. The report was produced in collaboration between the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience, with financial support from Work in a Warming World (W3) Project, partnered with Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change Project (ACW). A [summary of the findings](#) is at the ACW website; the full report is archived in the ACW Digital Library [here](#).

More on this topic: *Creating and Optimizing Employment Opportunities for Women in the Clean Energy Sector in Canada* (2016) is an informal working paper/knowledge synthesis by Bipasha Baruah, Canada Research Chair in Global Women's Issues at Western University. She states that "The conversation about gender equity or social justice (more broadly) in Canada's green economy is at best incipient and tokenistic", and calls for specific employment equity policies as well as a shift in societal attitudes. The article documents the same underrepresentation of women in the renewable energy industry, and argues that Canada lags other OECD countries in data collection and analysis, and policy initiatives. "Renewable inequity? Women's employment in clean energy in industrialized, emerging and developing economies" is a more formal article by Baruah which appeared in *Natural Resources Forum* (2017). The 2017 volume *Climate Change and Gender in Rich Countries: Work, Public Policy and Action*, edited by Marjorie Griffin Cohen, offers a still broader look at the issue of gender and climate change.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Gender](#), [Gender Equality](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Women in Renewable Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

L7 leaders alert to backsliding on Just Transition at the G7 meetings; Unionists share Just Transition experiences in Vancouver

Posted on **April 16, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In Ottawa on April 4 and 5, the Canadian Labour Congress, along with the International Trade Union Confederation and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), hosted the L7 meetings of international labour leaders, as part of Canada's presidency of the G7 this year. According to the [CLC press release](#), the L7 considered a full range of topics, including extension of bargaining rights, full employment, gender equity, and progressive trade – but also "welcomed the creation of a new G7 Employment Task Force – a key outcome of the G7 Employment Ministers meeting in Montréal from

March 26th to 28th.” The G7 Leaders’ official statement re Employment Outcomes and the Task force is [here](#); one of the “deliverables” is to “Share best practices and identify policy approaches to assist individuals in making the transition and adapting to changes in the labour market.” In the *L7 Evaluation of the Outcomes of the G7 Innovation and Employment Ministerial Meeting* released after the meetings, the unionists point out : “While discussing transitions, the text does not refer to “just transitions” in contrast to the outcomes of the Italian G7 presidency. The main proposals for transitions by the G7 focus on reviewing social protection and training systems. The support for “apprenticeship and training opportunities and adult upskilling programs” is welcome but is not enough and does not address financing and governance challenges.” The CLC press release states: “For trade unions, the Task Force should aim for “Just Transition” principles that ensure that workers are not paying the cost of the adjustment to decarbonisation, digitalisation and the shifts in production and services technologies.”



— Photo by Tracy Sherlock, from the National Observer, April 6

On April 5 and 6th in Vancouver, labour leaders from around the world presented and discussed their experiences at the Metro Vancouver Just Transition Roundtable, hosted by the B.C. Federation of Labour, the Canadian Labour Congress, Green Jobs B.C., the City of Vancouver, Vancouver and District Labour Council, and others. Amongst the speakers: B.C. Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger, who argued that “the two defining problems of our time are climate change and inequality”, and they need to be addressed together, and urgently. Samantha Smith, Director of the Just Transition Centre of the International Trade Union Confederation, provided European examples in her Keynote Address, and a spokesman from the United Federation of Danish Workers 3F, the largest trade union in Denmark, spoke of the clean economy investment of members’ pension funds. Other union speakers were from New Zealand and Norway. From Vancouver, City Councillor Andrea Reimer discussed their Renewable City Strategy and the Greenest City Action Plan. The Councillor reported that Vancouver has 25,000 green jobs (5% of all jobs), and that surprisingly, these are not in the transportation and waste recovery sectors, but in local food production, clean buildings and local technology companies. For a summary of the event, read “BC FED President Irene Lanzinger calls climate change and inequality ‘defining problems of our time’” in the *National Observer* (April 6).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Federation of Labour](#), [Canadian Labour Congress](#), [G7](#), [Just Transition](#), [L7](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

102 Cities globally are sourcing 70% of their energy from renewables

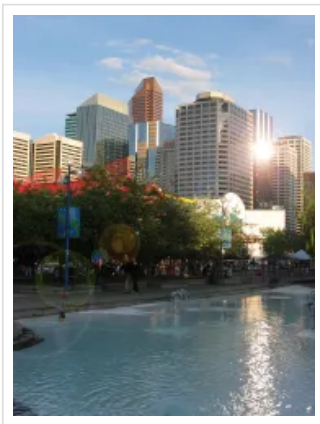
Posted on [March 9, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Recent meetings have prompted the release of several new research reports about cities, described as the “front-line of climate action” at the 10th anniversary [meetings of the EU’s Covenant of Mayors](#) in February . The biggest meeting, and first-ever [Cities and Climate Change Science Conference](#) , was co-sponsored by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and was held in Edmonton, Alberta in March 5 – 7. The conference commissioned [five reports](#) , and included several others, including “[Six Research Priorities for Cities and Climate Change](#)” , which appeared in *Nature* in February. Detailed [daily coverage of the conference](#) was provided by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD); the closing press release is [here](#) .

In advance of the IPCC Cities conference, CDP released [The World’s Renewable Energy Cities](#) report , with new data that shows that 102 cities around the world are now sourcing at least 70 percent of their electricity from renewables (more than double the 40 cities from their list in 2015). The 102 cities include Auckland (New Zealand); Nairobi (Kenya); Oslo (Norway); Seattle (USA) and from Canada: Montreal, Prince George (B.C.), Winnipeg, and Vancouver. The full report identifies data by type of renewable energy: hydropower, wind, solar photovoltaics, biomass and geothermal. Related, broader reports are: [Renewable Energy in Cities: State of the Movement](#) (Jan. 2018), which offers a global overview of local policy developments and documents from 2017, and [Renewable Energy in Cities](#) (October 2016) by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

All of these reports are more encouraging than another recent study in the news: “[Future heat waves, droughts and floods in 571 European cities](#)”, which appeared in *Environmental Research Letters* in February 2018. These are warnings we’ve read before, but this study offers unique detail: it names cities that could be expected to experience the worst flooding in the worst-case scenario – Cork and Waterford in Ireland, Santiago de Compostela in Spain – and those that could expect the worst droughts: Malaga and Almeria in Spain. Stockholm and Rome could expect the greatest increase in numbers of heatwave days, while Prague and Vienna could see the greatest increases in maximum temperatures.

Some recent news about Canadian cities:



As the IPCC Cities conference met in Edmonton, the nearby **City of Calgary** convened its own [Symposium](#) as part of the process to develop its Resilience Plan, to be presented to Council in Spring 2018. The website provides overview information and links to documentation, including nine research briefs in a series, [Building a Climate-Resilient City: Climate Change Adaptation in Calgary and Edmonton](#) from the Prairie Climate Resilience Centre, a project of the University of Winnipeg and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).



Vancouver: The [Renewable Cities](#) program at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver recently released two reports from a collaborative project called “[Mapping Enabling Policies for Vancouver’s 100% Renewable Energy Strategy](#)”. The *Policy Atlas* is a brief, graphic guide ; The *Dialogue Report* summarizes the views and discussion of 19 participants at a workshop held on November 30, 2017 – and attempts to clarify the roles of the federal, provincial, and local governments around issues such as a zero emission vehicles, energy efficiency in housing, land use planning, and electricification and distributed energy, among others.



Toronto: In February, Toronto City Council [approved \\$2.5 million](#) for its Transform TO climate plan – which is a fraction of the \$6.7 million in the budget recommended by city staff. The [Transform TO](#) goals include 80 per cent GHG reduction by 2050 (based on 1990 baseline); the website provides documentation and updates.

Finally, the mainstream *Globe and Mail* newspaper promises a new series of articles focusing on Canadian cities and climate change. The first installment: “[Halifax’s battle of the rising sea: Will the city be ready for future floods and storms?](#)” (March 5).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Adaptation](#), [Calgary](#), [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Edmonton](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Municipal Government](#), [renewable energy](#), [Toronto](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour activists raising environmental justice issues in Canada’s climate change policy

Posted on **March 9, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The featured article in the Winter 2018 issue of *Our Times* is “A Green Economy for All” , which describes the action-research project [Environmental Racism: The Impact of Climate Change on Racialized Canadian Communities: An Environmental Justice Perspective](#). The ultimate goal: to equip Black trade unionists and racialized activists in Canada with the tools they need to influence the public policy debate over climate change, to ensure that the new green economy does not look the same as the old white economy. With important inspiration from the Idle No More movement and the Indigenous experience in Canada, the project began with research into [what has already been written about environmental racism in Canada](#), along with a participatory social media campaign using the Twitter hashtag [#EnvRacismCBTUACW](#), to solicit more information about lived experience. The project has now reached its second phase, designing and facilitating workshops to develop activism around the issue. The [first of these workshops](#) was presented to the Elementary Teachers of Toronto (ETT) in December 2017. Facilitation questions, case studies and workshop information will be made publicly available, with the goal of engaging other social and political activists, as well as the labour movement.

The [Environmental Racism: The Impact of Climate Change on Racialized Canadian Communities](#) project was launched in 2017 by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) project at York University, in collaboration with [Coalition of Black Trade Unionists](#) , and is being led by Chris Wilson, Ontario Regional Coordinator for the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) and PSAC Ontario union negotiator Jawara Gairey.

“A Green Economy for All” also mentions the work of the [Toronto Environmental Alliance](#) , which produced a map of toxic concentrations in the city in 2005, and the forthcoming book [There's Something in the Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous and Black Communities](#), which highlights the grassroots resistance against environmental racism in Nova Scotia, and is written by Ingrid Waldron, an associate professor at Dalhousie University and Director of the [Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities & Community Health Project \(The ENRICH Project\)](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Barack Obama](#), [Coalition of Black Trade Unionists](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [environmental racism](#), [Green Economy](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [toxic chemicals](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Carla Lipsig-Mummé named 2018 winner of the Sefton-Williams Award for Contributions to Labour Relations

Posted on **March 1, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



York University Professor Carla Lipsig-Mummé has been named the 2018 winner of the Sefton-Williams Award for Contributions to Labour Relations. It is presented by the University of Toronto's Woodsworth College and the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, to honour those who have made a significant contribution to the field of labour relations and human rights. Previous eminent recipients of the award have included former President of the Canadian Auto Workers and the Canadian Labour Congress Bob White, feminist labour activist and Professor Emeritus of Women's Studies at York University Linda Briskin, and former Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada Ed Broadbent. The award is named in honour of Mr. Larry Sefton and Mr. Lynn Williams, two pioneering leaders of the United Steelworkers of America in Canada.

"Professor Lipsig-Mummé's research and activism in the labour relations field, most recently and innovatively exploring the link between climate change and the world of work, has bridged the gap between practitioner and scholar," said Professor Rafael Gomez, Director of the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. "The Sefton-Williams committee felt compelled to honour these achievements."



Carla Lipsig-Mummé is Professor of Work and Labour Studies at York University, and is currently Principal Investigator of the [Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change \(ACW\)](#) research project, which brings together 56 individual researchers and 25 partner organizations in seven countries. Its ground-breaking work has been recognized by the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). She has edited [Climate @ Work](#) (2013), and co-edited [Work in a Warming World](#), (2015), which present research from the ACW project.



The Award will be presented at the annual memorial lecture, to be held this year on Thursday, March 29, 2018 from 4:00 to 6:00 PM in the Kruger Hall Commons, Woodsworth College, 119 St. George St., Toronto. Juliet Schor, Professor of Sociology at Boston College, will deliver the memorial lecture entitled, “Dependence and Precarity in the ‘Sharing’ Economy.” To register for the free event, click [here](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal budget gets high marks for conservation initiatives but disappoints on green economy spending

Posted on **March 1, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Budget 2018, Equality + Growth: A Strong Middle Class was tabled by the federal government on February 27. The *Globe and Mail* published a concise overview in “[Federal budget highlights: Twelve things you need to know](#)” . A compilation of reaction and analysis from the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis is [here](#) , including statements from CCPA partner organizations such as the [United Steelworkers](#) and the [Canadian Labour Congress](#).



The section of the Budget which relates most to a low carbon economy is in [Chapter 4: Advancement](#) . The Budget commits an unprecedented \$1.3 billion over 5 years for conservation partnerships and the protection of lands, waters, and species at risk – prompting the Pew Trust in the U.S. to call the biodiversity targets “an example to the world” in “[With earth in peril, Canada steps up](#)” . Responses from the 19 environmental advocacy members of the Green Budget Coalition are [compiled here](#) , applauding the “historic” and “landmark” investments in the Budget. DeSmog Canada [summarizes the provisions](#), which aim to protect 17 per cent of land and 10 per cent of oceans by 2020 under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and commit to recognizing Indigenous leadership.

But on the climate change front?

The National Observer writes: "[Budget delivers new conservation fund but avoids climate commitments](#)" (Feb. 27) , highlighting the Budget allocations announced for the the \$2.6 Billion [Low Carbon Economy Fund](#) (announced in 2016) : \$420 million will go to Ontario, for retrofitting houses and reducing emissions from farms; \$260 million will go to Quebec for farming and forestry best practices, as well as energy retrofitting, and incentives for industry; \$162 million will go to British Columbia, partly for reforestation of public forests; \$150 million will go to Alberta for energy efficiency programs for farmers and ranchers, for renewable energy in Indigenous communities, and for restoring forests after wildfires; \$51 million is going to New Brunswick and \$56 million to Nova Scotia for energy retrofitting. Allocations for Manitoba will be announced later, and for Saskatchewan if it signs on to the Pan-Canadian Framework.

The Pembina Institute reaction is also fairly positive in "[Budget 2018 builds on last year's commitment to climate change](#)" . "We are pleased to see that Budget 2018 allocates \$109 million over five years to develop, implement, administer, and enforce the federal carbon pollution pricing system. ...Another \$20 million over five years is allocated to fulfill the PCF's (Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change) commitment to assess the effectiveness of its measures and identify best practices. "

Less positive reaction: "[Council of Canadians disappointed by Trudeau government's budget 2018](#)" (Feb.27), which points out that the government has allocated \$600 million to host the G7 summit in June 2018 in Quebec, yet the Budget fails to phase out subsidies for the fossil fuel industry, as it committed to at the G20 meetings and in the October 2015 election. Elizabeth May of the [Green Party](#) also "laments squandered opportunities" and points out that "Budget 2018 does not touch subsidies to fossil fuels in the oil patch and for fracked natural gas".

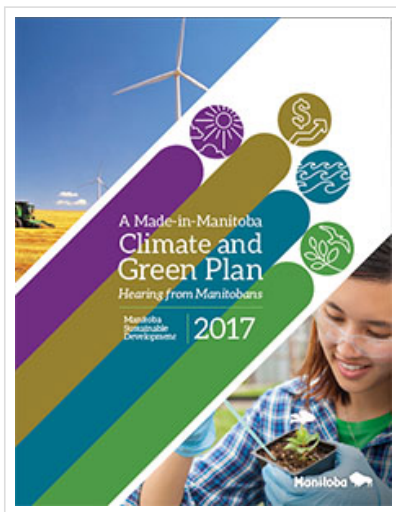
In advance of Budget 2018, the Canadian Labour Congress published "[What Canada's unions would like to see in the federal budget](#)" – a broad perspective which included a call for "a bold green economic program of targeted investments over the next five years for renewable energy development and infrastructure" ... and " the establishment of Just Transition training and adjustment funds for workers affected by climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy, automation, the digitisation of work, and job losses caused by trade agreements like CETA." The [CLC response](#) to the actual Budget emphasizes the positive developments on issues like pharmacare and pay equity, but is silent on the green economy issues. Canadian Union of Public Employees' [reaction](#) is similar.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Green Economy](#), [Low-Carbon Investment](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Manitoba joins the Pan-Canadian Framework, leaving Saskatchewan the odd-man-out

Posted on **February 26, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Facing a deadline of February 28 to qualify for approximately \$67 million in federal funding through the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, the province of Manitoba [announced](#) on February 23 that it will sign on to the Framework agreement. However, the province will not compromise on its flat \$25-a-tonne carbon price, as outlined in its [Made-in-Manitoba climate policy document](#) (October 2017).



Manitoba's letter announcing its adoption of the Pan-Canadian Framework is [here](#) . The federal government's letter welcoming Manitoba is [here](#) , stating that Manitoba will only be in compliance with the carbon pricing provisions until 2019. Ottawa has stated that it will review each province's carbon price plan every year starting in 2019, thus postponing until then any further conflict over the federal standard of a \$50 per tonne carbon price . Details of the \$2Billion Low Carbon Economy Fund, for which Manitoba now qualifies, are [here](#).

According to a [CBC report](#) (Feb. 26), Saskatchewan is now the only province not part of the Pan-Canadian Framework, and the federal government is "just waiting" and hoping that they will commit. New Premier Scott Moe, so far, is holding to the policies outlined in [Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy](#), released in December 2017 under previous Premier Brad Wall – a strong opponent of a carbon tax.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Manitoba](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Auditor General reports on B.C. climate policies; B.C. Budget only begins to answer the concerns

Posted on **February 26, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

B.C. Budget 2018 [was released](#) on February 20, highlighting a "made-in-BC child care plan, a comprehensive housing plan and record levels of capital investment." An 8-page [Highlights summary is here](#). The Budget was released just two days after the B.C. Auditor General's report, [Managing Climate Change Risks: An Independent audit](#), which found it unlikely that British Columbia will meet its 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target and is off track to meet its 2050 target. According to the Auditor General, the existing [Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) has not been updated since it was written in 2010, leaving the province without clear priorities, timelines or assignment of responsibilities. In addition, the Auditor General states that B.C. is not prepared for climate risks such as rising sea levels and increased frequency and intensity of wildfires. A [summary](#) of the Auditor General's report appeared in [The Tyee](#) on February 20.

How will the Budget help to meet the shortcomings of the climate change file? The Pembina Institute states "[B.C. budget = good news for families, businesses, and climate](#)", giving credit for investments in wildfire preparedness, energy-efficient social housing, and carbon-tax rebates for lower income households, yet calling for a clearer "road map" for energy and low carbon targets. (The Highlights document says that the government will invest a further \$72 million in community resilience and recovery, and rural development, to help survivors of the 2017 wildfire season). The Tyee also highlighted the need for more vision and ambition in "[NDP Told to Step Up Game on the Environment](#)" (Feb. 22). The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) describes the proposals for new incentives for large industrial emitters in "[BC budget unveils support for](#)

industry to prevent 'carbon leakage' . The David Suzuki Foundation [response](#) commends investments in transit, but criticizes the failure to extend the carbon tax to include methane gas. And [DeSmog blog notes](#) the absence of discussion in Budget 2018 of the single largest publicly funded project in the province – the Site C Dam.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alternative Budget proposals for a Just Transition and a low carbon economy

Posted on **February 23, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released its 23rd Alternative Budget (AFB) on February 22 in Ottawa, in advance of the federal government's February 26 Budget release. According to the summary at [Behind the Numbers](#) : "Our budget puts forward bold progressive policy ideas rooted in a rigorous economic and fiscal framework. Our approach considers not just standard budget items but delivers a gender-based analysis, examines income distribution effects, and projects the impacts on poverty rates." High priority areas for the CCPA include universal child care, pharmacare, gender equity, free tuition, and a green, low carbon economy.

The report argues that the current, relatively low unemployment levels make this an opportune time to begin "in earnest, the just transition to a green jobs future." In a section called "Industrial Strategy and Just Transition" the report calls for a National Decarbonization Strategy to be developed through broad consultation, and to act as a co-ordinating body for other AFB proposals – notably an enhanced Low Carbon Economy Fund to support cities and infrastructure investments, and a trade promotion strategy. A new \$500-million Just Transition Transfer (JTT) is proposed, to flow federal funds to provinces – for workers and communities affected through actions under the National Decarbonization Strategy or for existing provincial just transition programs, such as Alberta's Coal Workforce Transition Fund. Finally, the AFB calls for a new \$1Billion Strategic Training Fund to increase training capacity at colleges and trade schools – with the funds contingent on improved representation of women, racialized Canadians, immigrants, First Nations and other groups that have been historically excluded from the skilled trades.

Regarding the environment, some of the top-level goals are : Remove all direct and indirect subsidies for fossil fuel exploration, development and transportation; enforce a stringent national carbon pricing standard (rising to \$50 per tonne by 2020); contribute Canada's fair share of global climate financing; improve energy efficiency for Canadian homes, with \$600 million annually to offset the costs of retrofitting and construction; create a network of protected areas covering 17% of Canada's land and freshwater and 10% of its oceans; strengthen environmental protection laws and make advances toward sustainable fisheries, and invest \$50 million annually for a stronger environmental data and science system at Statistics Canada.

Read the full Alternative Federal Budget 2018 in [English](#) or in [French](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change policies](#), [coal phase-out](#), [Green Infrastructure](#), [Just Transition](#), [Retraining](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada announces a new Task Force on Just Transition for Coal-Power Workers

Posted on **February 21, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On February 16th, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change [announced](#) amendments to existing regulations to phase out traditional coal-fired electricity by 2030, along with new greenhouse gas regulations for natural-gas-fired

electricity. The proposed regulations are open to comment until April 18, 2018. The government's Technical Backgrounder is [here](#).

In fulfilment of a promise made to Canadian unions at the COP meetings in Bonn in December 2017, the Minister also [announced](#) the creation of a Task Force on the Just Transition for Canadian Coal-Power Workers and Communities. A detailed [statement of the Terms of Reference](#) calls for the Task Force to engage with specified stakeholder groups and provide policy options and recommendations by the end of 2018. The Minister will appoint 9 members and 2 chairs – with the strongest representation from labour unions, including a representative from the Canadian Labour Congress; from a provincial Federation of Labour in an affected province; from a union responsible for coal extraction; from a union in coal power generating facilities; and from a union in the skilled trades related to coal power. The rest of the Task Force will include a workforce development expert, a sustainable development expert; a past executive from a major Canadian electricity company or utility; and a municipal representative, identified in collaboration with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Reaction is generally supportive, as exemplified by the [Climate Action Network](#), or the [Pembina Institute](#). Members have not yet been named, although the expertise of the [Coal Transition Coalition](#), chaired by the Alberta Federation of Labour, would appear to be essential. Their report, *Getting it Right: A Just Transition Strategy for Alberta's Coal Workers*, was submitted to the [Alberta Advisory Panel on Coal Communities](#) in 2017, and recommended establishing an independent Alberta Economic Adjustment Agency to manage Just Transition.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta Coal Phase-out](#), [coal phase-out](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

National Energy Board is a casualty of Canada's new legislation for environmental assessment

Posted on [February 9, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On February 8, following 14 months of consultation and review, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change introduced the mammoth *Bill C-69 An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. The government [press release](#) from Environment and Climate Change Canada highlights these talking points about the proposed legislation- It will: Restore public trust through increased public participation; Included transparent, science-based decisions; Achieve more comprehensive impact assessments by expanding the types of impacts studied to include health, social and economic impacts, as well as impacts on Indigenous Peoples, over the long-term. Also, it promises "One project, one review" – through a new Impact Assessment Agency, (replacing the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency) which will be the lead agency, working with a new Canadian Energy Regulator (replacing the National Energy Board), as well as the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and Offshore Boards. Further, it will make decisions timely; Revise the project list; Protect water, fish and navigation ; and Increase funding. The detailed government explanation of the changes is [here](#) ; other summaries appeared in the *National Observer* in "[McKenna unveils massive plan to overhaul Harper environmental regime](#)" ; "[Ottawa to scrap National Energy Board, overhaul environmental assessment process for major projects](#)" in CBC News; and in [the reaction by The Council of Canadians](#), which expresses reservations about the protection of navigable waters, and these "Quick Observations":

- 1- the current industry-friendly Calgary-based National Energy Board would be replaced by a proposed Calgary-based (and likely industry-friendly) Canadian Energy Regulator
- 2- it includes the 'one project, one review' principle as demanded by industry
- 3- assessments of major projects must be completed within two years, a 'predictable timeline' also demanded by industry
- 4- the bill notes the 'traditional knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada' but does not include the words 'free, prior and informed consent', a key principle of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- 5- McKenna said that no current projects (including the Kinder Morgan pipeline which crosses more than 1,300 water

courses) would be sent back to 'the starting line'
6- the government is seeking to implement the law by mid-2019.”

An overview of other reaction appears in “[New Federal Environmental Assessment Law Earns Praise from Climate Hawks, Cautious Acceptance from Fossils](#)” from the *Energy Mix*. Reaction from [West Coast Environmental Law \(WCEL\)](#) is here ; and from [Environmental Defence](#) here . The [Canadian Environmental Law Association](#) sees some forward progress but warns that “the Impact Assessment Act is marred by a number of serious flaws that must be fixed in the coming months.” [Reaction from the Pembina Institute](#) says “Today’s legislation improves the federal assessment process by centralizing authority for impact assessment under a single agency; providing a broader set of criteria for assessing projects including impacts to social and health outcomes; and removing the limitations on public participation that were put in place in 2012.... Building on today’s legislation, we would like to see progress towards the establishment of an independent Canadian Energy Information Agency to ensure that project reviews include Paris Agreement-compliant supply and demand scenarios for coal, oil and gas.”

Companion legislation, also the product of the lengthy Environmental Regulation Review, was introduced on February 6, [Bill C-68 An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence](#) (Press release is [here](#) ; there is also a [Backgrounder](#) comparing the old and new legislation). Most importantly, Bill C-68 restores a stronger protection of fish and fish habitat – the HADD provision – to the definition used before the 2012 amendments by the Harper government. (HADD = the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat). Reaction is generally very favourable: The [David Suzuki Foundation](#) says : “The most important changes we were looking for are part of these amendments” and [West Coast Environmental Law](#) says that the proposed legislation “meets the mark”. Reaction is also favourable from the [Ecology Action Centre](#) in Halifax . And from the Alberta Environmental Law Centre, some background in “[Back to what we once HADD: Fisheries Act Amendments are Introduced](#)” .



And finally, where does the new environmental assessment process leave Canada’s Indigenous people? The new legislation includes the creation of an Indigenous Advisory Committee and requires that an expert on Indigenous rights be included on the board of the new Canadian Energy Regulator body, according to a CBC report, “[Indigenous rights question remains in Ottawa’s planned environmental assessment overhaul](#)” . Minister McKenna is also quoted as saying the government will “try really hard” to conform to the principles of the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) – a statement that is not satisfactory to some Indigenous leaders. See “[Indigenous consultation and environmental assessments](#)” (Feb. 7) in *Policy Options* for a discussion of the issue of “free, prior and informed consent”. On February 7, Private member’s [Bill C-262, an Act to Harmonize Canada’s Laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) passed 2nd reading in the House of Commons.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Canadian Energy Regulator](#), [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act](#), [Environmental Assessment](#), [Environmental law](#), [Environmental regulation](#), [First Nations](#), [Fisheries Industry](#), [Impact Assessment Agency](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [National Energy Board](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline ignites a trade war between Alberta and British Columbia

Posted on February 7, 2018 by [elizabethperry493](#)



Pipeline politics have ignited a trade war between the governments of Alberta and British Columbia – both led by NDP Premiers – with the [Prime Minister clearly siding with Alberta](#) and the construction of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline, as recently as February 1. The latest episode in the longstanding interprovincial feud was triggered on January 30, when the B.C. government announced the formation of an independent scientific advisory panel to determine whether diluted bitumen can be effectively cleaned up after being spilled in water, and “Until that committee reports, the government will impose a regulation prohibiting any expansion, either by pipeline or rail, of heavy oil sands crude.” Details are in [“B.C. announces oil transportation restrictions that could affect Kinder Morgan”](#) in the *National Observer* (Jan. 30); [“B.C.’s Action on Bitumen Spills ‘Finds Kinder Morgan’s Achilles’ Heel’](#) (Feb. 5).

Alberta’s reaction was strong. First, in what Toronto’s *Globe and Mail* described as a “spat” on February 1: [“Alberta suspends electricity talks with B.C. over pipeline fight”](#). In a few days, *The Energy Mix* wrote [“Sour Grapes: Alberta to stop importing B.C. wine over Kinder Morgan feud”](#) (Feb. 6) and [“Alberta Declares Boycott of B.C. Wine in Escalating Kinder Morgan Dispute”](#) (Feb. 7). CBC News reports reveal the escalating emotions: [“The Alberta vs. B.C. pipeline fight. Now it’s war.”](#) (Feb. 3) and [“Weaponizing wine: Notley’s engineering a federal crisis in her battle with B.C.”](#) and [“Oil, water and wine: “Escalating Alberta-B.C. feud threatens future of Trans Mountain pipeline”](#) (Feb. 7); DeSmog Canada wrote [“This might get Nasty: Why the Kinder Morgan standoff between Alberta and B.C. is a Zero-Sum Game”](#) (Feb. 2). On February 9, Alberta’s Premier announced [“a task force of prominent Canadians to respond to B.C.’s unconstitutional attack on the Trans Mountain Pipeline and the jobs that go with it”](#). The [Market Access Task Force](#) is loaded with government representatives and oil industry executives.

If you only have time to read one article about this dispute, read the analysis of Alberta’s Parkland Institute, in [Let’s share actual facts about the Trans Mountain Pipeline](#). The three claims being made by the Alberta government are: 1. the pipeline would generate \$18.5 billion for “roads, schools, and hospitals”; 2. it would create 15,000 jobs during construction, and 3. it would create 37,000 jobs per year. With deep expertise in the oil and gas industry, Parkland explains how these numbers were derived and why they are mostly outdated and selective.



Protests against Kinder Morgan will continue in B.C., with the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation calling for a mass demonstration on Burnaby Mountain in March. – see the CBC summary [here](#).

Stepping back, see Andrea Harden-Donahue's January 24 blog for the Council of Canadians, "[#StopKM: State of Resistance](#)", which details past resistance and demonstrations against KM, and states that "the [Pull Together](#) campaign recently reached the fundraising target of \$625,000 towards Indigenous legal challenges." For a view of the legal issues and lawsuits (including First Nations') in this longstanding fight, see a West Coast Environmental Law blog published on January 17, before this war erupted: "[Whose \(pipe\)line is it anyway? Adventures in jurisdictional wonderland](#)".

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [First Nations](#), [Oil pipelines](#), [Trade Policy](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

UPDATED: How universities can confront climate change: new Canadian guide, and a new North American network

Posted on **February 6, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Confronting Climate Change on Campus is a newly-released guide by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT/ACPPU), in response to growing awareness and concern amongst the professors and researchers who are members. It presents a three-step plan of practical action to be followed by academic staff associations and researchers across Canada: To reduce the carbon footprint of campuses by improving building energy conservation and promoting low-carbon transportation; to expand course offerings dedicated to climate change, and to encourage climate change research through grants and awards; and to advocate for the creation of association or institutional environment committees, or work with established committees, such as collective bargaining or workplace joint health and safety committees, to push climate change concerns. The French version of the guide is [here](#).

The [University Climate Change Coalition](#), to be known also as UC3, was launched on February 6 at the [2018 Higher Education Climate Leadership Summit](#) in Arizona. The new, North American-wide network pledges to leverage their research and to accelerate local and regional climate action. To begin, in 2018 each UC3 institution will organize a climate change forum tailored to local and regional objectives, to bring together community and business leaders, elected officials and advocates. The 13 participating research institutions include University of British Columbia and University of Toronto, whose [press release about UC3](#) also provides an update on U of T sustainability policies and initiatives. The remaining UC3 institutions are: Arizona State University, California Institute of Technology, Tecnológico de Monterrey, La Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ohio State University, State University of New York, University of California, University of Colorado, University of Maryland, University of New Mexico, and University of Washington.

The growing awareness and concern amongst Canadian academics can be partly credited to the research efforts of the Sustainability and Education Policy Network (SEPN) at the University of Saskatchewan, which CAUT has highlighted, most recently in "[The Politics of Climate Change](#)" in the *CAUT Bulletin* (June 2017). The article summarizes results of a

survey of Canadian colleges and universities by researchers at SEPN, and calls for exactly the kinds of actions addressed in the new CAUT guide. The scholarly article on which the *CAUT Bulletin* article is based, "Climate Change and the Canadian Higher Education System: An Institutional Policy Analysis", appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* in June 2017. The key findings are: "less than half (44 per cent) have climate change-specific policies in place; those policies focus most often upon the built-campus environment with "underdeveloped secondary responses" to research, curriculum, community outreach and governance policies; and the "overwhelming" response of modifying infrastructure and curbing energy consumption and pollution, while important, risks masking deeper social and cultural dynamics which require addressing." A 2-page summary is [here](#) ; an infographic is [here](#).

Other relevant SEPN publications include "The State of Fossil Fuel Divestment in Canadian Post-secondary Institutions" (2016) ; "50 Shades of Green: An Examination of Sustainability Policy on Canadian Campuses" (2015) , and the related Research Brief *Greenwashing in Education: How Neoliberalism and Policy Mobility May Undermine Environmental Sustainability* (2014), and "Greening the Ivory Tower: A Review of Educational Research on Sustainability in Post-secondary Education" , which appeared in the journal *Sustainability* in 2013.

And elsewhere in the world: According to *The Guardian*, on February 5, the University of Edinburgh , which divested from coal and tar sands investments in 2015, announced that it will sell its final £6.3m of fossil fuel holdings. Edinburgh has a £1bn endowment fund, (exceeded in the U.K. only by Cambridge and Oxford). Signalling the change to a more climate-friendly investment strategy, Edinburgh has invested £150m in low carbon technology, climate-related research, and businesses that directly benefit the environment.

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UNISON launches a campaign for pension fund divestment with a Guide for Local Unions

Posted on **February 6, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On January 10, 2018, the U.K. union UNISON [launched a campaign](#) to encourage members of local government pension schemes to push for changes in the investment of their funds – specifically, to “explore alternative investment opportunities, allowing schemes to sell their shares and bonds in fossil fuels and to go carbon-free.” A key tool in this campaign: [Local Government Pension Funds – Divest From Carbon Campaign: A UNISON Guide](#), which states: “Across the UK there are nearly 50 divestment campaigns targeting local government pension funds In September this year, it was revealed that a total of £16 billion is invested in the fossil fuel industry by Local Government Pension funds.” The new Guide explains how the U.K. pension system works for local government employees, and provides case studies of existing divestment campaigns. In addition, it provides “Campaign Resources”, including a model campaign letter, a glossary of pension and investment terms, and it reproduces the Pensions and Climate Motion passed at the 2017 UNISON Delegates conference. The Guide was written by UNISON, in collaboration with ShareAction – a registered U.K. charity that promotes responsible investment practices by pension providers and fund managers.



Information about the divestment campaign, as well as information about the [National Auditor's Report](#) re the U.K. Green Investment Bank, is included in the [January-February](#) issue of the newsletter of the [Greener Jobs Alliance](#), a U.K. partnership of “trade unions, student organisations, campaigning groups and a policy think tank.” The Greener Jobs Alliance is part of the [Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Group](#), which is organizing an event on March 10 in London: [Jobs & Climate: Planning for a Future that Doesn't Cost the Earth](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Divestment](#), [Divestment - Case studies](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [labour union policies](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [UNISON](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: Autonomous vehicles in Canada, job displacement, and bargaining at UPS

Posted on [February 5, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



[Autonomous Vehicles and the Future of Work in Canada](#) is a report released on January 11 by the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC) and funded by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiatives Program. It provides an overview of the technology and benefits of autonomous vehicles, including “smart cities”. Most of the report is dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the impact of AV's to Canada's labour market, forecasting a demand of approximately 34,700 jobs in the industry by 2021, and considering the issues of job displacement and occupational skill requirements. The ICTC forecasts that the integration of AV technology will be slowed down in the trucking industry by a shortage of drivers (estimated by the Canadian Truckers Alliance as 34,000 by 2024), giving the industry a buffer of time to plan training and retraining strategies. The report considers non-driving occupations (including mechanics, dispatchers, auto assembly workers, insurance underwriters, heavy equipment operators) in a “deeper dive” about education, wages, and demand. The most in-demand occupations, with the highest wages, are forecast to be in Information Technology: software and computer engineers, database analysts, computer programmers, etc. . The report concludes with five recommendations centered around the need for more research and greater integration between policymakers, industry and academic experts, so that Canada can catch up with the autonomous vehicle “powerhouse” countries: U.S., Germany, and Japan.

The Canadian [Senate Standing Committee on Transportation and Communication](#) released its report on autonomous vehicles in January 2018, after hearing from over 78 witnesses from across Canada and the United States between March and October 2017 (The testimony is compiled [here](#)). The [Submission by Teamsters Canada](#) (Oct. 2017) focused mostly on the safety concerns of driverless vehicles, but raised the issue of displaced workers and their pension and benefits, stating that “Teamsters Canada believes the study of automated and connected vehicles is not just a technical study, it must examine the social and workplace consequences of technology adoption.” A fuller view of the concerns of Teamsters (and B.C. Taxi drivers) appears in an article in *The Tyee*, “[Job Losses from Automated Vehicles Worry Truckers](#)” (Feb. 2).



The issue of autonomous vehicles is being tested in the negotiations underway between UPS and the Teamsters in the U.S. An article from the *Wall Street Journal* is reposted at the Teamsters' website: "[Teamsters tell UPS no Drones or Driverless Trucks](#)". The Teamsters Union has been closely monitoring all aspects of the technology and appeared at a House of Representatives Committee hearing on autonomous vehicles, according to a [Teamsters press release](#) from June 2017.

Within Canada, Ontario strives to be the leader in autonomous vehicle development, and employs almost 10,000 workers in the industry as of November, 2017, when the Premier [announced the launch](#) of an Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network at Stratford, Ontario. Part of the \$80 million investment over 5 years will be spent on a Talent Development Program, to support internships and fellowships for students and recent graduates with Ontario companies advancing C/AV technologies. Full details are at [The AVIN Hub](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [autonomous vehicles](#), [driverless vehicles](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [smart cities](#), [Teamsters Canada](#), [Transportation](#), [Trucking Industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Tech investment in Canada held back by a “fossil fuel comfort zone” and lack of financial disclosure

Posted on [February 4, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

“[Canadian cleantech startups get ready for a breakout year](#)” appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on January 3, 2018 citing a 2017 report by Cleantech Group, which ranked Canada “fourth in the world as a clean-technology innovator – and tops among Group of Twenty countries – up from seventh place in 2014.” Then on January 24, the San Francisco-based company Cleantech Group [released](#) its ninth annual Global Cleantech 100 list for 2018 ; the [List](#) includes 13 Canadian companies, and the full Report is [here](#) (free; registration required). Sure enough, Canada has improved its showing. And on January 18, the Government of Canada [announced](#) that the federal government will invest \$700 million over the next five years through the [Business Development Bank of Canada](#) (BDC) “to grow Canada’s clean technology industry, protect the environment and create jobs”, as part of its larger Investment and Skills funding. The same press release also announced the launch of the Clean Growth Hub, the government’s “focal point for clean technology”, which will focus on supporting companies and projects that produce clean technology, as well as coordinate existing programs and track results.

Yet in reaction to the government's announcement, the president of [Analytica Advisors](#), which publishes an annual review of Canadian clean tech, had this to say in the *National Post* : “A \$700-million investment to help clean technology firms expand and develop new products won’t turn Canada’s clean-tech industry into the “trillion dollar opportunity” the government keeps touting until we get out of our fossil-fuel comfort zone”. She also co-authored an OpEd in the *Globe and*

Mail, “[Canada’s financial sector is missing in action on climate change](#)” (Jan. 23) where she berates the Canadian financial community for sitting on the sidelines amidst international initiatives for more climate-risk disclosure so that those risks can be priced into investment decisions. For an update on the Canadian scene regarding this issue, see “[Modernizing financial regulation to address climate-related risks](#)” by Keith Stewart, in *Policy Options* (Feb. 2).

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean Tech](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Financial Risk](#), [Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Circular economy contributes to clean growth – but what are the implications for jobs?

Posted on [February 4, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Getting to a Circular Economy: A primer for Canadian policymakers was released by Smart Prosperity (formerly Sustainable Prosperity) on January 24, the first in a planned series of policy briefs and blogs on the topic. This introductory Primer starts from the widely-held premise that current global production and consumption models are unsustainable, and states that “Canadian discussion on the circular economy has been overshadowed by the national emphasis on climate change and clean growth. In fact, the two approaches have significant goals in common: a focus on a low-carbon economy and on economic growth, innovation and new technologies.”

The Primer uses a broad definition developed by Canada’s Circular Economy Lab (CEL): circular economy is “an approach to maximize value and eliminate waste by improving (and in some cases transforming) how goods and services are designed, manufactured and used. It touches on everything from material to business strategy to the configuration of regulatory frameworks, incentives and markets.” The Policy Brief provides a catalogue and description of the major circular economy policies and initiatives from around the world, especially Europe; from Canada, these include the [National Zero Waste Council](#), the [Circular Economy Lab](#), L’Institut d’environnement, du développement durable et de l’économie circulaire (EDDEC) in Quebec, and [BioFuelNet](#), through which Warren Mabee of the ACW conducts research on advanced biofuels. The Brief concludes by proposing “Top 6 Tools for Accelerating the Circular Economy in Canada”, including extended producer responsibility programs and policies; green procurement; and public investments in circular economy related research, development, innovation and pilots.” The Brief identifies one of the research gaps as the need to understand the social and employment impacts of the circular economy, and how to manage them.

In related news, on January 22 at the World Economic Forum meetings in Davos, the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE) [was launched](#), with an agreement between the United Nations Environment Program and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the prominent U.K. charity whose mission is to accelerate the shift to a circular economy. To kick off the project, eleven global corporations pledged that all their packaging will be reused, recycled or composted by the year 2025.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [packaging industry](#), [Recycling](#), [Zero Waste](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trump's solar tariffs may impact solar jobs worldwide

Posted on **February 4, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Donald Trump's decision to [impose tariffs on solar panels and washing machines](#) on January 23 was roundly criticized on many grounds – most frequently, the impact on jobs in the solar industry, as stated in the *New York Times* Editorial on January 23, “[Mr. Trump's Tariffs will not bring back manufacturing jobs](#)”. The *Times* supported their opinion with several articles, including “[Trump's Solar Tariffs are clouding the industry's future](#)” (Jan. 23), which states: “Far more workers are employed in areas that underpin the use of solar technology, such as making steel racks that angle the panels toward the sun. And the bulk of workers in the solar industry install and maintain the projects, a process that is labor-intensive and hard to automate.” The Solar Energy Industries Association in the U.S. response is [here](#), and their [Fact Sheet](#) (Feb. 2) explains the terms and impact of the decision. The Solar Foundation released its [8th annual Jobs Census](#) on February 7, revealing the first-ever year of decline in the number of jobs, but still a census of over 250,000 workers. For a thorough overview, see the Fact Checker article by the *Washington Post*, “[Trump says solar tariff will create 'a lot of jobs.' But it could wipe out many more](#)” (Jan. 29).

Three [Canadian solar companies](#) immediately filed a suit against the tariffs in the U.S. Court of International Trade, arguing that they violate NAFTA. The EU, China, South Korea, and Taiwan have also filed complaints at the World Trade Organization. For a deeper look at the possible implications for other countries, including Canada, consider the complexity of global trade: From an excellent overview in *The Energy Mix*: “[Trump Solar Tariff may be opening salvo in trade war](#)”: “Although China appeared to be Trump's intended target, the tariff on solar cells and panels will mostly hit workers in other countries. Thanks to dispersed supply chains—and partly in response to previous U.S. tariffs—solar photovoltaic manufacturing is a global industry. Malaysia, South Korea, and Vietnam all hold a larger share of the U.S. market than China does directly. And all are entitled to seek remedies under various trade agreements.” *The Energy Mix* item refers to “[U.S. tariffs aimed at China and South Korea hit targets worldwide](#)” in the *New York Times* (Jan. 23), which adds: “Suniva, one of the American solar companies that had sought the tariffs, filed for bankruptcy protection last year, citing the effects of Chinese imports. But [the majority owner of Suniva is itself Chinese](#), and the company's American bankruptcy trustee supported the trade litigation over the objections of the Chinese owners.” From Reuters, “[Why the US decision on solar panels could hit Europe and Asia hard](#)” states that Goldman Sachs estimated that the tariffs implied “a 3-7 percent cost increase for utility-scale and residential solar costs, respectively Two key exclusions with respect to technology and certain countries (Canada/Singapore, among others) were included as part of the (initial) recommendation.” [Canadian Solar](#), founded in Canada but a multinational traded on NASDAQ, is one the world's biggest panel manufacturers.

For an overview of the current state of the U.S. renewable energy markets and labour force, including solar, see [In Demand: Clean Energy, Sustainability and the new American Workforce](#) (Jan. 2018), co-authored by Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and Meister Consultants Group. Highlights: there are 4 million clean energy jobs in the U.S., with wind and solar energy jobs outnumbering coal and gas jobs in 30 states. Quoting the IRENA [Renewable Energy and Jobs](#)

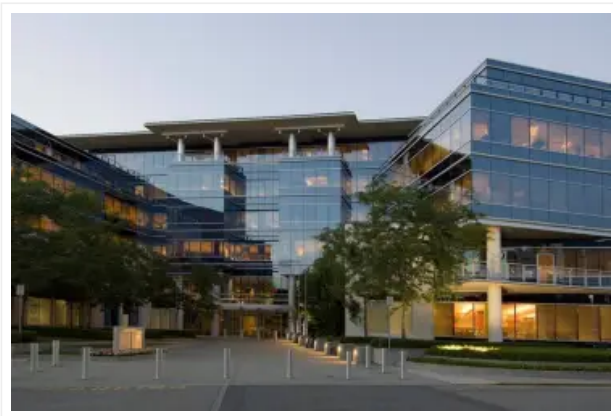
Annual Review for 2017, the *In Demand* report states that: “The solar industry grew 24.5 percent to employ 260,000 workers, adding jobs at nearly 17 times the rate of the overall economy in 2016.” The coal industry employs 160,000 workers in the U.S. *In Demand* compiles statistics from the U.S. Department of Energy, International Energy Agency, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and many others, about current and projected clean energy markets and employment in the U.S.: renewable energy, energy efficiency, alternative vehicles, and energy storage and advanced grid sectors.

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Donald Trump](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [Trade Policy, United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

LEED Green buildings deliver energy savings, reduced emissions, and health benefits – including reduced absenteeism

Posted on **February 1, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new study which examined how LEED-certified green buildings had performed over a 16 year period reported that the green buildings delivered \$7.5B in energy savings, \$1.4B of benefits in reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and a further \$4.4B in public health benefits. Those health benefits included an estimate of 21,000 lost days of work avoided in the U.S. alone; other health benefits derive from avoiding an estimated 172–405 premature deaths, 171 hospital admissions, 11,000 asthma exacerbations, 54,000 respiratory symptoms, and 16,000 lost days of school in the U.S. The results are summarized in “[Harvard study: Green buildings deliver nearly \\$6bn in health and climate benefits](#)”; the full study appears as “[Energy savings, emission reductions, and health co-benefits of the green building movement](#)” in the *Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology online* (Jan. 30) (restricted access). The study was commissioned by the engineering company United Technologies Corporation and conducted by researchers at Harvard’s [Healthy Buildings program](#) at the T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Buildings studied were located in the U.S., China, India, Brazil, Germany and Turkey.



— Willingdon Office building, Burnaby B.C. – photo from the website of [Lighthouse Sustainable Building Centre](#)

Although Canada was not included in the study, on January 22, the Canada Green Building Council [announced](#) that Canada ranked second amongst countries outside the U.S. for its LEED-certified buildings, with a current total of 2,970 projects totaling more than 40.77 million gross square meters of space. The [2017 annual Top 10 Countries and Regions for LEED list](#) is compiled by the U.S. Green Building Council to recognize LEED markets outside the U.S., which remains

the largest market at 30,669 projects with 385.65 million gross square meters of space. China is the largest market outside the U.S., followed by Canada, followed by India, Brazil, and Germany. In February 2018, certification and professional credentialing services for LEED and other energy-efficiency programs in Canada will change, with the launch of a joint venture between the Canada Green Building Council and for-profit Green Building Certification Inc. Canada (GBCI). The relationship of the two bodies is outlined in [their press release](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [absenteeism](#), [Canada Green Building Council](#), [green buildings](#), [indoor air quality](#), [LEED](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil sands companies called on to “keep it in the ground” – but Suncor opens new mine near Fort McMurray, deploys driverless trucks

Posted on **January 31, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The majority of Alberta oil sands production is owned by the five companies: Canadian Natural Resources Limited (CNRL), Suncor Energy, Cenovus Energy, Imperial Oil, and Husky Energy. *What the Paris Agreement Means for Alberta's Oil Sands Majors*, released on January 31 by the Parkland Institute, evaluates what the 2°C warming limit in the Paris Agreement means for those “Big Five” – by assessing their emissions-reduction disclosures and targets, climate change-related policies, and actions, in light of their “carbon liabilities.” The carbon liabilities are calculated using three levels for the Social Cost of Carbon, ranging from \$50, \$100, and \$200 per tonne. Even under the most conservative scenario, the carbon liabilities of each corporation are more than their total value, and the combined carbon liabilities of the Big Five (\$320 billion) are higher than Alberta's GDP of \$309 billion. Conclusion: “the changes required to remain within the Paris Agreement's 2°C limit signals a need for concrete, long-term “wind-down” plans to address the challenges and changes resulting from global warming, including the fact that a significant portion of known fossil fuel reserves must remain underground.” *What the Paris Agreement Means for Alberta's Oil Sands Majors* was written by Ian Hussey and David Janzen, and published by the Parkland Institute as part of the SSHRC-funded Corporate Mapping Project. A [National Observer](#) article reviewed the report and published responses from the Big Five companies on January 31.



Rather than keeping it in the ground, Suncor Energy [announced](#) on January 29 that it is continuing to ramp up production at its Fort Hill oilsands mine, about 90 kilometres north of Fort McMurray. The next day, Suncor also [announced](#) the beginning of a 6-year phase-in of approximately 150 autonomous electric trucks at numerous locations. The company said it will “continue to work with the union on strategies to minimize workforce impacts,” and that “current plans show that the earliest the company would see a decrease in heavy equipment operator positions at Base Plant operations is 2019.” Reaction from the local union is here in [a notice on the website of Unifor 707A](#); Unifor National Office response is here: [“Driverless trucks aren’t the solution for Suncor”](#). The *National Observer* published an interview with a Suncor spokesperson on January 31. According to [“Suncor Energy says driverless trucks will eliminate a net 400 jobs in the oilsands”](#), Suncor is the first oil sands company to use driverless trucks, and “Suncor’s plan to test the autonomous truck systems was initially criticized by the Unifor union local because of job losses. But Little says Suncor is working with the union to minimize job impacts by retraining workers whose jobs will disappear. The company has been preparing for the switch by hiring its truck drivers, including those at its just-opened Fort Hills mine, on a temporary basis.”

The good news is that “the era of oil sands mega-projects will likely end with Suncor Energy’s 190,000 barrel-per-day Fort Hills mining project, which started producing this month”, according to an article by Reuters. The bad news is in the title of that article: [“Why Canada is the next frontier for shale oil”](#) (Jan. 29). The article extols the strengths of Alberta’s mining industry, and quotes a spokesman for Chevron Corporation who calls the Duvernay and Montney formations in Canada “one of the most promising shale opportunities in North America.” For a quick summary, read [“Montney, Duvernay Oil and Gas Fields Seize the Momentum from Athabasca Tar Sands/Oil Sands”](#) (Jan. 31) in the *Energy Mix*.

Also, consider the work of Ryan Schultz of the Alberta Geological Survey. Most recently, he is the lead author of [“Hydraulic fracturing volume is associated with induced earthquake productivity in the Duvernay play”](#), which appeared in the journal *Science* on January 18, and which is summarized in the *Calgary Herald* on January 18. It discusses the complexities of how fracking has caused earthquakes in the area.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [autonomous vehicles](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Fracking](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Retraining](#), [Social Cost of Carbon](#), [Stranded Assets](#), [Suncor Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario’s GHG emissions at lowest level since 1990 – Environmental Commissioner commends the first year of cap and trade but recommends changes for freight sector, green procurement

Posted on **January 30, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On January 30, 2018 the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) submitted her annual Greenhouse Gas Progress Report to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario – an independent, non-partisan review of the government’s progress in reducing emissions for 2016-2017. The report, *Ontario’s Climate Act: From Plan to Progress* covers the period since the *Climate Change Action Plan* was introduced in June 2016, and the cap and trade market became effective January 2017. The report provides detailed emissions statistics by sector and sub-sector, catalogues and critiques climate-related policies, and places Ontario’s initiatives in a national and international context – especially the cap and trade market and its relationship with the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. Top-level findings: overall, GHG emissions were at the lowest level since reporting began in 1990 and “the first year of cap and trade went remarkably well”. Because Ontario’s market is part of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI) which includes California and Quebec, the report warns that prices make weaken because of political uncertainty in the U.S., and also calls for more “bang for the bucks” in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Account, which manages the proceeds of the carbon auctions. Chapter 4 includes an explanation and critique of Ontario’s proposed carbon offsets, which are also tied to the WCI, and states that some sectors at some risk of being little more than greenwashing. The Commissioner singles out the emissions of Ontario’s transportation industry and states that it will be impossible to meet Ontario’s emissions reduction targets unless urgent action is taken to rein in emissions from the freight sector, with recommendations to “encourage the freight sector to avoid trucking where possible (e.g., through logistics and road pricing), improve diesel truck efficiency (e.g., through incenting the scrapping of older diesel trucks), and shift freight away from fossil fuels (e.g., providing more targeted support for zero-emission trucks).”



The report also calls for improved green procurement policies in government’s own spending and a stronger climate lens for regulation, taxation and fiscal policies. The Ministry of Energy is singled out in this regard: “For example, the Ministry of Energy by itself governs 70% of Ontario’s emissions, yet its 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan does little to achieve Ontario’s climate targets.” An 8-page summary of the report is [here](#) ; the full report, (all 284 pages) is [here](#) ; eight Technical Appendices are available from [this link](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [Carbon Offsets](#), [Green procurement](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Trucking Industry](#), [Western Climate Initiative](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada needs a mix of reactive and proactive Just Transition policies across the country

Posted on **January 26, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



“Making Decarbonization Work for Workers: Policies for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy” was released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives on January 25th. In light of the [federal government’s pledge](#) to launch a Task Force on Just Transition in 2018, this report makes a unique contribution by using census data to identify the regions in each province with the greatest reliance on fossil fuel jobs. While fossil fuel dependence is overwhelmingly concentrated in Alberta, with a few “hot spots” in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the report identifies communities from other provinces where fossil fuel jobs represent a significant part of the local economy – for example, Bay Roberts, Newfoundland; Cape Breton, Nova Scotia; Saint John, New Brunswick; Sarnia, Ontario. The report also makes the useful distinction between “reactive” just transition policies, which are intended to minimize the harm to workers of decarbonization, and “pro-active” just transition policies, which are intended to maximize the benefits. The author argues that, if the broad goal of a just transition is to ensure an equitable, productive outcome for all workers in the zero-carbon economy, a mix of reactive and proactive elements is necessary. Thus, a national just transition strategy is required for fossil fuel-dependent communities, but workers in any industry facing job loss and retraining costs will also need support from enhanced social security programs. In addition, governments must invest in workforce development programs to ensure there are enough skilled workers to fill the new jobs which will be created by the zero-carbon economy.

Making Decarbonization Work for Workers is a co-publication by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change research program. The author is CCPA researcher Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Green Economy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Retraining](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Rolls out Green Policies, including Fighting Plastics, Phasing Out Coal, and Encouraging Divestment

Posted on **January 16, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Facing criticism for recent policy reversals which have resulted, for example, in falling investment in clean energy in the U.K. in 2016 and 2017, the government has recently attempted a re-set with its policy document: *A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*, released on January 11. “Conservatives’ 25-year green plan: main points at a glance” (Jan. 11) in *The Guardian* summarizes the initiatives, which focused on reducing use of plastics (in line with a recent EU decision), encouraging wildlife habitat, and establishment of an environmental oversight body. Specifics are promised soon; the Green Alliance provides some proposals in “Here’s what Theresa May should now do to end plastic pollution” (Jan. 11). George Monbiot is one of many critics of the government policy, in his *Opinion Piece*.

In the lead-up to the long-term Green Future policy statement, other recent developments have included: 1. Changes to investment regulations to encourage **divestment**. “Boost for fossil fuel divestment as UK eases pension rules” appeared in *The Guardian* on December 18, stating: “in what has been hailed as a major victory for campaigners against fossil fuels, the government is to introduce new investment regulations that will allow pension schemes to ‘mirror members’ ethical concerns’ and ‘address environmental problems.’ The rules are expected to come into force next year after a consultation period and will bring into effect **recommendations made in 2014** and earlier this year by the **Law Commission**.”

2. **Coal Phase-out**: Also, on January 4, the British government responded to a consultation report by announcing CO2 limits to coal-fired power generation. By imposing emissions limits, the government seeks to phase out coal-fired power by 2025, but still to allow flexibility for possible carbon capture operations, and for emergency back-up energy supply. The consultation report, *Implementing the end of unabated coal: The government’s response to unabated coal closure consultation*, capped a consultation period which began in 2015. The government’s policy response is summarized in the UNEP Climate Action newsletter [here](#) (Jan. 5).

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **coal-fired electricity, Divestment, Energy policy, Fossil Fuel Divestment, Pension Fund management, plastic pollution, United Kingdom** | **1 Reply**

California’s progressive policies yield better job growth and wage growth than Republican comparators

Posted on **January 15, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



A November 2017 report from the Labor Center at University of California Berkeley examined the “California Policy Model” – defined as a collection of 51 pieces of legislation and policy implementations enacted in California between 2011 and 2016 – and found that with progressive policies such as minimum wage increases, increased access to health insurance, reduction of carbon emissions and higher taxes on the wealthy, the state showed superior economic performance in comparison to Republican-controlled states and to a simulated version of California without such policies. According to “California is Working: The Effects of California’s Public Policy on Jobs and the Economy since 2011”, the suite of progressive policies resulted in superior total employment growth, superior private sector employment growth, and higher wage growth for low-wage workers from 2014 to 2016. All the while, keeping the state on track to meet its 2020 GHG emissions targets. The environmental policies included in the analysis were: starting in 2006, AB 32, which committed the state to lowering its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020; regulations under AB 32 in 2012 and 2013, which introduced the state cap and trade program; SB 350 in 2015 and 2016, committing the state to greater use of renewable energy and further improvements in energy efficiency; and SB 32, which raised the emissions reduction goal to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The report warns that enforcement of labour standards and a lack of affordable housing remain as challenges facing the state, and also admits to possible weakness regarding the second of its two methods of analysis, the synthetic control statistical method.

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Federal government releases detailed proposals for Canada’s carbon pricing system, including output-based pricing for industrial emitters

Posted on **January 15, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On January 15, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Finance issued a [press release](#) announcing the full draft legislative proposals relating to the carbon pricing system. Public comment will be accepted until February 12, 2018. The full text of *Legislative and Regulatory Proposals Relating to the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act and Explanatory Notes* are in [English](#) and [French](#) versions. Comment on the legislative proposals will be accepted until April 9, 2018, with “structured engagement” and consultation with provinces and territories, Indigenous Peoples, environmental non-governmental organizations, industry, and business promised over the Winter/Spring of 2018.

Minister McKenna also [released for comment](#) the proposed regulatory framework for carbon pricing for large industrial facilities – an Output-based Pricing System (OBPS), with the aim “to minimize competitiveness risks for emissions-intensive, trade-exposed industrial facilities, while retaining the carbon price signal and incentive to reduce GHG emissions. Emission sources covered by OBPS will include fuel combustion, industrial process, flaring, and some venting and fugitive sources – but notably, “Methane venting and methane fugitive emissions from oil and gas facilities will not be subject to pricing under the OBPS.” The system will include emissions of all seven of the UNFCCC-designated greenhouse gases, “to the extent practicable” – carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride and nitrogen trifluoride. Details are in [Carbon pricing: regulatory framework for the output-based pricing system](#) (French version here), and build on the [Technical Paper: Federal Carbon Pricing Backstop](#) (French version here), released in May 2017.

Leading up to the January release, the federal government had released clarification about the timing of the planned backstop carbon pricing mechanism on December 20, 2017 – it will come into effect by January 2019, bringing the carbon price to \$20 per tonne in any jurisdiction that doesn't meet the federal benchmark. Full details are set out in: [Supplemental Benchmark Guidance](#), [Timelines](#), and the [Letter to Ministers](#). Generally positive reaction followed, from the [Pembina Institute](#) and [Clean Energy Canada](#).

Initial reaction/summary of the proposed legislation released on January 15: "Ottawa's new carbon pricing plan will reward clean companies" from CBC, and from the *Globe and Mail*, "Ottawa prepares to relax carbon-pricing measures to aid industry competitiveness". More substantive comment comes from the *National Observer*, in "Trudeau government explains how it will make polluters pay" (Jan. 15). Reaction from Environmental Defence came from [Keith Brooks](#), who calls the proposed plan "an effective and fair pan-Canadian carbon pricing system." [Reaction from Clean Energy Canada](#) is similar.

Meanwhile, in Alberta: Note also that the province of Alberta released their new [Carbon Competitiveness Incentive Regulation \(CCIR\)](#) for large industrial emitters in December 2017, also based on an output-based allocation system. Carbon Competitiveness Incentive regulations replaced the current Specified Gas Emitters Regulation (SGER) on Jan 1, 2018, and will be phased in over 3 years. It's expected to cut emissions by 20 million tonnes by 2020, and 50 million tonnes by 2030. Favourable testimonials from the oil and gas, wind energy, and cement industry are quoted in the [government press release](#) on December 6.

To explain output-based carbon pricing, the Ecofiscal Commission published [Output-Based Pricing: Theory and Practice in the Canadian context](#), by Dave Sawyer and Seton Stiebert of EnviroEconomics in early December. The highlights of the paper are summarized [here](#), with a discussion of the pros and cons and challenges of implementation, with special attention to Alberta's provisions.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Canada](#), [Carbon Leakage](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Emissions Regulations](#), [output-based carbon allocations](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Zero Emissions Standard takes effect in Quebec January 11, 2018

Posted on [January 12, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On December 27, Quebec enacted a new Zero Emissions Vehicle Standard in the form of Final Regulations to Bill 104, [An Act to increase the number of zero-emission motor vehicles in Quebec](#), (which passed in October 2016). The new

[Standard](#) comes into effect January 11, 2018, and is meant to increase the supply so that 10% of new-vehicle sales or rentals in the province will consist of zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) or low-emission vehicles (LEV) by 2025. Earlier in December, the government had announced a committee to monitor implementation of the regulations, with representatives from the Corporation des concessionnaires automobile du Québec (CCAQ), the provincial Department of Sustainable Development, Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change (MDDELCC) and the Coalition zéro émission Québec (CZÉQ), as well as environmental group Équiterre. [Équiterre's reaction](#) to the new Standard is favourable; the Global Automakers of Canada [press release](#) states it “needs more work”, reflecting the industry opposition reported in the [Montreal Gazette](#) when the regulations were first unveiled in July 2017. Full details and documentation are available from the Quebec government website in [English](#) and in [French](#).

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New York City and State announce plans to divest pension funds; Canadian Public Pension fund holds on to coal

Posted on [January 11, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio captured [headlines on January 10 2018](#) for his announcement that New York City will divest from fossil fuels and will sue Exxon and other oil companies for the damages of Superstorm Sandy. Yet it was actually on December 19 that New York City Comptroller [Scott Stringer](#) and New York State [Governor Andrew Cuomo](#) first announced separate proposals to freeze current fossil fuel investments, divest New York's public pension funds from fossil fuels, and reinvest in renewable energy. Common Dreams summarized the announcements in " ['Undeniable Victory': Cheers Follow Proposals to Divest Massive New York Pensions From Fossil Fuels](#)". [Reaction from 350.org](#) (Dec. 19) emphasized the importance of five years of citizen activism, and quoted Bill McKibben, who emphasized the symbolic importance of New York's announcement: "Coming from the capital of world finance, this will resonate loud and clear all over the planet. It's a crucial sign of how fast the financial pendulum is swinging away from fossil fuels." (As further proof, in November, administrators of Norway's \$1 trillion sovereign wealth fund recommended no further investment in fossil fuels and [divestment from existing oil and gas shares](#), and in the U.K., [legal changes are in the works](#) to ease divestment for pension funds.)

At the state level, Governor Cuomo's [press release](#) states: "Governor Cuomo and Comptroller DiNapoli will work together to create an advisory committee of financial, economic, scientific, business and workforce representatives as a resource for the Common Retirement Fund to develop a de-carbonization roadmap to invest in opportunities to combat climate change and support the clean tech economy while assessing financial risks and protecting the Fund." The New York Common Fund of the state manages approximately \$200 billion in retirement assets for more than one million New Yorkers and is heavily invested in fossil fuels, with nearly \$1 billion invested in ExxonMobil alone.

At the city level, officials have set a goal of divesting the city's funds from fossil fuel companies within five years , according to the [press release](#) from the Office of the Comptroller, which also highlights the complex process involved. In February 2017, the Office of the Comptroller had issued a [press release](#) stating, “the Trustees of the New York City Pension Funds ... will conduct the first-ever carbon footprint analysis of their portfolios and determine how to best manage their investments with an eye toward climate change. In the 21st century, companies must transition to a low-carbon economy, and a failure to adapt to the realities of global warming could present potential investment risks.” The New York City pension fund includes municipal employees, teachers, firefighters and police.

Related reading re New York activism : The [Divest NY website](#); “How New Yorkers won fossil fuel divestment” from the *Independent* (Jan. 12); and [Noami Klein's article](#) in *The Intercept* (Jan. 11).



Contrast the New York divestment announcements with the continued fossil fuel investment of the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), revealed in two new reports. In early December, Friends of the Earth Canada, as part of its ongoing campaign, released [Canadian Coal Investment: Powering Past the Coal Alliance](#), and Urgewald, a German organization, released [Investors vs. the Paris Agreement](#). The two reports “present a compelling picture of entrenched investors holding onto the old dirty economy and its growing risks at a time when politicians are committing to the phase out of coal.” – specifically, the Powering Past Coal Alliance launched by Canada and Great Britain at COP23 in Bonn in 2017. The [Powering Past Coal Declaration](#) commits governments to phasing out existing traditional coal power and placing a moratorium on any new traditional coal power stations without operational carbon capture and storage, and commits all *partners to supporting clean power through their policies and investments, as well as restricting financing for traditional coal power stations without operational carbon capture and storage*. In an October 2017 [press release](#), Friends of the Earth representatives asked, “Why is the CPPIB ignoring government policy and undermining Canada’s diplomatic efforts to lead a global phase-out of coal?” . To date, there has been no public statement adjusting the [Sustainable Investing position](#) of the CPPIB to bring it in line with the Powering Past Coal Alliance Declaration.

[Canadian Coal Investment: Powering Past the Coal Alliance](#) calculates the CPPIB’s total investment in coal at \$12.2 billion Cdn., with \$267 million of that in new coal projects . In a global ranking in [Investors vs. the Paris Agreement](#), Urgewald found that [Canada is the 8th largest investor in new coal development](#), and names several Canadian institutions in its Top 100 Investors list, including SunLife (ranked #31 with \$895 million invested); Power Financial Corporation (#53 with \$631 million invested); Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (#71 with \$433 million invested); Royal Bank (#86 with \$356 million invested); and Manulife Financial (#98 with \$282 million invested).

Also of interest: “[Failure to Launch](#)” in *Corporate Knights* magazine (Jan. 15 2018), which provides a serious discussion of the problems of pension plan regulation as the answer to its tagline question: “Why are Canadian pension funds dragging their feet when it comes to climate change?”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Divestment](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Municipal Government](#), [New York City](#), [New York State](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Powering Past Coal Alliance](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's progress on emissions reduction: New reports from OECD, UNFCCC , and policy discussion

Posted on **January 11, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

An excellent overview article about Canada's "staggering challenge" and policy options to meet its emissions reduction targets appeared in *The Conversation* on January 11, 2018), written by Warren Mabee, Director of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Policy at Queen's University and a Co-Investigator in the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) project. "[How your online shopping is impeding Canada's emissions targets](#)" outlines the issues of clean electricity, transportation emissions (where your online shopping can make a difference), greener homes, and rethinking fossil resources, and concludes that "If we're to succeed, Canada will need an integrated, holistic suite of policies – and we need them to be in place soon."



Other recent publications take stock of Canada's emissions reductions in greater detail. In its [3rd Environmental Performance Review for Canada](#) released on December 19, the OECD warns that "Without a drastic decrease in the emissions intensity of the oilsands industry, the projected increase in oil production may seriously risk the achievement of Canada's climate mitigation targets... .."Canada is the fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gasses in the OECD [in absolute terms], and emissions show no sign of falling yet." Canada's emissions actually did decrease since the last report was issued in 2004, but only by 1.5 per cent compared to reduction of 4.7 per cent by the OECD as a whole. In addition to the impact of oil sands production, the OECD singles out a regime of poor tax incentives: "Petrol and diesel taxes for road use are among the lowest in the OECD, fossil fuels used for electricity and heating remain untaxed or taxed at low rates in most jurisdictions, and the federal excise tax on fuel-inefficient vehicles is an ineffective incentive to purchase low-emission vehicles."

The OECD analysis finds support in a report from two researchers from the University of Toronto, in "[How the oil sands make our GHG targets unachievable](#)" in *Policy Options*. They state: "... only with a complete phase-out of oil production from the oil sands, elimination of coal for electricity generation, significant replacement of natural-gas-fuelled electricity generation with electricity from carbon-free sources, and stringent efficiency measures in all other sectors of the economy could Canada plausibly meet its 30 percent target." The authors recommend a gradual (12-to-15-year) phase-out of oil sands operations, with workers and capital redeployed to emerging sectors such as renewable energy and building retrofits, and contend that the importance of oil sands production is overstated. "... the direct contribution of the [entire oil, gas and mining sector](#) to Alberta's 2016 GDP was 16.4 percent, of which oil sands mining and processing was likely about one-third (or 5 to 6 percent of total provincial GDP)"and [oil sands oil production](#) is estimated to account for only 2 percent of Canadian GDP."

Yet the federal government continues the difficult balancing act of a "have-it-all" approach – for example, in a [speech by Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr](#) in November 2017, in which he defended the approval of the Trans Mountain Pipeline with: "We need to prepare for the future, but we must deal with the presentThat means continuing to support our oil and gas resources even as we develop alternatives – including solar, wind and tidal.... new pipelines will diversify our markets, be built with improved environmental safety and create thousands of good middle-class jobs, including in Indigenous communities. They were the right decisions then and they are the right ones now. " A recent blog by Patrick DeRochie of Environmental Defence, "[Trudeau Thinks We Can Expand Oil And Still Reduce Carbon. Let's Put That To A Test](#)" , challenges this view .

On December 29, Canada issued a press release announcing that it has submitted its [Seventh National Communication and Third Biennial Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) , required by the UNFCCC to document progress towards its 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 30% reduction from 2005 levels. The title of the government press release, “Canada’s Climate action is Working, Report to United Nations Confirms” is justified by including estimates of the effects of policies still under development in a “with additional measures scenario”. Under that scenario, the government forecasts an emissions decline across all economic sectors, equivalent to approximately a third of Canada’s emissions in 2015 by 2030... ”

Meanwhile, the federal government has released a number of announcements and legislative proposals in December 2017 and January 2018. Regarding the planned carbon pricing backstop under the Pan-Canadian Framework, which will come into effect by January 2019: Details are set out in: [Supplemental Benchmark Guidance Timelines](#) , and the [Letter to Ministers](#) in December, and on January 15, the proposed carbon backstop legislative framework was released as [Legislative and Regulatory Proposals Relating to the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act and Explanatory Notes \(French version here\)](#) . Also on January 15, the federal government released for comment the proposed regulatory framework for [carbon pricing for large industrial facilities](#) – an Output-based Pricing System (OBPS) described in more detail in a separate [WCR post here](#).

On December 12, the [Clean Fuel Standard Regulatory Framework](#) was released for comment. The government has also committed to developing a [national strategy for zero emission vehicles](#) in 2018 to increase the supply of zero-emission vehicles.

Also on December 12, and capping six months of consultation under the banner [Generation Energy](#), the Minister of Natural Resources [announced](#) the creation of a 14-member Generation Energy Council to be co-chaired by Merran Smith, Executive Director of Clean Energy Canada, and Linda Coady, Chief Sustainability Officer at Enbridge. (Bios of all members are [here](#)). The council is tasked with preparing a report to advise the government on an “ energy policy that ensures meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples; aligns with Canada’s Paris Agreement commitments and the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change; and complements the work being done by the provinces and territories, building on the shared priorities identified at the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Meeting at the Forum.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [carbon backstop](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta reports progress under Climate Leadership Plan, increases carbon levy

Posted on **January 11, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Climate Leadership Plan Progress Report 2016 – 2017](#) , released in December 2017, summarizes and measures the outcomes for the programs initiated under the Climate Leadership Plan . The report includes a section on Skills and Employment, providing very basic measures of “Green Skills Demand” and “Jobs Supported”. Green Skills Demand is measured as the percentage of job postings categorized as green, and the results show an increase from 2014 to 2016, though green job postings have not yet recovered to 2014 levels. The Jobs Supported section estimates include total direct, indirect and induced jobs created, calculated by Statistics Canada and using an input-output (IO) model. It

concludes that, in 2016-17, \$311 million was invested back into the economy in programs and policies under the Climate Leadership Plan, which supported approximately 2700 jobs.

Also, effective January 1, 2018, Alberta's carbon levy increased from \$20 per ton to \$30 per ton. The government [press release](#) states that 60 per cent of households are expected to receive a full or partial carbon levy rebate in 2018, ranging from approximately \$300 (tax-free) for a single adult earning up to \$47,500 per year to \$540 for a couple with two children earning up to \$95,000 per year. The Pembina Institute has produced an Infographic and FAQ's "[What you need to know about Alberta's Carbon Levy](#)".

The government also released a new [Carbon Competitiveness Incentive Regulation \(CCIR\)](#) in December 2017, designed to help trade-exposed industries. From the [press release](#) on December 6: "The CCIRs are the product of extensive consultation with industry and will be phased in over three years. Companies will have further incentives to invest in innovation and technology to create jobs and reduce emissions through a [\\$1.4-billion innovation package](#) released earlier this week, which includes \$440 million for oil sands innovation alone." Although the oil sands industry receives the lion's share of the Energy Innovation Fund, described [here](#) and [here](#), the Fund also includes incentives for bioenergy producers, cross-sector green loan guarantees of \$400 million, and funding for energy efficiency upgrades for large agricultural and manufacturing operations, institutions, commercial facilities and not-for-profit organizations. The Pembina Institute explains the new regulations in a detailed technical report, [Understanding the Pros and Cons of Alberta's new industrial carbon pricing rules](#), released on December 20.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Biofuels](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Clean Fuel Standard Framework released

Posted on [January 9, 2018](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On December 13, the Government of Canada released its [Clean Fuel Standard Regulatory Framework](#), the latest stage in the development of regulations to complement the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, by achieving 30 megatonnes of annual reductions in GHG emissions by 2030. The standard will apply to all fuels – gasoline and diesel, but also aviation fuel, natural gas for heating, and metallurgical coal. It will also apply to the full life cycle of fuels – the first jurisdiction in the world to do so, [according to the Pembina Institute](#). The Clean Fuel Standard process began in November 2016, with consultations held throughout 2017, largely focused on the government's [Discussion Paper](#) (February 2017). Comments received in that consultation were compiled in a November report: [Clean fuel standard: Summary of stakeholder written comments on the Discussion Paper](#). In response to the December Framework release, comments on the technical details will be accepted from industry, provincial governments, non-governmental organizations until January 19, 2018. Draft regulations are promised for late 2018.

The Pembina Institute [reaction](#) highlights three noteworthy aspects of the proposed Canadian Fuel Standard Framework:

1. Sustainability and indirect land-use change issues are sidelined – which is "concerning and unacceptable";
2. Canada's existing federal Renewable Fuels Regulations will remain in place for a short-term transition period, and the new GHG-intensity-based clean fuel standard will eventually replace them – (an approach Pembina has previously recommended in its April 2017 [submission to the government](#)); and
3. Pembina urges "the importance of timelines" – i.e. the longer it takes to implement these regulations, the more stringent they must be if Canada is to meet its emissions reduction target for 2030.

How important is the Clean Fuel Standard? It has been called the single most important policy tool to achieve Canada's emissions reductions target for 2030. And in November 2017, Clean Energy Canada published "[What a Clean Fuel Standard can do for Canada](#)" in which Navius Research used two in-house models to simulate the impact of different Clean Fuel Standard designs on Canada's economy. The report concluded, among other beneficial effects: "The policy would increase economic activity in clean fuels in Canada by up to \$5.6 billion a year in 2030. It would also create up to

31,000 jobs for the skilled workers needed to build, operate and supply new clean fuel facilities.” A separate [Technical Report](#) explains the modelling and provides much more detail about all projections, including employment projections.

Also of interest: From the EcoFiscal Commission, [A delicate \(im\)balance: policy interactions and the federal clean fuel standard](#) and an April 2017 [Submission](#) to the Clean Fuels Standard consultations from the Pembina Institute, Equiterre, Environmental Defence, and the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean Fuel Standard](#), [Emissions Regulations](#), [Oil and Gas Regulations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Increasing frequency and intensity of heat stress bring dangers to outside workers and will trigger migration

Posted on **January 9, 2018** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The 40-plus temperatures and melting asphalt of [Australia's latest heat wave](#) seem hard to understand for North Americans shivering under a polar vortex, but both temperature extremes relate to climate change, and both can be deadly for vulnerable groups, including outdoor workers. On December 22, a [new scientific paper](#) was published in *Environmental Research Letters* and summarized in layman's terms by *Climate News Network* as “Humidity is the real heat wave threat” (December 24). In “[Temperature and humidity based projections of a rapid rise in global heat stress exposure during the 21st century](#)” in *Environmental Research Letters*, scientists at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory used numerous models to project frequency of high wet-bulb readings, (a scale which combines heat and humidity). The authors project that in the south-east U.S., where current wet-bulb temperatures now reach 29 or 30°C only occasionally, such highs could occur 25 to 40 days per year by the 2070's or 2080's, and wet-bulb temperatures of 35°C could occur on one or two days a year. (35°C on a wet-bulb scale is considered the limit of human survivability.)

The situation would be worse in parts of South America, China, and especially in Northeast India and coastal West Africa, where there is little cooling infrastructure, relatively low adaptive capacity, and rapidly growing populations. The authors conclude that “heat stress may prove to be one of the most widely experienced and directly dangerous aspects of climate change, posing a severe threat to human health, energy infrastructure, and outdoor activities ranging from agricultural production to military training.” One might add, to any outdoor worker, including those in agriculture, construction, delivery, and emergency responders.

Similar warnings were published for farmers in Asia in “[Deadly heat waves projected in the densely populated agricultural regions of South Asia](#)” in *Science Advances* (August 2, 2017), [summarized by Inside Climate News](#). Researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles concluded “The most intense hazard from extreme future heat waves is concentrated around densely populated agricultural regions of the Ganges and Indus river basins.”

But a recent article from *Climate News Network* shows that we're all in this together. " [Warming drives climate refugees to Europe](#)" (Dec. 22) summarizes a study which combined EU asylum-application data with projections of future warming, and concludes that even under optimistic scenarios, asylum applications to the EU would increase by 28% by 2100 . The article concludes "Though poorer countries in hotter regions are most vulnerable to climate change, our findings highlight the extent to which countries are interlinked, and Europe will see increasing numbers of desperate people fleeing their home countries."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Asia](#), [climate change migration](#), [Climate migrants](#), [Farmers](#), [Heat Stress](#), [outdoor workers](#), [Southeast United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Technology Employment in Canada – new data from two Statistics Canada releases

Posted on [December 19, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A December 15 article in *Energy Mix* reported "More Canadians working in green jobs than in oil patch"; the National Observer wrote " There are nearly 300,000 high-paying clean tech jobs in Canada". Both articles were based on data released by Statistics Canada on December 13 from its new [Environmental and Clean Technology Products Economic Account survey](#). Statistics Canada estimates that 274,000 jobs were attributable to environmental and clean technology activity in 2016, accounting for 1.5% of jobs in the Canadian economy. This represents a growth of 4.5% since 2007 – but at a time when employment in the economy as a whole grew 8.4%. The good news of the data shows higher than average annual labour compensation per job (including benefits) for environmental and clean technology jobs – \$92,000, compared with an economy-wide average of \$59,900. This is largely because of the inclusion of electricity and waste management – without those two sectors, the average compensation per job was \$82,000.

[Environmental and Clean Technology Products Economic Account, 2007 to 2016](#) is a 3-page summary report; full, interactive data is provided in [CANSIM tables](#) , including a [separate table for employment](#) .

Smaller employment numbers are reported by the [Survey of Environmental Goods and Services \(SEGS\)](#), most recently published on December 12, 2017, and providing data from 2015. Amongst the findings: "Ontario (\$600 million) and Quebec (\$247 million) businesses exported almost \$850 million worth of environmental and clean technology goods and services in 2015. This accounted for 71.7% of all Canadian exports in this sector..... In 2015, about 11,000 people held environmental and clean technology positions in Ontario, while almost 4,000 people were employed in this sector in Quebec. Waste management services provided jobs for another 15,000 people in Ontario and 7,000 people in Quebec." [CANSIM Tables for the SEGS](#) are here , including a table showing employment by region of Canada.

How to explain the differences? The Environmental and Clean Technology Products Economic Account includes clean energy, waste management, environmental and clean technology manufacturing industries, and technical services, which gives it a broader scope than the Survey of Environmental Goods and Services (SEGS), as explained [here](#) .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Clean Technology](#), [labour market statistics](#), [Waste management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Brunswick's new Climate Change Act unlikely to meet the federal carbon pricing benchmark

Posted on **December 18, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

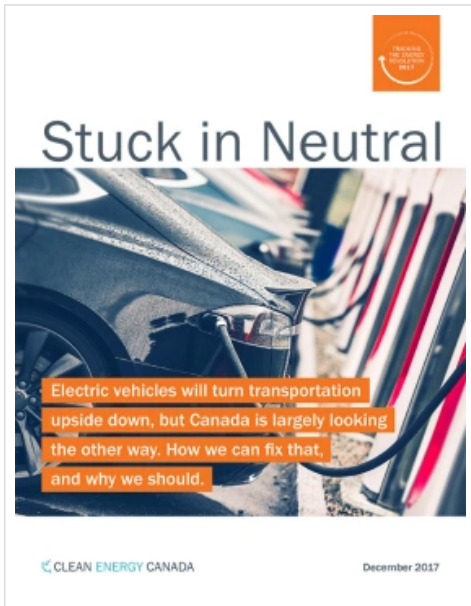
The government of New Brunswick introduced its *Climate Change Act* on December 14, 2017. According to the [government press release](#) , the province will adopt the federal government's intensity targets for the 10 large industrial emitters in the province, and will redirect existing taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel – but not heating fuel – to a new Climate Change Fund. It forecasts that in 2018, 2.33 cents per litre of existing gasoline taxes and 2.76 cents per litre of existing diesel fuel taxes will be transferred to the Climate Change Fund, amounting to about \$37 million, to be invested in infrastructure adaptation and energy efficiency improvements for homes, business, industry and transportation. For details, see the government [Backgrounder](#) and see the CBC analysis "[Liberals' sleight-of-hand carbon tax formally proposed in climate bill](#)" (Dec. 14) for summary and reaction. In "[Legislation misses mark on protecting families and communities from worst of climate change impacts in N.B.](#)" , the Conservation Council of New Brunswick calls the government plan "an uninspiring follow-up to last December's [climate change action plan](#) , which was a smart road map for climate action and job creation that was among the best in the country.... we have legislation that largely maintains the status quo and sets us on a race to the bottom when it comes to protecting the health and safety of New Brunswickers and taking advantage of the economic opportunities that come with ambitious climate action."

The National Observer summarizes the reaction from the federal government in "[New Brunswick defends climate plan against McKenna's concerns](#)", quoting the Minister's Facebook post which reiterated the federal position that it will impose a carbon tax on any jurisdiction which falls short of federal carbon pricing benchmarks under the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#). In a separate [statement on December 15](#) , the Minister extended the deadline for provincial compliance till the end of 2018.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [New Brunswick](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Strong new policies needed for electric vehicle adoption in Canada

Posted on **December 18, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



With a National Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy expected to be released in Canada in early 2018, two reports released in December decry Canada's slow progress to date, and make policy recommendations to speed up electric vehicle adoption. Clean Energy Canada released *Stuck in Neutral*, which states that "In 2016, just 0.6 per cent of car sales in Canada were for electric vehicles, well behind the U.S., U.K., China and other world-leading nations (Norway's market share is a whopping 28.8 per cent)." The report provides a suite of recommended policies, starting with strengthening Canada's aspiration target of 30% EV sales by 2030 to a binding, ambitious national EV adoption target, beginning in 2020. Amongst the other recommendations: "Develop an EV-charging-infrastructure plan informed by EV sales targets. • Ensure that all residents in multi-unit residential buildings (such as condos and townhouses) have opportunities to charge vehicles at home. • Ensure the National Building Code and the Canadian Electrical Code facilitate EV charging in all new buildings with parking facilities." Also, "• Help Canada's mining sector capitalize on the global demand for mining and processing metals and minerals that will be central to this shift, while requiring world-leading practices; • Encourage EV parts and vehicle manufacturing in Canada."

A second new report, from the Sustainable Transportation Research Action Team at Simon Fraser University, is *Canada's ZEV Policy Handbook*, summarized and given context by one of the authors in "How to get more electric vehicles on the road" in *The Conversation* (Dec. 12). The report identifies three effective policy approaches for achieving long-term ZEV sales targets: one, based on Norway's model of long-term incentives, a second based on the California model of supply-side policies, and a third option of radically more stringent regulation for vehicle emission standards and fuel standards. The researchers conclude that "Regardless of which option or combination of options policymakers choose, the main message is that Canada needs to stop nibbling around the edges."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [Electric Vehicles](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada, the World Bank and International Confederation of Trade Unions announce a partnership to promote Just Transition in the phase-out of coal-fired electricity

Posted on **December 13, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Canada's Environment and Climate Change Minister is back on the international stage at the [One Planet Summit](#) in Paris, which is focusing on climate change financing – notably phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, and aid to developing countries. In a [press release](#) on December 12, Canada announced a partnership with the World Bank Group to accelerate the transition from coal-fired electricity to clean sources in developing countries, stating: “This work also includes sharing best practices on how to ensure a just transition for displaced workers and their communities to minimize hardships and help workers and communities benefit from new clean growth opportunities. The transition to a low-carbon economy should be inclusive, progressive and good for business. We will work together with the International Trade Union Confederation in this regard.” The [World Bank Group announcement](#) was briefer: “Canada and the World Bank will work together to accelerate the energy transition in developing countries and, together with the International Trade Union Confederation, will provide analysis to support efforts towards a just transition away from coal.” The [ITUC Just Transition Centre](#) hadn't posted any announcement as of December 13.

Other Canadian partnerships announced in a [general press release](#): a Canada-France Climate Partnership to promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement through carbon pricing, coal phase-out, sustainable development and emission reductions in the marine and aviation sectors; Canada was selected as one of five countries for a new partnership with the Breakthrough Energy Coalition led by Bill Gates; and Canada, along with five Canadian provinces, two U.S. states, and Mexico, Costa Rica and Chile, signed on to the Declaration on Carbon Markets in the Americas, to strengthen international and regional cooperation on carbon pricing.

The World Bank, one of the organizers of the One Planet Summit, made [numerous other announcements](#) – including that it will no longer finance upstream oil and gas developments after 2019, and as of 2018, it will report greenhouse gas emissions from the investment projects it finances in key emissions-producing sectors, such as energy. Such moves may be seen as a response to the demands of the Big Shift Global campaign of Oil Change International, which released a new briefing called “[The Dirty Dozen: How Public Finance Drives the Climate Crisis through Oil, Gas, and Coal Expansion](#)” on the eve of the One Planet Summit. Over 200 civil society groups also issued an [Open Letter](#) calling on G20 governments and multilateral development banks to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and public finance for fossil fuels as soon as possible, and no later than 2020. Signatories include Oil Change International, Les Amis de la Terre – Friends of the Earth France, Christian Aid, Greenpeace, Réseau Action Climat – Climate Action Network France, WWF International, BankTrack, Climate Action Network International, Global Witness, 350.org, Germanwatch, Natural Resources Defense Council, CIDSE, and the Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development.

In Canada, Environmental Defence is collecting signatures in a [campaign to stop fossil fuel subsidies](#), stating “ Together, federal and provincial governments hand out **\$3.3 billion in subsidies** every year for oil and gas exploration and development. In 2016, Export Development Canada, a crown corporation, spent an additional **\$12 billion in public money** to finance fossil fuel projects.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [coal-fired electricity](#), [Energy policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Just Transition](#), [World Bank](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Site C Hydro Dam will go ahead after historic decision by B.C.'s NDP Premier

Posted on December 12, 2017 by elizabethperry493



Bringing an end to years

of controversy, in what NDP Premier Horgan called a “very, very divisive issue”, the British Columbia government announced on December 11 that it will proceed with construction of the [Site C hydroelectric dam](#) , on the grounds that it is too late to turn back. In a [press release](#) which blames “megaproject mismanagement by the previous government”, the government justifies its decision by saying that cancellation would result in “ an immediate and unavoidable \$4-billion bill – with nothing in return – resulting in rate hikes or reduced funds for schools, hospitals and important infrastructure.” The press release continues with a list of sweeteners for the opponents of the project, announcing that improved project management to keep costs to \$10.7 billion; new community benefits programs to keep jobs in local communities and increase the number of apprentices and First Nations workers hired; a new BC Food Security Fund to help farmers whose land will be negatively affected; and the promise of a new alternative energy strategy for B.C. .

The *National Observer* provides a brief overview of reaction in “[As costs escalate, Horgan says it's too late to stop Site C mega-project](#)” . CBC News covers the debate and the decision in several articles, including “ [John Horgan disappoints both Site C opponents and supporters in northeast B.C.](#)” and “[B.C. government to go ahead with Site C hydroelectric dam project](#)” which examines the huge political fallout and states that the Green Party , which holds the balance of power in B.C.'s legislature, will not force an election over the issue, despite their opposition to the decision.

Reaction on labour issues : For mainstream union reaction to the decision, see “[Site C: What Happens Next?](#)” in *The Tyee* (Dec. 11) . The complex labour politics of Site C is summarized in “ [Construction Unions Pressing for Completion of Site C](#)” , which appeared earlier in *The Tyee*, (Nov. 24) , and takes a deep dive into the ties between the NDP government and the Allied Hydro Council of BC, a bargaining agent for unions at previous large hydro projects, and an advocate of the Site C project. Following the decision, the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA) stated their “relief” for the go-ahead decision, with the reservation that “Arbitrarily setting apprentice and other workforce ratios will limit contractor flexibility and inevitably drive up costs and slow the construction schedule.” Similar sentiments appear in the [press release](#) from the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) , which represents the majority of Site C workers under the Open Shop system in place since 2015.



— Photo by Yvonne Tupper, from CBC News

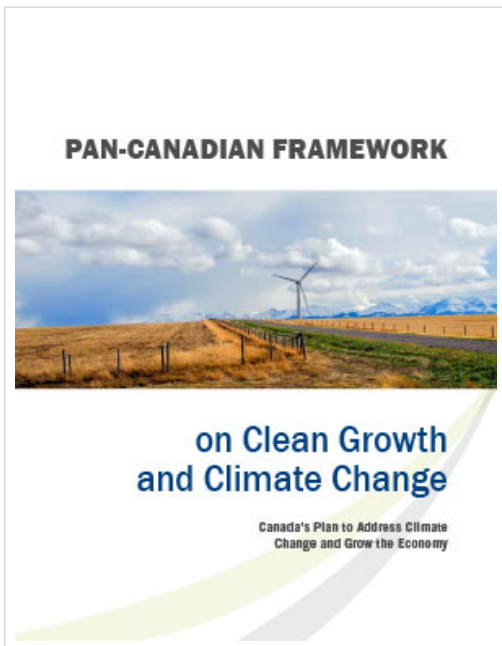
Re the First Nations opposition: “A reconciliation fail’: B.C. First Nations promise court action over NDP’s approval of Site C” at CBC News (Dec. 12), quotes First Nations leaders, including the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, and the West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nations, who have already announced that they will apply for a court injunction to halt construction of the project and begin a civil action for Treaty infringement.

A sampling of reaction of environmentalists appears in “Site C a betrayal of First Nations, Ratepayers and Future Generations” (Dec. 11) and in multiple articles at DeSmog Canada <https://www.desmog.ca/> . A glimpse of the environmental campaign appears at the [Stop Site C website](#) , and the Wilderness Committee, a member of that campaign, reacts [here](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Community benefits](#), [First Nations](#), [Green Party](#), [labour union policies](#), [New Democratic Party \(NDP\)](#), [Site C Dam](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

First year progress report on the Pan-Canadian Framework lacks any mention of Just Transition

Posted on **December 12, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On December 9th, the Governments of Canada and British Columbia [jointly announced](#) the first annual progress report on the implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change – officially titled, the *First Annual Synthesis Report on the Status of Implementation – December 2017* (English version) and *Premier rapport annuel du cadre pancanadien sur la croissance propre et les changements climatiques* (French version). The report summarizes the year's policy developments at the federal and provincial/territorial level – under the headings pricing carbon pollution ; complementary actions to reduce emissions; adaptation and climate change resilience ; clean technology, innovation and jobs; reporting and oversight; and looking ahead. It is striking that the report is up to date enough to include mention of the [Saskatchewan climate change strategy](#), released on December 4, as well as the [Powering Past Coal global alliance](#) launched by Canada and Great Britain in November at the Bonn climate talks – yet in the section on “Looking Ahead”, there is no mention of another important outcome of the Bonn talks: a Just Transition Task Force in Canada. As reported by the Canadian Labour Congress in “[Unions applaud Canada's commitment to a just transition for coal workers](#)”, “Minister McKenna also announced her government's intention to work directly with the Canadian Labour Congress to launch a task force that will develop a national framework on Just Transition for workers affected by the coal phase-out. The work of this task force is slated to begin early in the new year.” No mention of that, nor in fact, any use of the term “Just Transition” anywhere in the government's progress report.

“Environment Canada touts ‘good progress’ on climate after scathing audit” appeared in the National Observer (Dec. 11), summarizing some of the progress report highlights and pointing out that not everyone agrees with the government's self-assessment that “While good progress has been made to date, much work remains”. Recent criticism has come from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development in her [October report](#) ; from Marc Lee at the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis in “[Canada is still a rogue state on climate change](#)” (Dec.11) ; and from the Pembina Institute in [State of the Framework: Tracking implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) . The Pembina Institute report calls on the federal government to speed up on all policy fronts, with specific recommendations including: “extend the pan-Canadian carbon price up to \$130 per tonne of pollution by 2030, implement Canada-wide zero emission vehicle legislation, ban the sale of internal combustion engines, and establish long-term energy efficiency targets.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Cities continue to fight climate change

Posted on **December 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [North American Climate Summit](#) held in Chicago from December 4 to 6, 2017 brought together the mayors of 50 cities from Canada, Mexico, France, and Tanzania, to reaffirm their commitment to the Paris Agreement and greenhouse gas emissions reduction. The mayors signed the [Chicago Climate Charter](#), which is not legally binding but commits the municipalities to at least match the emissions reductions goals of their home countries, and sets out reporting mechanisms. The Summit was also the setting for the 5th annual [2017 C40 Cities Bloomberg Philanthropies Awards](#), which recognized exemplary city programs from around the world (none of the winners was Canadian). The Summit was co-sponsored by the [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#).

U.S. cities in particular are keen to demonstrate their climate change-fighting resolve – many through the “[We are Still In](#)” coalition which formed after President Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and which was very active at the COP23 meetings in Bonn. Additionally, the Sierra Club has published the [Cities are Ready for 100 2017 Case Study Report](#), highlighting the U.S. cities which are committing to a 100% Renewable Energy target. Disappointingly, on December 4, [Bloomberg News reported](#) that the Trump administration has terminated the Community Resilience Panel for Buildings and Infrastructure Systems, an interagency group created under President Obama to help municipalities protect their residents against extreme weather and natural disasters.



In November, the City of Vancouver updated its [Renewable City Strategy](#), setting an interim 55% renewable energy target for 2030, which covers electricity, heating and cooling, and transport. For a discussion of Vancouver’s progress, see “[Can Vancouver achieve 100% renewable energy?](#)” in *The Vancouver Sun* (Nov. 5).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Municipal Emissions](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Redesigning the fashion industry from linear to circular

Posted on **December 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In what is being called a revolutionary document, *A New Textile Economy: Redesigning Fashion’s Future* characterizes the current system of textile and clothing production as a “wasteful, linear system” which “leads to substantial and ever-expanding pressure on resources and causes high levels of pollution. Hazardous substances affect the health of both textile workers and the wearers of clothes, and plastic microfibres are released into the environment, often ending up in the ocean.” To improve the societal and environmental impacts of the industry, the report fleshes out the means to achieve four fundamental objectives: 1. Phase out substances of concern and microfibre release 2. Transform the way clothes are designed, sold, and used to break free from their increasingly disposable nature, 3. Radically improve recycling by transforming clothing design, collection, and reprocessing, and 4. Make effective use of resources and move to renewable inputs. Benefits to consumers are emphasized, and benefits to workers seem to flow from a reduced exposure to the toxic

chemicals used in manufacture. There is only vague attention to “A better deal for employees. Because a circular economy is distributive by design, value would be circulated among enterprises of all sizes in the industry, rather than being extracted. This would allow all parts of the value chain to pay workers well and provide them with good working conditions.” The report was released by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the Circular Fibres Initiative, with Stella McCartney adding star power.

A greater focus on the working conditions in the global clothing industry comes from The [Clean Clothes Campaign](#) . Greenpeace International has been promoting the fight against toxic chemicals in fashion for several years in their [Detox My Fashion](#) campaign.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [clothing industry](#), [Recycling](#) | [1 Reply](#)

What happens to workers when wildfires and natural disasters hit?

Posted on **December 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Sadly, we are becoming used to seeing headlines about the costs of fighting climate change-related wildfires, hurricanes, and floods – most recently, the record wildfire season of 2017. These news reports usually discuss loss in terms of the value of insurance claims – for example, “[Northern Alberta Wildfire Costliest Insured Natural Disaster in Canadian History – Estimate of insured losses: \\$3.58 billion](#)” from the Insurance Bureau of Canada, or in terms of the budgets of emergency service agencies – for example, “[Cost of fighting U.S. wildfires topped \\$2 billion in 2017](#)” from Reuters (Sept. 14), or in terms of health and mental health effects – for example, “[Economic analysis of health effects from forest fires](#)” in the *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* (2006). “[The Science behind B.C.’s Forest Fires](#)” (December 5) post by West Coast Environmental Law discusses the links to climate change, and concludes that the record wildfires of 2017 foreshadow growing economic and human costs in the future.

When employment effects of disasters are reported, it is usually by statistical agencies interested in working days lost or unemployment effects, for example, “[Wildfires in northern Alberta: Impact on hours worked, May and June, 2016](#)” from Statistics Canada, or “[Hurricane Katrina’s effects on industry employment and wages](#)” from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006) . While all these are important, Hurricane Katrina taught that there are also other aspects, including those of environmental and economic justice.



One recent example which illustrates recurring patterns: on December 5, the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Episcopal Health Foundation in Texas released [the results of a survey](#) about the impacts of Hurricane Harvey . While most of the survey reports on the loss of homes and cars, it also measures employment impacts: 46% of respondents reported that they or someone else in their household lost job-related income as a result of the storm – through fewer hours at work (32%), losing a job entirely (12%) or losing income from a small business or unpaid missed days (32%). And as so often is the case, income disruptions affected a greater share of Hispanic (65%) and Black (46%) residents compared to White residents (31%).

Two recent news reports highlight a more surprising story of the California wildfires: “California Is Running Out of Inmates to Fight Its Fires” in *The Atlantic* (Dec. 7 2017) and “Incarcerated women risk their lives fighting California fires. It’s part of a long history of prison labor” (Oct. 22, 2017) . These articles describe the long-standing practice in California of using prison inmates as firefighters: in the current season, almost 3,000 of the 9,000 firefighters battling wildfires are inmates, who get a few dollars plus two days off their sentences for each day spent fighting wildfires.



The Fort McMurray wildfires in northern Alberta in 2016 rank as the costliest natural disaster in Canadian history, exceeding the previous record, which was the 2013 flooding in Calgary and southern Alberta. That ranking is based on the [estimate by the Insurance Bureau of Canada](#) of \$3.58 billion; the Conference Board of Canada also reported on the [economic impacts](#) (free; registration required). Statistics Canada measured work days lost and employment insurance claims through their Labour Force Survey instrument, and so were able to differentiate effects by sector, sex and age, as location, in two reports: *Wildfires in northern Alberta: Impact on hours worked, May and June, 2016* (November 2016) and “Wildfires in northern Alberta affected hours and Employment Insurance beneficiaries”, a section in the *Annual Review of the Labour Market, 2016* .

Another assessment of the total financial impact of the Fort McMurray wildfire estimated the financial impact of the Fort McMurray fire was \$9.9 billion, as reported by the [CBC](#) (January 2017) and the [Toronto Star](#) (January 17). That research, by two [economists from MacEwan University](#) in Edmonton, was commissioned by the [Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction](#) , but does not appear to have been published as of December 2017. Their estimates included indirect impacts such as the expense of replacing buildings and infrastructure, lost income, and lost profits and royalties in the oilsands and forestry industries. And they estimate the mental health impacts and cost of suffering of the firefighters as \$3.78 million.

Excellent news reports also described the employment situation – including the government and union support for workers : “ [Fort McMurray wildfires leaves livelihoods in limbo](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (updated March 2017); “[Fort McMurray smoke halts major oilsands project](#)” in the *National Observer* (May 7 2016), “ [Fort McMurray firefighters who slew ‘The Beast’ now battling emotional demons](#)” from CBC News (July 3 2016) , and “[Resilient but tired: Mental effects of wildfire lingering in Fort McMurray](#)” in *The National Observer* (Dec. 18 2017).

An [Employment Fact Sheet](#) from ProBono Law website answers FAQ’s regarding workers’ rights in Alberta as of May 2016 – such questions as: . “If business operations are badly affected and an employer has no work for some or all employees, does the employer have to pay them ...?” (No); “An employee’s home was badly affected by the fire. Are they entitled to paid or unpaid leave to sort out the personal problems caused by the fire?” (No, employees are not entitled , but some employers do offer such leaves as part of their benefit plans or will offer them if asked.) Future recourse regarding leave provisions may be available as of January 2018, when the Alberta Employment Standards Code is amended to provide [new Personal and Family Responsibility Leave](#) of up to 5 days of job protection per year for personal sickness or short-term care of an immediate family member, which includes attending to personal emergencies. And failing that, there is always the hope, as described in the *Toronto Star*, that “[Workplaces are adapting to climate change by offering paid extreme weather leave](#)” (November 14).

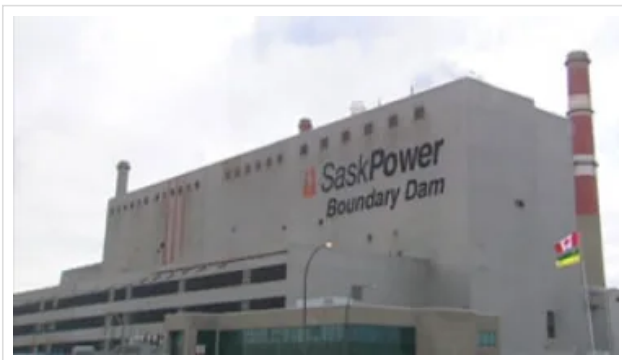
Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [firefighters](#), [forest fires](#), [Fort McMurray wildfire](#), [leaves of absence](#), [natural disasters](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Saskatchewan's new Climate Strategy maintains old positions: No to carbon tax, yes to Carbon Capture and Storage

Posted on **December 6, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy was released by the government of Saskatchewan on December 4, maintaining the province's position outside the Pan-Canadian Framework agreement with this introductory statement: "A federal carbon tax is ineffective and will impair Saskatchewan's ability to respond to climate change." A summary of all the strategy commitments appears as a "Backgrounder" from [this link](#). An [Opinion column](#) in the *Regina Leader Post* newspaper summarizes it as a "repackaging" of past policies, and "oil over the environment".

The provincial government defends their plan as "broader and bolder than a single policy such as a carbon tax and will achieve better and more meaningful outcomes over the long term" by encouraging innovation and investment – and yes, that Prairie spirit of independent resilience. The strategy includes provisions re protecting communities through physical infrastructure investment, water system management, energy efficiency for buildings and freight, and disaster management. It commits to "maintain and enhance partnerships with First Nations and Métis communities to address and adapt to a changing climate through actions that are guided by traditional ecological knowledge." In the electricity sector, which at 19% is the third largest source of emissions, it proposes to introduce regulations governing emissions from electricity generation by SaskPower and Independent Power Producers; meet a previous commitment of up to 50 per cent electricity capacity from renewables; and "determine the viability of extending carbon capture use and storage technology to remaining coal power plants while continuing to work with partners on the potential application for CCUS technology globally." The Strategy is still [open to consultation](#) on the regulatory standards and implementation details, with a goal of implementation on January 1, 2019. Consultation is likely to reflect the state of public opinion on climate change issues as revealed by the Corporate Mapping Project in *Climate Politics in the Patch: Engaging Saskatchewan's Oil-Producing Communities on Climate Change Issues*. The participants in that study "were largely dismissive over concerns about climate change, were antagonistic towards people they understood as urban environmentalists and Eastern politicians, and believed that the oil industry was already a leader in terms of adopting environmentally sound practices." The oil and gas industry is Saskatchewan's largest emitter, at 32% of emissions in 2015. For an informed reaction, see Brett Dolter's article in *Policy Options*, "[How Saskatchewan's Climate Change Strategy falls short](#)" (December 11).



On the issue of carbon capture and storage: The Climate Strategy document released on December 4 states a commitment to: "determine the viability of extending carbon capture use and storage technology to remaining coal power plants while continuing to work with partners on the potential application for CCUS technology globally." On December 1, [CBC reported](#) that Saskatchewan had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming to "share knowledge, policy and regulatory expertise in carbon dioxide capture, transportation, storage and applications such as enhanced oil recovery." By late 2017 or early 2018, SaskPower is required to make its recommendation on whether two units at the Boundary Dam will be retired, or retrofitted to capture carbon and storage (CCS) by 2020. As [reported by the CBC](#), the research of economist Brett Dolter at the University of Regina has found that conversion to natural gas power generation would cost about 16% of the cost of continuing with CCS (\$2.7 billion to replace all remaining coal-fired plants with natural gas plants, compared to \$17 billion to retrofit all coal-fired plants with

carbon capture and storage.) The final decision will need to consider the economic implications for approximately 1,100 Saskatchewan coal workers, and isn't expected until a replacement for Premier Brad Wall has been chosen after his retirement in late January 2018.

For more details: "Saskatchewan, 3 U.S. states sign agreement on carbon capture, storage" at CBC News (Dec. 1) ; "SaskPower's carbon capture future hangs in the balance" at CBC News (Nov 23) , and "Saskatchewan Faces Tough Decision on Costly Boundary Dam CCS Plant" in *The Energy Mix* (Nov. 28).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [attitudes to climate change](#), [Boundary Dam](#), [carbon capture and storage](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [First Nations](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change policy in B.C. must deal with controversies – Kinder Morgan, Site C, and more

Posted on **December 4, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In his November 30 article, "Where is B.C. headed on climate action?", Marc Lee of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives begins with a bit of history – November 2007 marks the 10 year anniversary of the passage of B.C.'s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act, followed by B.C.'s carbon tax, the first in North America, in 2008. His overview then discusses climate change policy since the Liberal government and its [Climate Leadership Team \(CLT\)](#) were replaced by the government of the New Democratic Party in Summer 2017. Specific issues raised: the new government may still be considering the development of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) on the north coast; an inadequate [annual increase to the carbon tax of just \\$5 per tonne per year](#) (instead of the \$10 per tonne recommended by the CLT); the need for a [public inquiry into fracking](#) (as called for by the CCPA and 16 other organizations); and the need for leadership on more stringent regulation of methane emissions. The author concludes: "The BC government's opposition to Kinder-Morgan's TransMountain pipeline expansion is laudable. But there is much left to be done on climate action in BC... We need an action plan commensurate with the urgency posed by climate change and the aspirations of leadership claimed by BC politicians."



— B.C. Premier John Horgan and Green Party leader Andrew Weaver announce their coalition in June

Although Marc Lee [has written](#) about the controversial Site C Dam project previously, he doesn't include it in this overview, although it is still very much a live issue. Following the Report of the [Independent Review of the B.C. Utilities Commission \(BCUC\)](#) on November 1, the government indicated it would decide by December 31 whether to proceed with the project or not. On December 1, the B.C. Green Party, the government's coalition partner, sent an [Open Letter](#) to the Premier, arguing for cancellation of Site C on the grounds that it is likely to continue to exceed budget, and that alternative sources of energy are now cheaper. Questions about the job creation forecasts used to justify the original decision [have also been raised](#) – most relying on the latest analysis from the University of British Columbia Water Governance Institute. Their latest [full report](#) was released on November 23; a [2-page Briefing Note](#) also released argues that terminating Site C and pursuing the alternative scenario put forth by BCUC would create three times as many jobs as the construction and operation of Site C by 2054, albeit with short-term job losses. The longer term scenario forecasts jobs in site remediation, energy conservation, and alternative energy projects, including in the Peace River region. Commentary on the jobs debates has appeared in “[Digging for The Truth on Site C Dam Job Numbers](#)” in *DeSmog Canada* (Nov. 16) and in “[A BC without Site C best bet for taxpayers](#)” an Opinion piece in *The Tyee* written by Jay Ritchlin of the David Suzuki Foundation, which labels the call for current construction jobs as “a red herring”.

Also in *The Tyee*: “[Construction Unions Pressing for Completion of Site C](#)” (Nov. 24) , which takes a deep dive into a recent press conference of the Allied Hydro Council of BC, a bargaining agent for unions at previous large hydro projects, and an advocate of the Site C project. The detailed article, outlining ties between the Council and the NDP government, is by Sarah Cox, author of [Breaching the Peace: The Site C Dam and a Valley's Stand Against Big Hydro](#) (UBC Press, forthcoming Spring 2018). The Allied Hydro Council submission to the BCUC Inquiry is [here](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [climate tax](#), [New Democratic Party \(NDP\)](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Site C Dam](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Ontario announces initiative re energy efficiency in hospitals, and updates Infrastructure Plan

Posted on **November 30, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A [press release](#) on November 27 from Ontario's Ministry of Health announced an investment of \$64 million through a Hospital Energy Efficiency Program, which will support 180 projects at 98 hospitals across the province, providing more efficient heating, ventilation, air conditioning and lighting. The funds will be directed from the proceeds of cap and trade

auctions, and are in addition to the \$9 billion for new hospital projects already announced in the 2017 Budget statement, as part of Infrastructure spending.

On November 28, the government released [Building Better Lives](#), an update for 2017 about the Ontario Long Term Infrastructure Plan which was launched in 2014, and which integrates climate change priorities in infrastructure planning for public transit, transportation, schools and hospitals. The government [press release](#) cites a study by the Centre for Spatial Economics to defend its program. *The Economic Benefits of Public Infrastructure Spending in Ontario* (March 2017) estimates that in the short-run, gross domestic product rises \$0.91 per dollar of spending, 4.7 jobs are generated per million dollars spent, and \$0.27 of each dollar spent by government is recovered in additional Ontario and federal and government revenues.

Building Better Lives also includes a [Technical Appendix](#) with details on the asset management strategies of key ministries and agencies, as well as information about their assets. The Appendix also provides an overview of the three-year review to be undertaken to identify best practices and to transform the asset management process for government ministries. This status report and review is required under the Ontario *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015*.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Hospitals](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Corporate Climate Risk Disclosure needed to protect Pensions

Posted on **November 30, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“To protect pensions, companies should be required to come clean on climate risk” writes Keith Stewart of Greenpeace Canada in an Opinion piece in the *National Observer* on November 27. Stewart reports that Greenpeace Canada has filed a formal request under Ontario’s Environmental Bill of Rights, for the Ontario government to review the need for mandatory disclosure of climate-related risks in corporations’ financial filings. The government’s response is expected by the end of 2017. This is the latest of recent and ongoing calls for increased corporate disclosure of the risks posed by climate change, to protect investors and financial stability. The issue has even made it to the conservative *Report on Business* of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* newspaper, in “Business risk from climate change now top of mind for Canada’s corporate boards” (November 22). The article warns that Canada’s stock markets are particularly vulnerable to a potential “carbon bubble” in the valuations of fossil-fuel-dependent companies, given that the Toronto Stock Exchange is so heavily weighted with energy and mining companies (20 per cent for that category, as compared with only 2 per cent for clean technology and renewable-energy companies). And that’s not the worst: on the TSX Venture Exchange, mining and oil and gas companies account for 68 per cent of the index. (Such a resource sector dependency was part of the reasoning given by the Norwegian Wealth Fund for its proposal to divest oil and gas investments (Nov. 16)).

Another related *Globe and Mail* article provides an excuse for the current state of climate risk disclosure in Canada in “Companies Looking to Report Environmental Data Also Navigate Inconsistent Frameworks” (Nov. 22). The article states that “There is a dizzying number of best-practice guidelines for climate disclosures” and lists the major ones – with information drawn largely from the [Carrots & Sticks database](#). In fact, Carrots & Sticks lists nine sustainability reporting instruments unique to Canada, in addition to widely-recognized international ones such as the [Principles for Responsible Investment \(PRI\) Reporting Framework](#) and the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#). (Carrots & Sticks is an initiative begun in 2006 by KPMG International, Stichting Global Reporting Initiative, UNEP, and the Centre for Corporate Governance in Africa, with the goal of encouraging and harmonizing financial disclosure guidelines.)

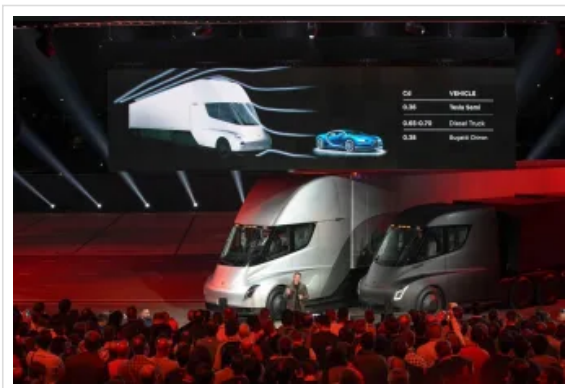
Most recently, the [Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures](#), led by Marc Carney and Michael Bloomberg, released their landmark Final Report and Recommendations in 2016. The following Canadian pension funds have, at least on paper, supported it: Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan, OPTrust, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec and the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation. The Canadian Securities Administrators launched a [Climate Change Disclosure Review](#) in March 2017 to investigate and consult re Canadian practice, which will issue a report “upon completion of its review”.

And across the globe in Australia, the [Australian Prudential Regulation Authority \(APRA\)](#), the regulator of the financial industry, has also announced an industry-wide review of climate-related disclosure practices. On November 29, an Executive Board member of the APRA delivered a speech, “[The weight of money: A business case for climate risk resilience](#)”, in which he outlines the Australian perspective on climate-related financial risks, and states: “So while the debate continues about the physical risks, the transition to a low carbon economy is underway, and that means the so-called transition risks are unavoidable: changes to market sentiment, new financial or environmental regulations, or the emergence of new technologies with the potential to prompt a reassessment of the value of a large range of assets, and consequently the value of capital and investments.” The speech is summarized in [The Guardian](#).

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Carbon Bubble](#), [corporate disclosure](#), [Financial Risk](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#), [Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Do electric vehicles create good green jobs? An Amnesty International report on Supply Chains says No

Posted on **November 27, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



November brought exciting news about electric vehicles: BYD, one of China’s leading electric carmakers, announced that it will open an assembly plant in a yet-to-be-announced location in Ontario in 2018, (though according to the [Globe and Mail article](#), the new plant will only create about 40 jobs to start). Also in mid-November, Tesla [revealed a concept design](#) for an electric truck in an glitzy release by Elon Musk , and the Toronto Transit Commission [announced its plan to buy its first electric buses](#), aiming for an emissions-free fleet by 2040. Unnoticed in the enthusiasm for these announcements was a report released by Amnesty International on November 15: [Time to Recharge: Corporate action and inaction to tackle abuses in the cobalt supply chain](#) which concludes : “ Major electronics and electric vehicle companies are still not doing enough to stop human rights abuses entering their cobalt supply chains, almost two years after an Amnesty International investigation exposed how batteries used in their products could be linked to child labour in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).” (That earlier report was [This is what we die for](#) released in January 2016) .

Under the heading “The Darker side of Green Technology”, [Time to Recharge](#) states: “Renault and Daimler performed particularly badly, failing to meet even minimal international standards for disclosure and due diligence, leaving major blind spots in their supply chains. BMW did the best among the electric vehicle manufacturers surveyed.” Tesla was also surveyed and ranked for its human rights and supply chain management; Tesla’s policies are described in its response to Amnesty International [here](#). And further, Tesla has come in for suggestions of anti-union attitudes in “[Critics Suggest Link to Union Drive After Tesla Fires 700+ Workers](#)”, in [The Energy Mix](#) (Oct. 23), and in an article in [Cleantechnica](#) , and for discriminatory policies in “[The Blue-Collar Hellscape of the Startup Industry](#)”, published in [In these Times](#) and re-posted in [Portside](#).

The Amnesty International report is a result of a survey of 29 companies, including consumer electronics giants Apple, Samsung Electronics, Dell, Lenovo, and Microsoft, as well as electric vehicle manufacturers BMW, Renault and Tesla. Questions in the survey were based on the [five-step due diligence framework](#) set out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its [Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas](#). Detailed responses from many of the surveyed companies are [here](#).

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [child labour](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [decent work](#), [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [electronics industry](#), [Job Quality](#), [mining industry](#), [Tesla](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Despite another oil spill, Keystone XL pipeline is approved in Nebraska. Resistance is strong and resolute

Posted on **November 23, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 16, TransCanada Pipeline shut down the existing Keystone Pipeline to contain a spill in South Dakota, estimated at 210,000 gallons– the third in the area since operations began in 2010. Reports include [“South Dakota Warns It Could Revoke Keystone Pipeline Permit Over Oil Spill”](#) in *Inside Climate News* . On November 20, the Nebraska Public Service Commission granted approval to Keystone – but an approval which [Anthony Swift at NRDC describes](#) as a “pyrrhic victory” because the original proposed route through Nebraska was rejected, and the new alternative route approved – the Keystone Mainline Alternative route – must now undergo new state and federal environmental approval processes . Official intervenors may also file an appeal in the Nebraska courts within 30 days and may petition the Public Service Commission for a rehearing within ten days. Even TransCanada seems to wonder if the Keystone will ever get built – the [official press release](#) states: “As a result of today’s decision, we will conduct a careful review of the Public Service Commission’s ruling while assessing how the decision would impact the cost and schedule of the project. ” Other reaction to the news of the approval: from *The National Observer* ; Alberta’s *Calgary Herald*; [Council of Canadians](#) ; [Bold Nebraska](#) (an alliance of landowners, environmental groups and First Nations), and from *Common Dreams*, “[‘This Fight Is Far From Over’ Groups Declare as Nebraska Clears Path for Keystone XL Construction](#)” – summarizing the responses of 350.org and the Sierra Club.

As for strong and resolute opposition: In May 2017, [CBC reported](#) that leaders of the Blackfoot Confederacy in Canada, the Great Sioux Nation (U.S.) and the Ponca tribe (U.S.) signed a joint declaration of opposition to Keystone XL . In a broader coalition, First Nations, along with non-native groups such as 350.org and Greenpeace USA, have now launched the [Promise to Protect campaign](#) which states: “We will make a series of stands along the route – nonviolent but resolute displays of our continued opposition to a project that endangers us all. Join native and non-native communities in the Promise to Protect the land, water, and climate. ” In light of the resolute and deep resistance, it is important to note an article in *The Intercept* [“Nebraska approves Keystone XL Pipeline as opponents face criminalization of protests”](#) (Nov. 20), which reported: “In anticipation of the Keystone XL’s construction, legislation was passed in South Dakota in March that allows the governor or a local sheriff to prohibit groups numbering more than 20 from gathering on public land or in schools, and also allows the Department of Transportation to limit access to highways by prohibiting stopping or parking in designated areas.” The South Dakota [Senate Bill 176](#) is [here](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [First Nations](#), [Keystone XL](#), [Oil pipelines](#), [Oil Spills](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [TransCanada](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A just clean energy transition for New York state – proposals include protection of pension benefits for displaced workers

Posted on **November 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 13, the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts published a new study by authors Robert Pollin, Heidi Garrett-Peltier and Jeannette Wicks-Lim, all well-established experts on the job creation benefits of renewable energy. *Clean Energy Investments for New York State: An Economic Framework for Promoting Climate Stabilization and Expanding Good Job Opportunities* examines the benefits of large-scale investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency for New York State, and proposes a Just Transition policy framework to support such clean energy investments. Their analysis is based on an estimate of a 40 percent decline in production activity and employment in fossil fuel industries in New York State as of 2030. They examine the labour market and present detailed statistics about the compensation and benefits, unionization, educational qualifications, gender and race of the small percentage (0.15 percent) of the total state workforce who worked in fossil fuel dependent industries in 2014.

In Chapter 8, they propose a Just Transition program guaranteeing pensions and reemployment, as well as providing income, training and relocation support for workers. They also propose support for fossil-fuel dependent communities, primarily through channeling new clean energy investments to the affected communities. The report cites the model of the Worker and Community Transition program that operated through the U.S. Department of Energy from 1994 – 2004.

Because of the level of detail in the report, (including information about the unfunded pension liabilities of the relevant companies), the authors are able to make very specific policy recommendations and also provide cost estimates. For example, they call on the State government to mandate full funding of pensions via state law, or through coordination with the federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC), to the extent that companies could be prohibited from paying dividends or financing share buybacks, or the state (in cooperation with PBGC) could place liens on company assets when pension funds are underfunded.

The report estimates a total cost of approximately \$18 million per year to fund 100 percent compensation insurance for five years, retraining for 2 years, and relocation support for workers. This is based on an average of \$270,000 – \$300,000 per worker per year, for the estimated 67 displaced workers likely to be eligible.

Interesting context for this report appears in an interview with Robert Pollin in the *Albany Times Union*, “N.Y. must try harder to become a clean energy beacon.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [New York State](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Progress at COP23 as Canada’s Minister pledges to include the CLC in a new Just Transition Task Force

Posted on **November 21, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



An article in the *Energy Mix* reflects a widely-stated assessment of the recently concluded Conference of the Parties in Bonn: “COP23 Ends with solid progress on Paris Rules, Process to Push for Faster Climate Action” : “It was an incremental, largely administrative conclusion for a conference that was never expected to deliver transformative results, but was still an essential step on the road to a more decisive “moment” at next year’s conference in Katowice, Poland.” A concise [summary of outcomes](#) was compiled by the International Institute for Environment and Development, including a link to the main outcome document of the COP23 meetings – the [Fiji Momentum for Implementation](#) . Germany’s Heinrich Böll Institute also issued a checklist and assessment titled *We will not drown, we are here to fight* . The UNFCCC provides a comprehensive list of initiatives and documents in its [closing press release](#) on November 17. And from the only Canadian press outlet which attended COP23 in person, the National Observer: “[Trump didn’t blow up the climate summit: what did happen in Bonn?](#)” .

What was the union assessment of COP23? The International Trade Union Confederation expressed concern for the slow progress in Bonn, [but stated](#): “The support for Just Transition policies is now visible and robust among all climate stakeholders: from environmental groups to businesses, from regional governments to national ones. The importance of a social pact as a driver to low-carbon economics means we can grow ambition faster, in line with what science tells us. ”

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) also expressed disappointment, reiterating the demands in its October [ETUC Resolution and views on COP 23](#) , and [calling for a “Katowice plan of action for Just Transition”](#) in advance of the COP24 meetings next year in Katowice, Poland.

The biggest winner on Just Transition was the Canadian Labour Congress, who pressed the Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change outside of formal negotiations at Bonn and received her pledge for federal support for the newly-announced [Just Transition Plan for Alberta’s Coal Workers](#) – including flexibility on federal Employment Insurance benefits, and a pledge that Western Economic Diversification Canada will support coal communities.

Importantly, “Minister McKenna also announced her government’s intention to work directly with the Canadian Labour Congress to launch a task force that will develop a national framework on Just Transition for workers affected by the coal phase-out. The work of this task force is slated to begin early in the new year”, according to the CLC press release “[Unions applaud Canada’s commitment to a just transition for coal workers](#)” . The background story to this under-reported breakthrough is in the *National Observer* coverage of the Canada-UK Powering Past Coal initiative, on [November 15](#) and [November 16](#). Unifor’s take on the Task Force is [here](#) .

This global alliance is the biggest COP23 news story for Canadians, coming near the end of meetings. Canada, along with the U.K. and the Marshall Islands, announced the “Powering Past Coal” global alliance to phase out dirty coal power plants around the world. See the government [press release for Canada](#) and [the U.K.](#) , and see the [Official Declaration](#), which states:

- “Government partners commit to phasing out existing traditional coal power in their jurisdictions, and to a moratorium on any new traditional coal power stations without operational carbon capture and storage within their jurisdictions.
- Business and other non-government partners commit to powering their operations without coal.
- All partners commit to supporting clean power through their policies (whether public or corporate, as appropriate) and investments, and to restricting financing for traditional coal power without carbon capture and storage.”

Amongst the 20-some jurisdictions already signed up to the alliance are Canada , the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, the city of Vancouver, and the states of Washington and Oregon. Noticeably absent so far are the major coal polluters – the U.S., Germany, China and India. The stated goal is to grow the alliance to 50 members jurisdictions. [The Energy Mix](#) provides a [summary and related interviews](#); Climate Action Network-Canada reacted with [“Powering Past Coal Announcement Shows Rise of International Collective Action; Domestic Implementation will Bring it Home”](#) (Nov. 16); [DeSmog UK](#) calls the alliance the “start of a journey” ; German news source DW provides an [international viewpoint](#) of the alliance, especially focused on the politically-charged debate about coal in Germany.

There were other breakthroughs at COP23, including on Gender Equality, Indigenous Rights, and Agriculture. Delegates adopted the first [Gender Action Plan](#) . As reported in [“To combat climate change, increase women’s participation”](#) in DW (Nov. 20), for the first time, there is a plan which sets out specific activities, with a timeline for implementation, and allocation of responsibilities. National governments are responsible for reporting back on progress on these activities in 2019.



[The Guardian](#) reported [“Indigenous groups win greater climate recognition at Bonn summit”](#) (Nov. 15) citing the improved language from the 2015 Paris Agreement. ” The [technical document](#) approved at COP23 states: countries “should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.” In response, the [Indigenous Environmental Network](#) states: “... while progress has been made on the UNFCCC traditional knowledge Platform for engagement of local communities and Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Peoples’ rights are not fully recognized in the final platform document of COP 23. The burden of implementation falls on local communities and indigenous peoples.” News and reports released by It Takes Roots, the Indigenous Environmental Network COP23 delegation, are [here](#), including their report in opposition to carbon pricing: [Carbon Pricing: A Critical Perspective for Community Resistance](#) , released at COP23.

Finally, regarding agriculture: As reported by the [International Institute for Environment and Development](#) “After years of fraught negotiations on this issue, the COP23 [decision on agriculture](#) requests the subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC to simultaneously address vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and approaches to tackle food security. Breaking the deadlock on issues connecting agriculture and climate change was a big win for COP23.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta Coal Phase-out](#), [Canadian Labour Congress](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [COP23](#), [First Nations](#), [Indigenous Environmental Network](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [Just Transition](#), [Powering Past Coal Alliance](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Alberta unveils its Just Transition plan for coal workers

Posted on **November 14, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 10, the government of Alberta released the [Recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Coal Communities](#) – 35 recommendations to promote a just transition from coal-mining, necessitated by the government’s [Climate Leadership Plan](#) to phase-out coal-fired electricity by 2030. The Advisory Panel focuses on three areas: workers, communities and First Nations. The 18 recommendations regarding workers relate to income security and replacement, pension security, retraining and re-employment – and recommend a strong role for unions in planning and process. Some examples: ... “Programs and training should be delivered, as much as possible, while workers are currently employed and should include accessible and flexible skills development models. This includes a role for employers to enable access to skills development during employment.”... “Employers and unions should play roles in facilitating the training or retraining of impacted workers. This could be reflected in employer cost sharing with government and union participation in planning and delivery of assistance.”... Where provisions are inadequate, facilitate the negotiation of severance provisions between employers and unions that represent workers at coal-fired facilities and associated coal mines. Similar negotiations should be facilitated for non-union employees. ...Where provisions are inadequate, facilitate the negotiation of early retirement benefits between employers and unions that represent workers at coal-fired facilities and associated coal mines. Similar negotiations should be facilitated for non-union employees. ...Immediately assess the direct impact of the transition on the funded status, solvency and operation of defined-benefit pension plans and take steps to ensure these plans are adequately funded. ”

In a separate [press release](#) , the government announced more details about a \$40-million transition fund for workers and communities. As described on the [government website](#) , benefits will include financial support for retraining (still under development), on-site employment counselling for individuals, and the provision of facilitators to assist employers, employees and unions to establish a worker adjustment committee to develop a workplace transition plan, using labour market information or commissioned regional labour market studies. In addition, Alberta is calling on the federal government to make changes to the Employment Insurance (EI) program immediately, so that the provincial income support will not reduce their EI income, and to also extend the duration of EI benefits for coal workers.

The [Coal Transition Coalition project](#), an alliance of unions led by the Alberta Federation of Labour, had previously published its recommendations in [“Getting it Right: A Just Transition Strategy for Alberta’s Coal workers](#). The [AFL response](#) to the government’s announcements on November 10 calls the Transition Plan “a step in the right direction” and credits the Advisory Panel with listening to workers’ input. President Gil McGowan warns, however, that “Offering bridging supports to workers on EI and extending the benefit period for workers close to retirement are important elements of the plan, but they depend on the federal government doing their part,” ... “Many coal-fired units in Alberta are closing due to federal government regulatory changes. They have a responsibility to these workers to help ensure a just transition.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Alberta Federation of Labour](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Just Transition](#) | [2 Replies](#)

Exceptional growth in clean energy jobs forecast for Europe and the U.S.

Posted on **November 13, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



SolarPower Europe, together with consultants EY, published [Solar PV Jobs & Value Added in Europe](#) in early November, concluding that Europe is poised for a solar jobs revival after several years of policy-driven uncertainty. The report discusses the policy environment, including trade policies, makes job projections, and estimates the socio-economic impact per segment of the value chain, for roof-mounted and ground-mounted solar. The job creation forecast: the PV sector workforce will grow from 81,000 full time jobs (FTE) in 2016 to over 174,000 FTE by 2021 (an increase of 145% in the next 5 years). As quoted in [an article in PV Magazine](#), the President of the European solar industry association states that an additional 45,500 jobs could be created across Europe next year if the trade restrictions on modules and cells from Asia were to be removed. SolarPower Europe proposes an industrial competitiveness strategy for solar in Europe which aims to support 300,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2030. It has also released a Policy Declaration, [Small is Beautiful](#) which promotes the benefits of small scale, clean, locally owned distributed energy.

In the U.S., the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) released the [2017 Clean Energy Industry Report](#) on October 27, showing a 3.4% employment growth rate for clean energy between December 2015 to December 2016 (surpassing the economy as a whole). Growth is projected to double again to 7% by the end of 2017. At the end of 2016, clean energy jobs employed 146,000 New Yorkers, distributed as follows: 110,000 jobs in energy efficiency; 22,000 renewable electric power generation (12,000 of which are found in solar energy); 8,400 alternative transportation; 2,900 renewable fuels, and 1,400 in grid modernization and storage. The report also discusses a labour market imbalance where demand exceeds supply of clean energy workers, with employers reporting the most difficult positions to fill are engineers, installers or technicians, and sales representatives.

Finally from the U.S., [an article by Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\) economists](#), appeared in the October issue of *Monthly Labor Review* with a summary and analysis of the detailed data of [Employment Projections for the entire U.S. economy](#) for 2016-26, released on October 24. The article notes: "Healthcare and related occupations account for 17 of the 30 fastest growing occupations from 2016 to 2026. ... "Of the 30 fastest growing occupations, 6 are involved in energy production. Employment for solar photovoltaic (PV) installers is expected to grow extremely fast (105.3 percent) as the expansion and adoption of solar panels and their installation create new jobs. However, because this is a relatively small occupation, with a 2016 employment level of 11,300, this growth will account for only about 11,900 new jobs over the next 10 years. Developments in wind energy generation have made this energy option increasingly competitive with traditional forms of power generation, such as coal and natural gas, and are expected to drive employment growth for wind turbine service technicians. Employment of these workers is projected to grow 96.1 percent. As with solar PV installers, this occupation is small, and its rapid growth will account for only about 5,500 new jobs." Surprisingly, "Faster-than-average employment growth from 2016 to 2026 is projected for a number of oil and gas occupations, including roustabouts, service unit operators, rotary drill operators, and derrick operators. The oil price assumptions in the MA model are expected to cause employment growth in the oil and gas extraction industry, at an annual growth rate of 1.7 percent over the 2016–26 decade."

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Distributed energy](#), [employment forecasts](#), [Europe](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Lancet measures the impact of climate change on public health, productivity and more

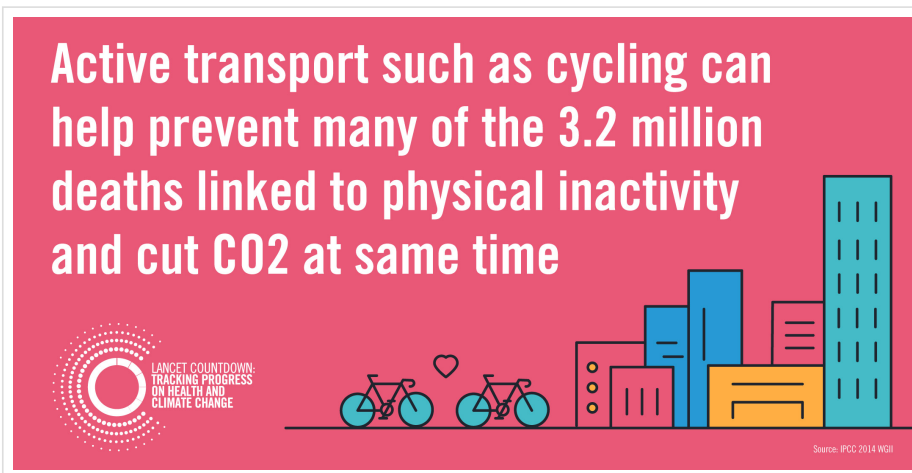
Posted on **November 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change is a global, interdisciplinary research collaboration which has published an annual review since 2016. The Lancet Countdown's 2017 Report tracks 40 indicators across five areas, and concludes that the human symptoms of climate change are unequivocal and potentially irreversible. Of particular interest, Indicator 1.3 states that "global physical labour capacity in populations exposed to temperature change has decreased by around 5.3% between 2000 and 2016." Other alarming statistics: between 2000 and 2016, the number of vulnerable people exposed to heatwave events has increased by around 125 million; without further action against climate change, over 1 billion people may be at risk of become climate change migrants by the end of the century. The [full report](#) is available here (registration required, free).

In addition to the global report, the Lancet Countdown produces country-specific reports; the [Briefing for Canadian Policy-makers](#) was written in partnership with the Canadian Public Health Association. It makes several recommendations for Canadian action, including:

- Phase out coal-powered electricity in Canada by 2030 or sooner, with a minimum of two thirds of the power replaced by non-emitting sources, and any gap made up by lowest-emitting natural gas technology. Track and cost the health benefits of the transition in Canada and globally;
- Develop a National Active Transport Strategy for Canada to coordinate improvements to walking, cycling and transit environments. This should receive priority funding, with healthcare cost savings calculated in order to demonstrate the cost offset of the investments.
- Enhance support for telecommuting and telehealth options. Within health systems, gather and analyze data on kilometers, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and costs saved by telehealth in order to help drive systems change.
- Increase funding for research into the local health impacts of resource extraction, with a focus on impacts on Indigenous populations.
- Integrate Health Impact Assessments as a core component of the federal Environmental Assessment process.



Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [climate change and health](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Labour Productivity](#), [telecommuting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Quebec launches public consultation on energy transition

Posted on **November 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 17, Transition énergétique Québec (TEQ) [announced](#) the launch of a public consultation process, to begin Nov. 6 and continue until Dec. 3, 2017, regarding the province's proposed Master Plan for Energy Transition for the next five years. In addition to compiling public input, TEQ will host thematic workshops focused on residential building, commercial and institutional building, passenger and freight transportation, industry, innovation, bioenergy and land-use planning. The [Consultation website](#) is available in French only; the [TEQ English website](#) has not yet been updated with any information about the consultation process.

Transition énergétique Québec (TEQ) is a public corporation created in April 2017 as part of Québec's 2030 Energy Policy, to support and promote energy transition and coordinate the implementation of energy policies in Quebec. The current policy document, *Energy in Quebec: A source of Growth* (2016) sets goals to enhance energy efficiency by 15%, reduce the amount of petroleum products consumed by 40%, eliminate the use of thermal coal, increase overall renewable energy output by 25%, and increase bioenergy production by 50%.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Energy policy](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Quebec](#), [Quebec Energy Strategy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Union conference focus: fighting climate change with innovative campaigns

Posted on **November 7, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Labour and climate activists gathered to exchange experiences and plan for future action at the Second Labor Convergence on Climate event, held on September 23-24, under the banner "Building Worker Power to Confront Climate Change." The meeting was hosted by the [Labor Network for Sustainability \(LNS\)](#), which recently released a [report on the meetings](#) summarizing the impressive initiatives and projects, including: the Canadian Postal Workers Union proposal [Delivering Community Power](#), which envisions expansion and re-purposing of the postal station network to provide electric vehicle charging stations, farm-to-table food delivery, and community banking; the International Brotherhood of Teamsters described the [San Francisco Zero Waste](#) program that now diverts 80% of municipal waste from landfills into recycling and composting and provides union jobs; [Service Employees International Union \(SEIU\) 1199](#) described their environmental and climate justice programs, resulting from the impact of disasters like Superstorm Sandy; worker training programs at the [Net-Zero Energy training facility](#) built by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 595 in partnership with the Northern California National Electrical Contractors Association; the United Food and Commercial Workers described their experience with the [Good Food Purchasing Policy](#) as a tool for protecting and enhancing labor standards for workers in the food industry and advancing climate justice; and the International Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen profiled their successful Green Diesel campaign to win cleaner fuel engines and a visionary strategy called "Solutionary Rail", profiled in "How we can turn railroads into a climate solution" in *Grist* (March 2017) and in "Electric Trains everywhere – A Solution to crumbling roads and climate crisis" in *YES Magazine* (May 2017).

Participants at the Second Labor Convergence on Climate included over 130 people – labour union leaders, organizers, and rank and file activists from 17 unions, 3 state federations/central labor councils and 6 labor support organizations, as well as environmental and economic justice activists.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green Building](#), [IBEW](#), [Labor Network for Sustainability](#), [labour union policies](#), [Retraining](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: Keeping up with COP23 in Bonn – what should Canadians know? what should workers know?

Posted on **November 7, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As anyone who reads the news must know by now, much of the world's climate change community has assembled for the 23rd annual "Conference of the Parties" (COP) in Bonn, Germany – from November 6 to 17. Following the flood of daily press releases and tweets from official meetings, side events, and protests can be overwhelming. Here are some helpful sources of events – most of which also provide Facebook and Twitter updates: official COP23 press releases and documents [in English](#) and [in French](#) ; Climate Action Network-International (CAN-I) daily coverage in [English](#) and [French](#) . The [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#) formal COP23 coverage of negotiations and side events , with more spontaneous news at their [Climate-L](#) site. The official Canadian government statement of what Canada hopes to achieve at COP23 is [here](#), and the government website for Environment and Climate Change Canada produces updates in [English](#) and [French](#) . Minister McKenna's Twitter feed [@ec_minister](#) is a fuller record of Canadian activity .



— CLC Side Event re Just Transition at COP23, Nov. 13 2017

For more opinion and analysis, follow Climate Action Network- Canada newservice [CanRaction](#) , which produced a November 9 issue: "Paris Implementation Depends on a Just Transition for Fossil Fuel Workers" . The *National Observer* has reported on Canadian activity from COP23 [here](#) . Follow trade union updates via Twitter at [#unions4climate](#) – the only way to find out about side events such as the Canadian Labour Congress event re [#Just Transition](#) on November 13. Follow the flood of tweets from all points of view at [#COP23](#) . For the progressive U.S. presence, follow [#wearestillin](#) on Twitter or visit the [We are Still In](#) website.

The meetings, although in Bonn, are officially hosted by Fiji, and will be governed by the principle of “talanoa” – described by the Prime Minister of Fiji as “ a process of inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue that builds empathy and leads to decision-making for the collective good.” This aspiration for transparency and consultation will be applied to the key points of contention: 1). “the “ratchet” – the means by which the national Paris pledges for emissions reduction will be increased in future years, (referred to in UN-speak as the “facilitative dialogue”; and 2). Issues of adaptation and financing (with adaptation now being re-phrased as “resilience”). As the first COP meeting since the Paris Agreement, the Bonn talks must begin to build the formal implementation structure – referred to as “The Paris Rulebook.” For context, read: “[The COP23 climate change summit in Bonn and why it matters](#)” in *The Guardian* (a very quick overview laden to links with more information), or “[Bonn climate talks must go further than Paris pledges to succeed](#)” . The Heinrich Boll Foundation has published a very complete discussion, which includes the topics of human rights, just transition, and gender climate change, in *The Fiji UN Climate Summit 2017, COP23: what is at stake in Bonn?* .

Below are a few documents relevant to Canada and working people:

Climate Action Network Canada Brief to the COP23 Meetings: This policy paper specifies goals from the Canadian point of view, including #4, explicitly about Just Transition: “Canada should work to ensure that global pursuits for just transition and decent work have a prominent place in relevant components of the Paris work programme as well as FD2018. Just transition for workers should be maintained as a permanent theme within the forum on response measures under the Paris Agreement. It is critical to have a dedicated technical space, where good practice or challenging situations can be presented and debated and then find a reflection in the work programme. Future work on this issue should be recommended to SBI/SBSTA as the Paris work programme is developed and implemented. As FD2018 invites parties to enhance NDCs, Canada should incorporate just transition commitments into its NDC and encourage other parties to do the same. NDCs supported by zero-carbon development roadmaps are critical for building a longterm vision for transforming our economy, as well as for driving sustainable investments. Factoring-in employment and just transition will align them with broader social priorities in each country.”

The ITUC Frontlines Briefing Climate Justice: COP 23 Special Edition. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is leading a delegation of 130 trade union members from 40 countries at COP, and posting updates from the meetings at #unions4climate on Twitter. The *COP 23 Special Edition* (which includes special note of the Columbia Institute *Jobs for Tomorrow – Canada’s Building Trades and Net Zero Emissions report*) fleshes out the top-level statement of *3 Trade Union Demands for COP23* : “• Raise ambition and realise the job-creation potential of climate action; • Deliver on climate finance and support the most vulnerable• Commit to securing a just transition for workers and their communities. ”

“Disclosure of Climate-related Financial Information: Time for Canada to Act” a Policy Brief by the Centre for International Governance Innovation: presented at COP 23 and urging strong implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. It provides a plan on how to integrate climate change into existing risk management and disclosure practices in Canada.

We Mean Business Blog: Watch this blog for news and press releases representing the views and policies of the We Mean Business coalition, which represents over 620 multinational companies which support a low carbon transition. *Making the Paris Vision a Reality* summarizes their policy goals.

UNEP The Emissions Gap Report 2017 . This 8th edition by the UNEP underlines the urgency and scale of the task at COP23 by stating that currently pledged emissions reductions, even if met, would result in no more than a third of the emission reductions needed. “If the climate targets in the Paris Agreement are to remain credible and achievable, all countries will need to contribute to significantly enhancing their national ambitions, augmenting their national policy efforts in accordance with respective capabilities and different circumstances, and ensuring full accounting of subnational action.” The UNEP reviews recent studies to score the countries which are on track to meet their 2030 NDC targets – Brazil, China, India and Russia. Those “likely to require further action in order to meet their NDCs, according to government and independent estimates” include Canada, along with Argentina, Australia, the European Union, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, the Republic of Korea and the United States. Much of the UNEP report is based on data from *The Climate Action Tracker* ; the *New York Times* interactive summary also relies on the Climate Action Tracker in the November 6 article, “[Here’s how far the world is from meeting its climate targets](#)” .

United States Fourth National Climate Assessment . Most attention went to the surprise that the Trump administration didn't suppress [this report](#) , which represents a comprehensive, authoritative documentation of climate change science worldwide, with an emphasis on U.S. statistics and experience . It was released by the U.S. government, and in direct opposition to the Trump administration stance, stated: "This assessment concludes, based on extensive evidence, that it is extremely likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress](#), [Climate change policy](#), [COP23](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New York marks Superstorm Sandy 5-year Anniversary in a big way: Climate Jobs Summit, Clean Energy Jobs Report, and expansion of New York's Green Bank

Posted on **November 2, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Hurricane Sandy Oct 29 2012 – photo from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The [Climate Jobs Now! Summit](#) was held on October 27, in partnership with the Office of New York Governor Cuomo, [Climate Jobs NY](#) , and the Workers Institute, ILR Cornell University. The event was built around the theme, Reversing Inequality and Combatting Climate Change: A New Era for States and Regions, with participants and speakers from New York labour unions, government, and climate advocates. The Closing Panel, "Fulfilling the Promise of a Just Transition for All New Yorkers through Clean Energy and Community Resilience" included John Cartwright, President of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council. [Video](#) of some presentations is available .

Also on October 27, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) released the [2017 Clean Energy Industry Report](#) , which found that clean energy jobs employed 146,000 New Yorkers at the end of 2016, distributed as follows: 110,000 jobs in energy efficiency; 22,000 renewable electric power generation; 8,400 alternative transportation; 2,900 renewable fuels, and 1,400 in grid modernization and storage. Employment growth in clean energy surpassed the economy as a whole, at 3.4% from December 2015 to December 2016, with projected growth to double again to 7% by the end of 2017. The report also states that the demand exceeds the supply of clean energy workers, with employers reporting the most difficult positions to fill are engineers, installers or technicians, and sales representatives.

(In June, Governor Cuomo announced funding for Workforce Development & Training Programs at campuses of the State University of New York).

Finally on October 27, a [press release](#) from the Governor's office announced that the New York Green Bank is seeking to raise at least an additional \$1 billion in private-sector funds to expand the availability of financing for clean energy projects. According to the press release, the Green Bank has had strong interest "from third-party entities like pension funds and insurance companies seeking to use it as an investment vehicle for sustainable infrastructure projects". The additional capital can be invested in projects across the U.S., and the Green Bank is prepared work with other states and NGO's to establish their own Green Banks.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Green Finance](#), [labour union policies](#), [New York State](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council established to guide provincial policy

Posted on **November 2, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On October 23 , the British Columbia Government [announced](#) the appointment of the Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council, to "provide advice to government on actions and policies that can contribute to carbon pollution reductions and optimize opportunities for sustainable economic development and job creation. This includes working with industry and the federal government to address the competitiveness of emissions-intensive trade-exposed sectors, to help them reduce their emissions and continue to thrive economically." The formal Terms of Reference are [here](#) . "B.C. Government sets up Climate Council" in the *Climate Examiner* provides a good summary: "The new body is not intended to craft an entirely new climate change strategy for the nascent government, but rather advise on how to build on the previous climate team's work, particularly with respect to decarbonizing the [major sources](#) of emissions in the province: transport, industry and buildings, the minister said. In addition, the council will offer advice on how to achieve a new mid-term emissions reduction [target of 40 percent](#) by 2030, legislation for which is to be introduced next spring."

The Advisory Council is a permanent group comprised of 22 members, some of whom advised the Liberal governments' [2016 Climate Leadership Plan](#); members are appointed for two year, renewable terms. The Co-Chairs are Merran Smith, Executive Director, Clean Energy Canada and Marcia Smith, Senior Vice-President of Sustainability and External Affairs, Teck Resources Limited. A [full list of members](#) is available – notably, it includes Lee Loftus, Executive Director of the British Columbia and Yukon Territory Building and Construction Trades Council, (a partner organization with the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) project); Gavin McGarrigle, BC Area director, Unifor; and D.J. Pohl, president, Fraser Valley Labour Council. Academic and activist members Nancy Olewiler, Professor, School of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University; Judith Sayers, Adjunct Professor, University of Victoria; Sybil

Seitzinger, Executive Director, Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, University of Victoria; Michelle Molnar, Environmental Economist, David Suzuki Foundation; and Karen Tam Wu, Acting Director, Pembina Institute.

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Final report on Site C dam leaves B.C. government to decide: continue or terminate the multi-billion dollar project?

Posted on **November 2, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

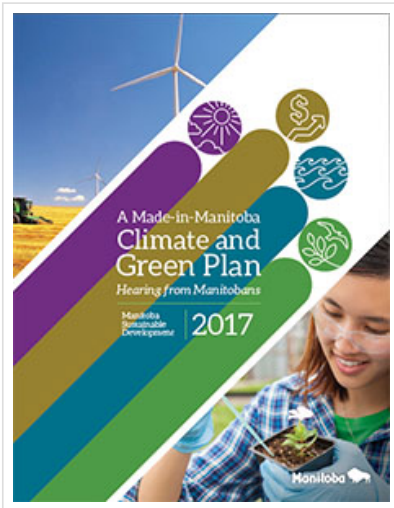
On November 1, the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) released its *Final Report to the Government on the Inquiry Respecting Site C*, the most controversial energy project in the province. (A 20-page Executive Summary is [here](#)) . BCUC concurs with previous criticisms that B.C. Hydro's forecast for electricity demand had been "excessively optimistic", and that the project is likely to run late and over budget – possibly costing more than \$10 billion. In his Submission to the BCUC in August, [Revisiting the Economic Case for Site C](#), CCPA Economist Marc Lee discussed many of these same concerns, and also raised the issue that the scope of the BCUC inquiry should be expanded to consider Site C's environmental effects and the implications for First Nations . All Submissions and documentation are available at the [Inquiry website](#).

The BCUC Final Report does not make recommendations, but presents detailed information on the costs of three alternatives: continuing and completing the project, terminating it, or suspending it. The report also considers the potential of alternative, renewable energy options of wind, geothermal, and industrial conservation. It concludes that suspending the project and re-starting it later is too expensive an option, leaving the provincial Government to decide: continue, or terminate Site C. The [government response](#) states that "we anticipate a decision by the end of the year." CBC News presents some of the range of reaction to the BCUC report in , " ['I think it would be devastating for our whole community': report raises local anxiety about Site C's future](#) " . DeSmog Canada published a detailed summary, along with background information about the many protests and objections, at "[Site C Dam Over Budget, Behind Schedule and Could be Replaced by Alternatives: BCUC Report](#)" . (November 1)

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Energy policy](#), [Site C Dam](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Made-in-Manitoba Green Plan proposes a \$25 per tonne carbon tax

Posted on **October 31, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On October 27, the Conservative Government of Manitoba released a discussion paper, *The Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan*, which announces a vision for the province to be Canada's "cleanest, greenest and most climate resilient province." It opens a brief [public consultation period](#) till November 30, with proposals organized around four stated "pillars": climate, jobs, water and infrastructure. Although most of the attention has been focused on the carbon tax proposals, the Discussion Paper proposes dozens of possible initiatives, including electrification of Winnipeg's transit, encouraging biofuels (e.g. by raising the provincial biodiesel mandate from two per cent to five per cent), and improving waste management to reduce methane emissions, among many others. Regarding jobs, the report states: "We need to focus on how to prosper through climate change and create new jobs and growth in the transition to a global low-carbon economy. Environmental services and clean technology are opportunity sectors for Manitoba companies." The report presents potential initiatives to create jobs – (for example, reducing "green tape", encouraging finance and capital markets) and to improve skills and training (e.g. through participation in the U.N. Green Youth Corps, or working with the private sector work "to develop a Clean Growth Talent Plan as part of a new Labour Market Strategy incorporating a focus on climate and sustainability jobs and skills. ")

The section on carbon pricing has attracted most attention because it so clearly misses the criteria laid out outlined by Environment and Climate Change Canada in [The Pan-Canadian Approach to pricing carbon pollution](#) (the Backstop plan) and the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#). Manitoba's Discussion Paper proposes a carbon tax of \$25 per tonne to remain in place till 2022 (only half of what the federal Framework Agreement calls for), with farm fuel use exempt. In a shift of its earlier position, however, Manitoba acknowledges the federal government's legal right to impose a carbon tax plan on the province, but continues to insist on its uniqueness: "Any carbon pricing system in Manitoba must recognize two essential facts: First, Manitoba is already 'clean' given our hydroelectricity system with 98 per cent of electricity generated from non-carbon emitting sources. Second, Manitobans have already invested billions of dollars in building our clean energy system and are still doing so with the Keeyask Dam and the Bipole transmission line. Adding a \$50 per tonne carbon price on Manitobans at the same time Hydro rates are rising is neither fair nor sensible."

A [thorough discussion](#) of the proposed carbon tax comes from the Ecofiscal Commission. Headlines reflect the reaction to the \$25 per tonne carbon tax: at CBC News: "[Manitoba thumbs nose at Ottawa, sets own carbon tax scheme](#)", and "[Proposed Manitoba carbon tax 'will have to go up': Federal environment minister](#)". "[Manitoba defies feds, unveils its own carbon pricing plan](#)" (Oct. 27) in the *Winnipeg Free Press* includes reaction from political parties and academics. Also in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, "[Details hazy in Made-in-Manitoba Green plan](#)" – which calls the Green Plan "the political equivalent of a Rubik's Cube. It's colourful, intriguing and almost impossible to figure out." That was no doubt a topic at the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment conference in Vancouver on November 3.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Manitoba](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario continues its commitment to nuclear power in newly-released 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan

Posted on **October 31, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 26, Ontario's Minister of Energy [released](#) the *2017 Long-Term Energy Plan – Delivering Fairness and Choice*, an update of previous versions in 2010 and 2013. [Clean Energy Canada](#) states "Ontario's long-term energy plan provides more direction than details, but it stays the course in building a modern, affordable and flexible energy system." Others, such as the [Ontario Clean Air Coalition](#), have concerns that the continuing commitment to nuclear power generation comes at the expense of development of renewables. While the policy seems to focus on the political task of making energy more affordable and giving consumers more energy options, some noteworthy goals relate to "enhancing net metering by allowing more people the opportunity to produce clean energy and use it to power their homes and lower their electricity bills." ... "Allowing utilities to intelligently and cost-effectively integrate electric vehicles into their grids, including smart charging in homes" ... and increased oversight of fees charged by private providers "strengthening protection for vulnerable consumers in condominiums and apartments to protect them from energy disconnection in winter." Key reading from the LTEP: Chapter 6 [Responding to the challenge of climate change](#). The next step is for the [Ontario Energy Board](#) and the [Independent Electricity System Operator](#) to submit implementation plans to the Minister of Energy for approval.

The LTEP summarizes Ontario's energy policies to date and forecasts demand for the future. For more detail and analysis on those aspects, see the [CBC](#), or "[Hydro Prices to keep rising just a bit more slowly](#)" in the *Ottawa Citizen* (Oct. 26) which points out that the province is forecasting almost flat demand for electricity for the next 20 years, as conservation and efficiency savings are traded for increased demand for electric vehicles and transit. (the report assumes 2.4 million electric vehicles will be on the roads by 2035).

Controversy surrounds the role of nuclear power in the plan. The Power Workers Union, which continues [to lobby for nuclear power](#), calls the new LTEP "good news for the environment and the economy" in their [press release](#), stating:

"Today's latest provincial Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP) confirms the pivotal role nuclear energy will play in Ontario's clean energy future. Recognizing the significant environmental and economic benefits that this safe, reliable generation delivers, the provincial government remains committed to refurbishing all of Ontario's publicly-owned nuclear reactors and to the four-year extension of the operations of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station to 2024". In contrast, the Ontario Clean Air Coalition reacted with "[Ontario doubles down on obsolete nuclear – and you're paying for it](#)", which states: "Ontario's fixation with obsolete nuclear energy is to say the least puzzling, but what is clear is that this fixation is going to cost us dearly. Please [sign our petition](#) calling on Premier Wynne to make a deal with Quebec to lower our electricity costs and to open the way for a modern renewable energy system." In a similar vein, the David Suzuki Foundation [press release](#) states: "Ontario's new Long-Term Energy Plan is both encouraging and worrisome. The former because it recognizes the importance of clean air and addressing climate change; the latter because of its embrace of nuclear power and its lack of a road map to expand renewable energy." ... "the province's continued reliance on nuclear for about half its power is troubling. In addition to concerns around uranium mining and waste disposal, nuclear has not proven to be cost-effective."



— \$13 Billion Darlington Nuclear Plant refurbishment is reportedly [over budget](#)

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AFL-CIO Convention adopts historic Climate Change resolution

Posted on **October 27, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The 2017 Convention of the AFL-CIO took place in St. Louis from October 22 to 25. In a breakthrough, [Resolution 55 on Climate Change, Energy and Union Jobs](#) was adopted, putting the AFL-CIO “on the record” as recognizing the threat of climate change and acknowledging the need to move to a sustainable alternative energy system. The resolution also calls for workers impacted by the energy transition to be protected. [The floor debate is available on YouTube](#), showing supportive speeches by members of the Utility Workers, IBEW, LIUNA, USW, the Boilermakers, CWA, AFA, the Montana AFL-CIO and the Southeast Minnesota Area Labor Council. Speaking strongly against the resolution was the General President of the UA, which represents workers in the plumbing and pipefitting trades, including pipeline and energy industry workers. He objected to the exclusion of the UA in the process of drafting the resolution. Resolution 55 was, in fact, a compromise version arrived at by the Executive Council from several resolutions submitted.

From the text of [Resolution 55](#): “ THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will fight politically and legislatively to secure and maintain employment, pensions and health care for workers affected by changes in the energy market; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO supports incentives and robust funding for research programs to bring new energy technologies to market, including renewables, carbon capture and advanced nuclear technologies; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will support the passage of key energy and environmental policies with a focus on ensuring high labor standards, the creation of union jobs and environmental sustainability; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will continue to urge the United States to remain in the Paris Agreement and to work to ensure that all nations make progress on emissions reductions; and BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO believes that the United States Congress should enact comprehensive energy and climate legislation that creates good jobs and addresses the threat of climate change.”

The full list of Adopted Resolutions from the 2017 AFL CIO Convention is [here](#). The Labor Network for Sustainability has archived past resolutions by U.S. labour unions to their own conventions [here](#). LNS President Joe Uehlein stated: “The resolution certainly could have gone further to support climate protection but it is an important and historic step for the U.S. labor movement”. And from the full statement of reaction by LNS, [The New AFL-CIO Stand on Climate Change: What Does It Mean for Labor and for the Climate?](#), which concludes: “Overall, this resolution represents a powerful statement of labor’s stake in protecting the climate. However, it retains many of the assumptions and approaches that have often put unions at loggerheads with concrete climate protection efforts. Whether it actually represents a new beginning or just old wine in new bottles will largely depend on the growing sector of the labor movement that is committed to putting labor “at the center of creating solutions that reduce emissions while investing in our communities, maintaining and creating high-wage union jobs, and reducing poverty.”

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [AFL–CIO](#), [Labor Network for Sustainability](#), [labour union policies](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Quebec Pension fund leads the way in low-carbon investing in Canada

Posted on [October 27, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec \(CDPQ\)](#) is Canada’s second largest pension fund, with \$286.5 billion under management for the public and parapublic pension plans of Quebec workers. On October 18, the Caisse burnished its existing reputation as a responsible investor by releasing “[Our Investment Strategy to address Climate Change](#)”, a detailed strategy document which pledges to factor climate change into every investment decision. The CDPQ will increase its low-carbon investments by 50% by 2020, and reduce the carbon intensity of its portfolio by 25% by 2025 across all asset classes. According to an article in the [Montreal Gazette](#), “the Caisse is the first fund in North America, and only the second in the world — after the New Zealand Superannuation Fund — to adopt this type of approach.” That article also notes that investment managers’ compensation will be tied to the emissions performance of their investments: investment teams will be given fixed carbon budgets, “and their performance will be evaluated and remuneration linked to how well they stick to these budgets.” The announcement was also covered by the [Globe and Mail](#).

In contrast, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, entrusted with the funds to support the public pensions of 20 million Canadians (the CPP), continues to invest in oil and gas ventures – and according to [Bloomberg Research](#), is currently involved in a bidding process for an Australian coal operation owned by Rio Tinto. Friends of the Earth Canada is advocating against the bid as part of its ongoing campaign, [Time to Climate-Risk-Proof the CPP](#). The CPPIB describes its investment strategy regarding climate change [here](#).

It is worth noting that the [Labor Convergence on Climate event](#) organized by the Labor Network for Sustainability in September included a discussion of how union leaders and rank and file members can work through their pension funds to join the movement to divest from fossil fuels and make green investments.

The role of the banking and investment community is important in policy development also; the case is most recently made in “[Three suggestions for for B.C.’s Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council](#)” in the [National Observer](#) (Oct. 26). The article concludes: “If the Advisory Council wants to see money move to support its policy aspirations they will have to find genuinely committed allies in the asset management and banking community. Action on climate change is great economic opportunity for British Columbia and Canada, and the financial sector must be brought into the discussion in order to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon energy system.”

How receptive is the Canadian investment community to considering and disclosing climate change risks and stranded assets? Two reports by the UN-affiliated [Principles for Responsible Investment \(PRI\)](#) are relevant to this question. [Fiduciary duty in the 21st century: Canada roadmap](#) (Jan. 2017) makes recommendations for how Canadian pension fund and investment managers can catch up with the international community and implement the recommendations of the [Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosures \(TCFD\)](#). The [PRI Canada country review](#) (June 2017) describes the

current regulatory framework for environmental and social governance disclosure . The Responsible Investment Association has also published the [2016 Canadian Responsible Investment Trends Report](#) .

Actors within Canada include the [Canadian Securities Administrators](#) , which began their own [review on climate-related financial disclosure practices](#) in March 2017 , but have not yet reported. A group of Canadian Chief Financial Officers [launched](#) the [CFO Leadership Network](#) in March 2017, to focus on the role CFO's play in integrating environmental and social issues into financial decision making. The Canadian CFO Leadership Network is the Canadian Chapter of The Prince of Wales's Accounting for Sustainability (A4S) CFO Leadership Network; in Canada, it operates in partnership with [Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada](#) , with support from The Prince's Charities Canada.

Finally, [SHARE \(Shareholder Association for Research & Education\)](#), is a Vancouver-based organization which actively promotes sustainable and responsible investing. On October 12, it [announced](#) that it is participating in an investor-led initiative which has written to the CEO's of sixty of the world's largest banks, including six Canadian banks, calling on them to adopt the landmark recommendations of the [Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosures \(TCFD\)](#), released by the Financial Stability Board in December 2016 . Specifically, they call for disclosure in four key areas: climate-relevant strategy and implementation, climate-related risk assessments and management, low-carbon banking products and services, and banks' public policy engagements and collaboration.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [accountants](#), [Banking Industry](#), [Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec \(CDPQ\)](#), [Canada Pension Plan](#), [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Divestment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian government is falling short of GHG emissions targets, needs a plan to phase out fossil fuel subsidies

Posted on [October 17, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 3, Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled highly critical audit reports in the House of Commons. From the Commissioner's [press release](#) : "the government's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have fallen short of its target and that overall, it is not preparing to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Only five of 19 government organizations had fully assessed their climate change risks and acted to address them." ... "Many departments have an incomplete picture of their own risks, and the federal government as a whole does not have a full picture of its climate change risks. If Canada is to adapt to a changing climate, stronger leadership is needed from Environment and Climate Change Canada, along with increased initiative from individual departments." The Commissioner also criticized the Department of Finance and Environment and Climate Change Canada for a "disconcerting lack of real results" towards meeting Canada's G20 commitment to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

The [CBC reports](#) on reaction and press conference remarks; the National Observer ran two articles, "[Watchdog finds Canada 'nowhere near' ready for climate risks](#)" and "[Parliamentary watchdogs conducting nationwide climate audits](#)", which reports that, for the first time, Auditors General are conducting climate change audits of all federal, provincial and territorial governments, working together to develop reports for their respective jurisdictions and a summary report of national performance on mitigation and adaptation.

The October 2017 federal audit reports are all available in [English](#) and in [French](#). The relevant reports are: Progress on Reducing Greenhouse Gases—Environment and Climate Change Canada ; Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change; Funding Clean Energy Technologies; and Departmental Progress in Implementing Sustainable Development Strategies. The archive of previous reports is [here](#) .

Victoria B.C. joins the movement for climate accountability, demanding compensation from Big Oil companies for climate change impacts

Posted on **October 17, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 12, the Council of [Victoria B.C.](#) voted unanimously to send a Climate Accountability Letter to twenty companies, including Exxon, Chevron and Shell, asking them to cover the costs the community is likely to incur to plan for or recover from the impacts of climate change. The motion also included an agreement to call upon fellow local governments across Vancouver Island, British Columbia and Canada to write similar letters. Such letters are part of the [Climate Law in our Hands campaign](#) launched by West Coast Environmental Law and almost 50 other groups in January 2017.

Accountability Letters may be seen as largely symbolic, but are a first step in the movement for legal action against these “Carbon Majors”, which is the goal of the [Climate Law in our Hands campaign](#). The campaign and the movement is based on the work of Richard Heede, whose [2013 research](#) identified 90 entities (producers of oil, natural gas, coal, and cement) that are collectively responsible for almost two thirds of human-caused greenhouse gases historically. Heede [updated his research](#) in July 2017 – naming the 10 oil and gas companies who are responsible for 26% of all fossil fuel emissions since 1988. See the [Climate Accountability Institute](#), where Heede is Director, or see [West Coast Environmental Law](#) for [a spreadsheet](#) with details about each company, as well as model letters for municipalities who want to join the campaign. Andrew Gage of WCEL compiled an [excellent overview of new research and legal developments about Climate Accountability](#) in September .

In September, San Francisco and Oakland, California became the latest and largest cities to sue the Carbon Majors: see [“California leads the way: San Francisco and Oakland the latest to sue fossil fuel companies”](#) . (They join the California counties of Marin, San Mateo and San Diego and the city of Imperial Beach). The [press release](#) from the City Attorney’s Office outlines their case against Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, BP and Royal Dutch Shell : “The lawsuits ask the courts to hold the defendants jointly and severally liable for creating, contributing to and/or maintaining a public nuisance, and to create an abatement fund for each city to be paid for by defendants to fund infrastructure projects necessary for San Francisco and Oakland to adapt to global warming and sea level rise. The total amount needed for the abatement funds is not known at this time but is expected to be in the billions of dollars.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate accountability](#), [Climate Activism](#), [Climate Change Liability](#), [Oakland](#), [San Francisco](#), [Victoria](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Unifor, Government visions for Sustainable Forestry

Posted on **October 16, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Future of Forestry: A Workers Perspective for Successful, Sustainable and Just Forestry was released on October 16 by Unifor’s Forestry Industry Council, representing the union’s 24,000 members in the forestry sector. The report provides an overview of the size and health of the forestry industry, and after the past several years of declining employment, asks, “What could lie ahead?” The answer given: “Technologies that put forestry resources to uses never previously imagined; transformative innovations in building materials and green construction, and a sustained transition toward higher-value

growth products and markets. There is also a coming wave of retirements that means the industry could need upward of 60,000 new workers within the decade.”

The report sets out Unifor’s aims for each of five focal points in an integrated forestry policy, involving the federal and provincial governments and prioritizing the role of First Nations. The report calls for “ sustainable rules for wood harvesting that secure investments and jobs while meeting the highest environmental standards. There must be stable and appropriately priced hydro-electricity; as well, transportation infrastructure, pricing and access need to be modernized. Trade policies need to support high-value forestry exports, maintain stable access to key markets, while ensuring we are not the target of unfair trade measures. And we need to control the export of unprocessed raw logs.” A key message is the need to involve workers in a sustained dialogue for policy-making process: “forestry ministers must lead efforts to bring together business, government, labour, Indigenous leaders, environmental organizations and community leaders in a reinstated National Forestry Council.”

Related reading: In mid-September, Natural Resources Canada released the 2017 edition of *The State of Canada’s Forests Annual Report* and *L’État des forêts au Canada*.

At the September annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM), their Innovation Committee released *A Forest Bioeconomy Framework for Canada* , with the vision to make Canada “a global leader in the use of forest bio-mass for advanced bioproducts and innovative solutions” including as a source of renewable energy. Note the first of the 4 pillars of the framework: “Communities and Relationships. This section in the Framework advances policies towards “creating green jobs, offering opportunities for rural communities through education and skills training, improving overall quality of life, and enhancing partnerships with Indigenous peoples.”

Also at the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers annual meeting, the Minister of Natural Resources **announced** a call for proposals for the next wave of projects through the Investments in Forest Industry Transformation (IFIT) program, a federal grant program to encourage :

- new or increased production of bioenergy, biomaterials, biochemicals and next-generation building products by the forest sector;
- increased deployment and encouraging broader adoption of first-in-kind innovative technologies, particularly Canadian, across the industry; and
- the creation of innovative partnerships with non-traditional forest sector partners as a way to develop new business models for the sector.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [bioenergy](#), [biomass](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [Sustainable Forestry](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Long-awaited Clean Growth Strategy of the U.K.- missing the workplace viewpoint

Posted on **October 16, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The British Government released its [Clean Growth Strategy](#) on October 12, outlining how it intends to reduce the country’s carbon emissions by 57 percent between 2020 and 2032. The Guardian summarizes the main provisions in “[Draughty homes targeted in UK climate change masterplan](#)” – describing it as “about 50 policies supporting everything from low-carbon power and energy savings to electric vehicles and keeping food waste out of landfill.” Highlights of the

plan are £3.6 billion in funds to support energy efficiency upgrades for about a million homes, and subsidies for offshore wind development. Also included: £1 billion is promised to encourage use of electric cars, £100m to fund research on carbon capture and storage (CCS) and £900 million for energy research and development, almost half of which will go to nuclear power. The controversial issue of fracking is omitted completely. For reaction and context, read [“UK climate change masterplan – the grownups have finally won”](#) in *The Guardian*, or the Campaign against Climate Change [response](#), which notes that the policies will be insufficient to reduce emissions enough to stay within the UK’s carbon budgets after 2023.

The Secretary General of the Trades Union Congress reacted with [this statement](#): “It has a bunch of targets, but lacks the level of public investment in low carbon infrastructure needed to achieve them. And there is a major blind spot towards working people who will create the clean economy.

“It doesn’t say how workers will get support to retrain if their job is under threat from the move to a low carbon economy. And it doesn’t set out how the government will work in social partnership with trade unions and business – this will be vital to a successful industrial strategy, building carbon capture and storage, and generating green growth.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [energy efficiency](#), [labour union policies](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trade unions in the U.K. actively engaged in climate change policy, advocating for environmental representatives

Posted on **October 16, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Trade Unions in the UK: Engagement with climate change is a new report, based on research conducted between September 2016 and January 2017 by the [Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group](#). The report asks: what are the driving forces behind trade union engagement in climate change issues, and what are some of the barriers and difficulties for trade unions? It summarizes the results of interviews with policy officers and environmental activists from the largest 15 unions in the Trades Union Congress (TUC), as well as two smaller but active unions: Transport and Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) and the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU). The report is also based on the results of systematic searches of the unions’ websites and relevant policy documents (with links to key documents). It reveals an overview of the diversity and context of trade union climate policy, focusing on issues such as environmental representatives, energy supply, airport expansion, fracking and divestment from fossil fuels. The report summarizes the positions on these issues, union by union, but for those who want even more detail, there is a [supplementary inventory](#).

This first-ever report was released in August 2017, and since then, [Unison has voted to campaign for pension fund divestment](#) and the TUC adopted an historic motion for public ownership of energy at its September Congress. Also at the Fringe Meeting of the September Congress, the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group presented its discussion paper ‘[Another world is possible: jobs and a safe climate](#)’. And most recently, the U.K. government at long last released its [Clean Growth Strategy](#), to limited union approval.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [environmental representatives](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Fracking](#), [labour union policies](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

First Nations, Renewable Energy, and the benefits of community-owned energy projects

Posted on **October 16, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“These are exciting times in British Columbia for those interested in building sustainable, just and climate-friendly energy systems.” So begins the October 12 featured commentary, “[BC First Nations are poised to lead the renewable energy transition](#)”, published by the Corporate Mapping Project, a research project led by the University of Victoria, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (BC and Saskatchewan Offices) and Parkland Institute. The commentary summarizes the results of a [survey conducted for the B.C. First Nations Clean Energy Working Group](#) by academics at the University of Victoria, published in April 2017. The survey reveals that 98% of First Nations respondents were either interested in, or already participating in a renewable energy projects – 78 operational projects, 48 in the planning or construction phase, and 250 further projects under consideration in B.C. alone. The responses reveal a growing interest in solar photovoltaic (PV), solar thermal, biomass and micro-hydro projects under development—compared to already-operational projects, 61% of which are run-of-river hydroelectricity. Survey respondents identified three primary barriers to their involvement in renewable energy projects: limited opportunities to sell power to the grid via BC Hydro – (mostly because of the proposed Site C hydro project), difficulties obtaining financing, and a lack of community readiness.

Although the discussion focuses specifically on B.C.’s First Nations, the article holds up the model of community-level energy projects beyond First Nations : “Instead of proceeding with Site C, BC has an opportunity to produce what new power will be needed through a model of energy system development that takes advantage of emerging cost effective technologies and public ownership at a community scale. Doing so would enable an energy system that can be scaled up incrementally as demand projections increase. It would also ensure the benefits energy projects are channelled to communities impacted by their development, and help respond to past injustices of energy development in our province...Choosing this path would result in a more distributed energy system, more resilient and empowered communities, a more diverse economy and a more just path towards climate change mitigation.”

CBC reported on another survey of First Nations – this one at a national level – in “[Indigenous communities embracing clean energy, creating thousands of jobs](#)” (October 11). The article focuses on First Nations renewable energy projects on a commercial scale, stating: “nearly one fifth of the country’s power is provided by facilities fully or partly owned and run by Indigenous communities”. The article links to case studies and numerous previous articles on the topic, but focuses on the job creation impacts of clean energy: “15,300 direct jobs for Indigenous workers who have earned \$842 million in employment income in the last eight years.”

The [CBC article](#) summarizes a survey conducted by Lumos Energy, a consultancy which specializes in energy solutions, especially renewable energy, “for First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders and communities”. Lumos Energy leads the [Indigenous Clean Energy Network](#); its principal, Chris Henderson, has written the book [Aboriginal Power: Clean Energy and the Future of Canada’s First Peoples](#) (2013).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [First Nations](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [renewable energy](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The future of wind energy in Alberta

Posted on **October 12, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— From CanWEA website, showing the state of Alberta’s wind market as of 2017

The Province of Alberta is reinventing its energy supply with its [Renewable Electricity Program](#), which targets 30% of the province’s electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030. To take stock of the province’s existing strengths, as well as gaps and opportunities related to that goal, the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) commissioned the Delphi Group to study the existing resources, including workforce skills, to support the growth of the wind industry. The resulting report, [Alberta Wind Energy Supply Chain Study](#), concludes that if wind energy were to meet 90 per cent of the government’s commitment, it would result in an estimated \$8.3 billion of investment in new wind energy projects in the province and almost 15,000 job years of employment by 2030. Many of the skills and occupations required to develop wind projects – such as engineering, construction, operations and maintenance – are transferable from the oil and gas sector. CanWEA is urging the government to provide a long-term renewable energy procurement policy which would encourage investment .

The report is summarized by the [Energy Mix](#), by the [National Observer](#), and in a [CanWEA press release](#). CanWEA also provides current profiles of provincial wind markets – Alberta’s is [here](#). CanWEA’s [annual conference](#) was held in Montreal from October 3 to 5; the closing press release is [here](#).

The [National Observer story](#) features the wind turbine technician program at Lethbridge Community College, and states that in January 2017, a third of the students who entered the College’s wind turbine technician program came from careers in the oil industry.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Canadian Wind Energy Association](#), [Clean energy industry](#), [Green procurement](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Proposals for a green transition that is just and inclusive in Ontario

Posted on **October 12, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Decent Work in the Green Economy, released on October 11, combines research on green transitions worldwide with the reality of labour market trends in Ontario, and includes economic modelling of Ontario's cap and trade program, conducted by EnviroEconomics and Navius Research. The resulting analysis identifies which sectors are expected to grow strongly under a green transition (e.g. utilities and waste management and remediation), which will see lower growth (e.g. petroleum refining and petrochemical production), and which will see a transformation of skills requirements (e.g. mining, manufacturing, and forestry). Section 3 of the report discusses the impacts on job quality (including wages, benefits, unionization, and job permanence), as well as skills requirements. The general discussion in Section 3 is supplemented by two detailed Appendices about the employment impacts by economic sector, and by disadvantaged and equity-seeking groups (which includes racialized workers, Indigenous people, workers with disabilities, newcomers, women, and rural Ontarians.) A final Appendix describes the modelling behind the analysis, which projects employment impacts of low carbon technologies by 2030.

The paper calls for a comprehensive Just Transition Strategy for Ontario, and proposes six core elements illustrated by case study "success stories". These case studies include the Solar City Program in Halifax, Nova Scotia, (which uses local supply chains and accounted for local employment impacts), and the UK Transport Infrastructure Skills Strategy (which incorporated diversity goals and explicit targets in workforce development and retraining initiatives). An important element of the recommended Just Transition Strategy includes a dedicated Green Transitions Fund, to transfer funding for targeted programs to communities facing disproportionate job loss; to universities or colleges to provide specialized academic programs; to social enterprise or service providers to carry out re-training programs; to directly impacted companies to invest in their employees; and to individuals in transition (much like EI payments).

The authors also call for better data collection to measure and monitor the link between green economy policies and employment outcomes, and better mechanisms for regular, ongoing dialogue. This call for ongoing dialogue seems intended to provide a role for workers (and unions, though they are less often mentioned). The authors state: "No effort to ensure decent work in the green economy will be successful without meaningfully engaging workers who are directly impacted by the transition, to understand where and how they might need support. Just as important will be the ongoing engagement with employers and industry to understand the changing employment landscape, and how workers can best prepare for it." And, on page 39, "Public policy will be a key driver in ensuring that this transition is just and equitable. Everyone has a role to play in this transition. Governments, employers, workers, unions and non-profit organizations alike must remember that if we fail to ensure that the green transition is just and inclusive, we will have missed a vital opportunity to address today's most pressing challenges. But if we design policies and programs that facilitate this transition with decent work in mind, they have the potential to benefit all Ontarians."

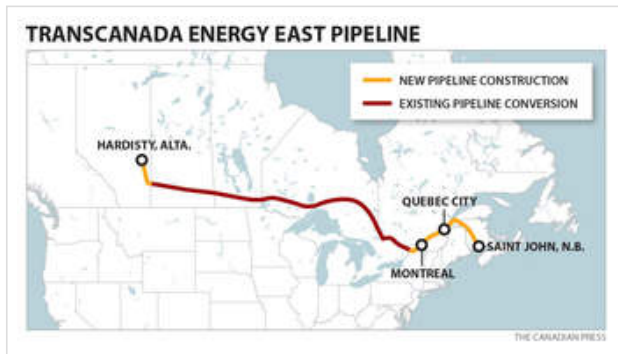
Decent Work in the Green Economy was published by the Mowat Centre at the University of Toronto, in cooperation with the Smart Prosperity Institute at the University of Ottawa. In addition to economic modelling, the analysis and policy discussion is based on an extensive literature review as well as expert interviews and input from government, industry, labour and social justice representatives. Part of the purpose of the report is to initiate discussion "between those actively

supporting the transition to a green economy and those advocating for decent work” as [defined by the ILO](#). Further, the report states: “Importantly, this conversation must address the need for equal opportunities among historically disadvantaged and equity-seeking groups who currently face barriers to accessing decent work.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Disabled workers](#), [disadvantaged workers](#), [employment impacts](#), [First Nations](#), [Green Economy](#), [Job Quality](#), [Just Transition](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [social partners](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Activists celebrate as the Energy East Pipeline is cancelled

Posted on **October 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On October 5, TransCanada Pipelines issued a [press release](#), announcing that it would no longer proceed with the proposed Energy East pipeline and Eastern Mainline projects. Accordingly, the National Energy Board Hearing Process has been closed, although [documents remain on its website](#). Below is some of the reaction that has poured forth, including: “[TransCanada terminates Energy East pipeline](#)” and “[Disappointment and delight mark the end of Energy East Pipeline](#)” in the *National Observer* (Oct. 5); “[Climate Hawks celebrate as TransCanada abandons Energy East pipeline](#)” from *Energy Mix*. The Council of Canadians had conducted a 5-year campaign against Energy East: their reactions and those of their allies appear in “[WIN! Energy East tar sands pipeline defeated!](#)”; “[Voices from the Energy East Resistance](#)” (Oct. 6) and “[Diverse Groups Opposed to Energy East Celebrate Project’s Cancellation](#)”. The common message is exemplified by Grand Chief Serge Simon of the Mohawk Council of Kanesatake on behalf of the 150 First Nations and Tribes who have signed the [Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion](#), who is quoted as saying: “Both the Northern Gateway fight and this Energy East one show that when First Nations stand together, supported by non-Indigenous allies, we win “So that’s two tar sands expanding mega-pipelines stopped in their tracks but it will be a hollow victory if either Kinder Morgan, Line 3 or Keystone XL are allowed to steamroll over Indigenous opposition and serve as an outlet for even more climate-killing tar sands production.” (and for more on that, read “[Energy East cancellation resonates for opponents of Trans Mountain expansion in B.C.](#)” in the *National Observer*).

Commentators trying to explain TransCanada’s decision focus on three principle reasons: the economics of falling oil prices, regional political forces, or the regulatory burden of pipeline approvals in Canada (especially since the Energy East review was required to account for [upstream and downstream emissions](#)). From the *Globe and Mail*, an editorial: “[The death of Energy East was a Business Decision – Swimming in Politics](#)”, which attributes the decision to Quebec opposition to Energy East, and the likely go-ahead of the Keystone XL pipeline in the U.S. The Editorial states: “Mr. Trump appears to have solved most of the Canadian oil industry’s pipeline shortage, making Energy East no longer economically necessary. The American President.... has also temporarily solved one of the Trudeau government’s, and Canada’s, most challenging political problems.” For a view of the political dimensions within Canada, read “[Energy East pipeline is dead, fallout in Alberta will be measurable](#)” in *Rabble* (Oct. 6). Finally, three overviews of the issues: “[Regulations alone didn’t sink the Energy East pipeline](#)” by Warren Mabee, Queen’s University and ACW Co-Investigator in *The Conversation* (Oct. 15); “[Five Things you need to know about the Cancellation of the Energy East Oilsands Pipeline](#)” from DeSmog Canada, and “[Energy East’s cause of death: Business, politics or climate?](#)”, from CBC News, which describes the regional differences via reaction from Canadian provincial premiers.

Nova Scotia introduces Cap-and-Trade legislation

Posted on **October 5, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A [press release](#) on September 29 announced that the Nova Scotia government has introduced amendments to the Environment Act, enabling regulations to set caps on GHG emissions, distribute and enable trading of emission allowances within the province, and set a province-wide greenhouse gas emission target for 2030. The province will create a Green Fund to support climate change initiatives and innovations, and money from emissions sales and fines will be deposited there. Next steps include “developing greenhouse gas reporting regulations this fall and consulting with stakeholders on them”.

The amending legislation, [Bill 15](#), received first Reading in the Legislature on September 29 as a means to satisfy [the requirement of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#). However, [reaction from the Ecology Action Centre](#) in Halifax urges the federal government to reject the plan, stating that “A carbon pricing system that doesn’t actually put a price on carbon, support low-income people, or incentivize clean growth truly misses the point.” The EAC also warns of the risks of extreme volatility since the plan is structured to create a carbon market within Nova Scotia alone – covering a population of under a million people and about 20 businesses. In [“Time for Ottawa to cry foul over Nova Scotia cap-and-trade proposal”](#) published in the Hill Times and reposted at Pembina (Nov. 2), the verdict is similarly negative: “Nova Scotia’s cap-and-trade system could cause the province to lose its foothold on climate leadership. In order to secure a clean, prosperous economy into the future, the provincial government should consider other approaches.”

The [Ecology Action website](#) has compiled documents and submissions from the provincial consultations leading up to the September announcement. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia Office published a [Backgrounder](#) in May 2017 which outlines its proposals for a stronger cap-and-trade policy.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The new British Columbia government tackles climate change policy and controversies: Site C, Kinder Morgan, and Carbon Tax neutrality

Posted on **September 28, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



As the smoke from over 100 forest fires enveloped British Columbia during the summer of 2017, a new brand of climate change and environmental policy emerged after June 29, when the New Democratic Party (NDP) government [assumed power](#), thanks to a [Confidence and Supply Agreement](#) with the Green Party Caucus. Premier John Horgan appointed Vancouver-area MLA George Heyman, a former executive director of Sierra Club B.C. and president of the B.C. Government Employees and Service Employees' Union, as Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, with a [mandate letter](#) which directed Heyman to, among other priorities, re-establish a Climate Leadership team, set a new 2030 GHG reduction target, expand and increase the existing carbon tax, and "employ every tool available to defend B.C.'s interests in the face of the expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline." A separate [mandate letter](#) to the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, directed the Minister to create a roadmap for the province's energy future, to consider all Liquefied Natural Gas proposals in light of the impact on climate change goals, to freeze hydro rates and to "immediately refer the Site C dam construction project to the B.C. Utilities Commission on the question of economic viability and consequences to British Columbians in the context of the current supply and demand conditions prevailing in the B.C. market." In addition, the government "will be fully adopting and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

Some notes on each of these priorities:

Re the B.C. Climate Leadership Plan: The recommendations of the B.C. Climate Leadership Team were ignored by the Liberal government when delivered in 2016. In mid-September 2017, the reasons for that became clear, as reported by the [National Observer](#), [DeSmog Canada](#), [Rabble.ca](#) and [Energy Mix](#). According to the *National Observer*, "provincial officials travelled to Calgary to hold five rounds of secret meetings over three months in the boardroom of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP). Representatives from Alberta-based oil giants Encana and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd (CNRL) are shown on the list of participants meeting with B.C.'s ministry of natural gas development." In [the article for DeSmog Canada](#), Shannon Daub and Zoe Yunker state that the Climate Leadership process was a stunning example of institutional corruption: "what can only now be characterized as a pretend consultation process was acted out publicly.... The whole charade also represents an abuse of the climate leadership team's time and a mockery of B.C.'s claims to leadership during the Paris climate talks, not to mention a tremendous waste of public resources." The documents underlying the revelations were obtained under Freedom of Information requests by [Corporate Mapping Project](#) of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, of which Shannon Daub is Associate Director.

Re the Carbon Tax: The [Budget Update](#) released on September 11 states: "The Province will act to reduce carbon emissions by increasing the carbon tax rate on April 1, 2018 by \$5 per tonne of CO2 equivalent emissions, while increasing the climate action tax credit to support low and middle income families. The requirement for the carbon tax to be revenue-neutral is eliminated so carbon tax revenues can support families and fund green initiatives that help us address our climate action commitments." For context, see "[B.C. overturns carbon tax revenue-neutrality](#)" (Sept. 22) by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions; for reaction, see the [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-B.C.](#) or the [Pembina Institute](#).

Re the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline: On October 2, 2017, the Federal Court of Appeal is scheduled to start the longest hearing in its history, for the consolidated challenges to the National Energy Board and Federal Cabinet approval of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Project. The government has applied for intervenor status, and in August [hired](#) environmental lawyer and former B.C. Supreme Court Justice Thomas Berger as an external legal advisor on the matter. West Coast Environmental Law blogged, "[See you in court, Kinder Morgan](#)", which provides a thorough summary of the 17 cases against the TransMountain expansion; WCEL has also published a [Legal Toolbox to Defend BC from Kinder Morgan](#), which goes into the legal arguments in more detail. The [NEB website](#) provides all official regulatory documents. [Ecojustice](#) is also involved in the complex court challenge.

Re the Site C Dam: In early August, the B.C. government [announced](#) a review of the Site C project by the [B.C. Utilities Commission](#). The [Preliminary Inquiry Report](#) was released on September 20, calling for more information before passing judgement on whether BC Hydro should complete the project. The Inquiry Panel also finds "a reasonable estimate of the cost to terminate the project and remediate the site" would be \$1.1 billion, based on the figures provided by [BC Hydro](#) and [Deloitte consultants](#). The Inquiry report is summarized by [CBC](#). Next steps: a series of round-the-province hearings and final recommendations to government to be released in a final report on November 1.

After years of protests about Site C, evidence against it seems to be piling up. A [series of reports](#) from the University of British Columbia Program on Water Governance, begun in 2016, have addressed the range of issues involved in the

controversial project : First Nations issues; environmental impacts; regulatory process; greenhouse gas emissions; and economics. In April, an overview summary of these reports appeared in Policy Options as “Site C: It’s not too late to hit Pause”, stating that Site C is “neither the greenest nor the cheapest option, and makes a mockery of Indigenous Rights in the process.” On the issue of Indigenous Rights, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination called for a halt on construction in August, pending a full review of how Site C will affect Indigenous land.

“If Site C is a good project, it’s time for Trudeau to trot out the evidence” in *iPolitics* (Sept. 17), calls Site C “an acid test for Trudeau’s promise of evidence-based policy” and an environmental and economic disaster in the making. The *iPolitics* article summarizes the findings of a submission to the BC Utilities Commission review by Robert McCullough, who concluded that BC Hydro electricity demand forecasts overestimate demand by 30%, that its cost overruns on the project will likely hit \$1.7 to \$4.3 billion, and that wind and geothermal are cleaner alternatives to the project. McCullough’s conclusions were partly based on his review of the technical report by Deloitte LLP, commissioned by the Inquiry.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [British Columbia](#), [First Nations](#), [Green Party](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [Kinder Morgan pipeline](#), [New Democratic Party \(NDP\)](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Site C Dam](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International action on Just Transition: what’s been accomplished, and proposals for the future

Posted on [September 27, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Just Transition – Where are we now and what’s next? A Guide to National Policies and International Climate Governance was released on September 19 by the International Trade Union Confederation, summarizing what has been done to date by the ITUC and through international agencies such as the ILO, UNFCCC, and the Paris Agreement. It also provides short summaries of some transition situations, including the Ruhr Valley in Germany, Hazelwood workers in the LaTrobe Valley, Australia, U.S. Appalachian coal miners and the coal mining pension plan, Argentinian construction workers, and Chinese coal workers. Finally, the report calls for concrete steps to advance Just Transition and workers’ interests.

The report defines Just Transition on a national or regional scale, as “an economy-wide process that produces the plans, policies and investments that lead to a future where all jobs are green and decent, emissions are at net zero, poverty is eradicated, and communities are thriving and resilient.” But the report also argues that Just Transition is important for companies, with social dialogue and collective bargaining as key tools to manage the necessary industrial transformation at the organizational level. To that end, the ITUC is launching “A Workers Right To Know” as an ITUC campaign priority for 2018, stating, “Workers have a right to know what their governments are planning to meet the climate challenge and what the Just Transition measures are. Equally, workers have a right to know what their employers are planning, what the impact of the transition is and what the Just Transition guarantees will be. And workers have a right to know where their pension funds are invested with the demand that they are not funding climate or job destruction.”

The ITUC report makes new proposals. It calls on the ILO to take a more ambitious role and to negotiate a Standard for Just Transition by 2021, carrying on from the *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies forAll* (2015). The ITUC also states “expectations” of how Just Transition should be given greater priority in the international negotiation process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), so that: Just Transition commitments are incorporated into the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of countries; Just Transition for workers becomes a permanent theme within the forum on response measures under the Paris

Agreement, and Just Transition is included in the 2018 UNFCCC Facilitative Dialogue. It also calls for the launch of a “Katowice initiative for a Just Transition” at the COP23 meetings to take place in Katowice, Poland in 2018, “to provide a high-level political space”. Finally, the ITUC calls for expansion of the eligibility criteria of the Green Climate Fund to allow the funding of Just Transition projects.

Just Transition – Where are we now and what's next? is a Climate Justice Frontline Briefing from the International Trade Union Confederation, with support from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and is based upon *Strengthening Just Transition Policies in International Climate Governance* by Anabella Rosemberg, published as a Policy Analysis Brief by the Stanley Foundation in 2017.

Other Just Transition News: In Calgary in September, the [Just Transition and Good Green Jobs in Alberta](#) Conference took place, sponsored by BlueGreen Alberta, with updates on national and provincial developments and with a global perspective from Samantha Smith, Director of the ITUC’s [Just Transition Centre](#) as the keynote speaker. A companion event, the 3rd [Annual Alberta Climate Summit](#), hosted by the Pembina Institute and Capital Power, also included a session on “Just Transition: Labour and Indigenous Perspectives” which featured Andres Filella (Metis Nation of Alberta), Samantha Smith(Just Transition Centre) and Heather Milton-Lightening (Indigenous Climate Action Network).

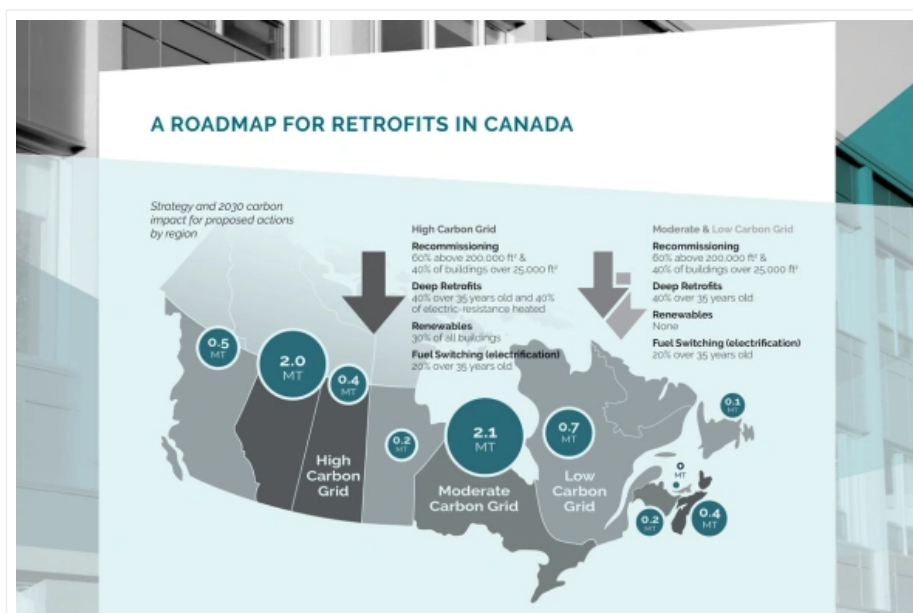
In advance of these events, the Alberta government had announced on September 11 the launch of the [Coal Community Transition Fund](#) to assist Alberta communities impacted by the mandated coal-phase out in the province.

Municipalities and First Nations can apply for grant funding to support economic development initiatives that focus on regional partnerships and economic diversification. Further funding is anticipated from the federal government, with retraining programs also expected after the [Advisory Panel on Coal Communities](#) provides its recommendations in a report to the government, expected this fall.

Posted in [Business Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Coal Industry](#), [International Labour Organization](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [Just Transition](#), [UNFCCC](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Roadmap for more energy efficient large buildings in Canada

Posted on [September 25, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



— From <http://www.cagbc.org/retrofitroadmap>, the website of the Canada Green Building Council

The Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) [has released](#) a new report which makes recommendations for retrofitting large buildings as a means to achieving significant reductions in GHG emissions by 2030. The [Roadmap for Retrofits in Canada](#) report builds on a 2016 document by CaGBC, [Building Solutions to Climate Change: How Green Buildings Can Help Meet Canada's 2030 Emissions Targets](#).

The *Roadmap* report begins with analysis of the carbon reduction potential of large buildings in Canada, based on the factors of size, age, energy source, regional electrical grid, and building type. The analysis was conducted by Montreal consultancy WSP. Some conclusions may seem obvious – for example, despite its relatively clean energy grid, Ontario contributes the greatest emissions from buildings because of the concentration of large buildings and the reliance on natural gas for heating and hot water. The level of detail of the analysis, however, reveals more surprising observations, for example: “In all provinces, the “other” asset class category represents the largest opportunity for carbon emissions reductions. This asset class includes warehouses, entertainment venues, leisure and recreation buildings, shopping centres, and colleges and universities.”

CaGBC's [Roadmap for Retrofits in Canada](#) presents its recommendations for action, clustered in 4 categories, (in order of their magnitude of impact):

1. **Recommission buildings** that have yet to achieve high performance status by optimizing existing building systems for improved control and operational performance;
2. **Undertake deep retrofits** in buildings to high-performance standards such as LEED, focusing on energy reduction and ensuring that key building systems such as lighting, HVAC and envelopes are upgraded. Most impact will come from deep retrofits in buildings over 35 years old, and in buildings using electric resistance heating systems in regions with carbon-intensive electricity grids (Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia). Retail buildings are highlighted as an important sector.
3. **Switch to low carbon fuel** sources in 20% of buildings over 35 years old in all regions; and
4. **Incorporate solar or other on-site renewable energy systems.** The report states that this action would bring the highest carbon emissions reductions in Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. It would also be most impactful for buildings with large roof-to-floor space ratios, such as retail, education and institutional buildings.

The *Roadmap* report concludes with public policy recommendations for the building sector, including: Canada's future retrofit code should include a GHG metric along with energy thresholds; each province should develop its own unique roadmap for retrofits, to target areas where investments can yield the highest economic and environmental benefits; and the federal [Low Carbon Economy Fund](#) and future public funding programs should make use of a “roadmap” model. The federal government is expected to announce policy measures this Fall – see [“Federal Government eyes energy retrofits in buildings”](#) in the *Globe and Mail*. For an excellent summary of the *Roadmap* report, see [“Deep retrofits, ‘recommissioning’ could meet climate targets on their own”](#) (Sept. 22) from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS).

In related news, on September 14, New York Mayor De Blasio proposed [what he characterized as a pioneering plan](#) to force landlords to retrofit older, larger commercial and institutional buildings in NYC. [“De Blasio Vows to Cut Emissions in New York's Larger Buildings”](#) in the *New York Times* (Sept. 14) states that the proposals are only sketched out and are just beginning to search for political allies. [An article in Inside Climate News](#) summarizes the issue of energy efficiency building codes in the U.S., and briefly describes initiatives in the cities of New York, Seattle, Dallas, and Washington, D.C.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Energy Efficiency Standards](#), [Energy policy](#), [Green Building](#), [New York City](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario, Quebec and California sign formal agreement to link their carbon markets

Posted on [September 22, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 22, Premier Couillard of Quebec hosted Premier Wynne of Ontario and California Governor Jerry Brown in Québec City, where they signed an agreement which [formally brings Ontario into the existing joint carbon market](#) of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI). This comes as no surprise: the government had announced its intention to join the WCI in April 2015 as part of its [Climate Change Action Plan](#). When Ontario joins up with Quebec and California, effective January 1, 2018, the carbon market will cover a population of more than 60 million people and about C\$4 trillion in GDP. The three governments will harmonize regulations and reporting, while also planning and holding joint auctions of GHG emission allowances. Text of the *Agreement on the Harmonization and Integration of Cap-and-Trade Programs for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions* is [here](#). Here is [an introduction to Ontario's cap and trade program](#), which was announced as part of the For an up-to-date description of the Western Climate Initiative and its importance as a model for sub-national, international co-operation, see ["Will Other States Join California's International Climate Pact?"](#) in *The Atlantic* (August 10 2017).

The [Western Climate Initiative Inc.](#) is based in Sacramento California, and is now "a non-profit corporation formed to provide administrative and technical services to support the implementation of state and provincial greenhouse gas emissions trading programs" .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [California](#), [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [Ontario](#), [Quebec](#), [Western Climate Initiative](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

“Historic” climate change resolution is passed unanimously at the 2017 Trades Union Congress in the U.K.

Posted on [September 20, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

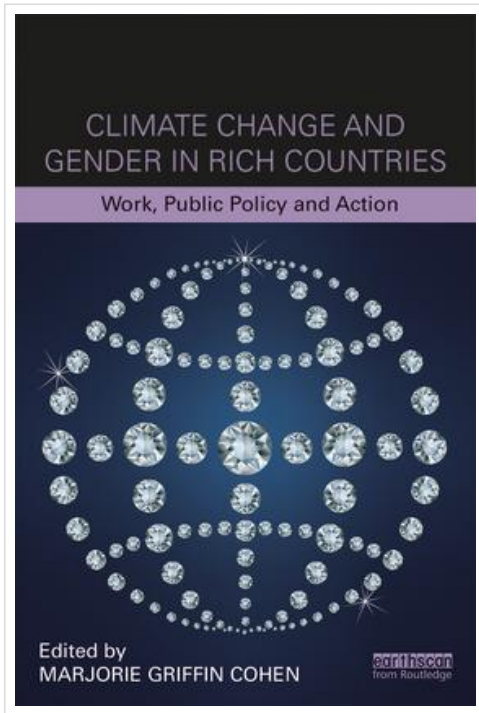
According to a [September 13 press release](#) from Trade Unions for Energy Democracy : “The annual congress of the UK [Trades Union Congress](#) (TUC) has passed a historic [composite resolution](#) on climate change that supports the energy sector being returned to public ownership and democratic control. The resolution—carried unanimously—calls upon the 5.7-million-member national federation to work with the Labour Party to achieve this goal, as well as to: implement a mass program for energy conservation and efficiency; lobby for the establishment of a “just transition” strategy for affected workers; and, investigate the long-term risks to pension funds from investments in fossil fuels.” The “composite resolution”, Resolution 4, along with discussion and videos of the debate are [here](#) . The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) submitted the first resolution; the final composite resolution incorporated amendments by the Communication Workers Union, Fire Brigades Union, the train drivers union ASLEF, and the Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association.

A previous climate change resolution had been defeated at the 2016 annual congress. What was different this time? Speakers in the debate mentioned Donald Trump’s decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, the chaos of Brexit, and also Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, fresh evidence of the disasters of climate change. Trade Unions for Energy Democracy credits the influence of the Labour Party, and in advance of the vote, Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn received an enthusiastic response to his speech to the Congress. The Labour Party Manifesto, *For the Many, not the Few* , had been released during the 2017 General Election, and highlighted the issue of energy poverty, committing to “take energy back into public ownership to deliver renewable energy, affordability for consumers, and democratic control.” It further called for the creation of “publicly owned, locally accountable energy companies and co-operatives to rival existing private energy suppliers.” Another influential document, *“Reclaiming Public Service: How cities and citizens are turning back privatization,”* was published in June 2017 by the Transnational Institute, providing global case studies of “re-municipalization” of public services, including energy.

The Trades Union Congress [2017 Congress website](#) provides videos, reports, and an archive of documents from the meetings. [This blog post](#) summarizes the General Council statement on workers’ rights and Brexit.

Why gender matters when dealing with climate change

Posted on **September 19, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Climate Change and Gender in Rich Countries: Work, Public Policy and Action is a new book released in London by Routledge publishers, as part of its *Studies in Climate, Work and Society series*. Reviewers call it “path-breaking”, “timely”, “exciting”, “unique”, “excellent and wide-ranging” and judge that it “moves beyond common perceptions of women as vulnerable victims to show there are no universal experiences of climate change. Gender is highly relevant but in complex ways.”

Editor Marjorie Griffin Cohen introduces the book by answering the question, “Why Gender Matters when Dealing with Climate Change”. 18 chapters follow, providing analysis and case studies from the U.K., Sweden, Australia, Canada, Spain and the U.S.. Some of the chapters are: “Women and Low Energy Construction in Europe: A New Opportunity?” by Linda Clarke, Colin Gleeson and Christine Wall; “The US Example of Integrating Gender and Climate Change in Training: Response to the 2008–09 Recession”, by Marjorie Griffin Cohen; “UK Environmental and Trade Union Groups’ Struggles to Integrate Gender Issues into Climate Change Analysis and Activism”, by Carl Mandy; and “How a Gendered Understanding of Climate Change Can Help Shape Canadian Climate Policy”, by Nathalie Chalifour.

The book editor, [Marjorie Griffin Cohen](#), is Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, and a Co-Investigator at the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project (ACW). She was also an editor of “Women and Work in a Warming World (W4)” which appeared as Issue 94/95 in *Women & Environments International Magazine* (2014/15).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Gender](#), [labour union policies](#), [Women in Renewable Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Responses to Climate change-related weather disasters in 2017

Posted on **September 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Photo from B.C. Wildfire Service

The summer of 2017 has seen unprecedented forest fires, heat waves, floods and hurricanes around the world, with flooding and forest fires in Canada. In response, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change [announced](#) the launch of an advisory Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience on August 29, to be chaired by Dr. Blair Feltmate, Head of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo. The Expert Panel will be composed of academic, private sector, government, non-government, and Indigenous representatives. CBC summarizes the initiative [here](#).

On September 1, the Insurance Bureau of Canada issued a [press release](#) that estimated more than \$223 million in insured damage from two storm and flooding events in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec in May. An [Internal Review of the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements](#), released in the Spring of 2017, states that the average annual federal share of provincial/territorial response and recovery costs has increased from C\$10 million from 1970 to 1995, to \$100 million from 1996 to 2010, to \$360 million from 2011 to 2016, with the majority of costs caused by flooding.

Before either Hurricanes Harvey or Irma, the [U.S. National Centers for Environmental Information \(NCEI\)](#) at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) stated, "In 2017 (as of July 7), there have been 9 weather and climate disaster events with losses exceeding \$1 billion each across the United States. These events included 2 flooding events, 1 freeze event, and 6 severe storm events. Overall, these events resulted in the deaths of 57 people and had significant economic effects on the areas impacted."

At the end of August, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce [released](#) a report which states: "The average natural disaster costs the economy C\$130 billion and lowers GDP by approximately 2%..... On average, it is estimated that natural disasters increase public budget deficits by 25%." [Building Better: Setting the 2017 Ontario Infrastructure Plan up for success](#) urges significant investment, stating: "Research shows that investment in infrastructure, such as roads, transportation, communication, utilities and more, have resulted in lowered business costs and increased labour productivity. It is estimated that for every \$1 billion in infrastructure spending, 16,700 jobs are supported for one year and the GDP sees a \$1.14 billion increase."

In June, the City of Toronto appointed its first [Chief Resilience Officer](#), whose job it is to prepare for catastrophic events and other stresses, with a focus on social issues such as housing and transit, building on existing programs under the city's climate resilience and [TransformTO](#) initiatives. The Chief Resilience Officer position is funded by [100 Resilient Cities](#), an international network whose website houses a collection of [Urban Resilience plans](#) from around the world.

And for the last word on this catastrophic summer, read Bill McKibben's opinion in *The Guardian*, "Stop Talking Right Now about the threat of Climate Change. It's Here; It's Happening".

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Flooding](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [natural disasters](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Business think tank calls for Low-carbon policies for Canada

Posted on **September 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Conference Board of Canada acknowledged that Canada must institute a carbon tax and decarbonize its electricity system in its September report, *The Cost of a Cleaner Future: Examining the Economic Impacts of Reducing GHG Emissions* (free, registration required). The report presents a range of economic scenarios, relying on modelling from the Trottier Energy Futures project, and focusing on three issues: carbon pricing; eliminating oil and natural gas from electricity generation; and the investment of trillions of dollars in green technology. On the impact of carbon pricing, one scenario assumes a carbon tax of \$80 per tonne in 2025, yielding an average annual cost to Canadian household of approximately \$2,000, shrinking the economy by only 1.8%, and cutting employment by 0.1%. The total economic impact is forecast to be small, assuming that carbon tax revenues are reinvested in the economy in the form of corporate and personal income tax cuts and additional public spending on infrastructure. Industries most likely to suffer from reduced competitiveness are chemicals, mining and smelting, and pulp and paper; and "industries with a domestic focus and sensitivity to price changes, such as residential construction, will be hard hit".

Negative press coverage of the report appeared in "Carbon tax to shrink economy by \$3 billion, hurt loonie, study warns" in the *Financial Post*. The *Globe and Mail* was more optimistic, with "Canada urged to bite the bullet on shift to low carbon economy" and an OpEd "Can Canada remain an energy superpower?". In the OpEd, Glenn Hodgson of the Conference Board recommends public policy support for a low-carbon energy strategy so that Canada can become North America's most efficient, low-carbon source of oil and gas, while building up the country's expertise in a range of other energy services, including carbon capture and storage, nuclear, and energy storage technologies. Such an outlook coincides with two other Conference Board publications over the summer: *Clean Trade: Global Opportunities in Climate-Friendly Technologies* and *Canadian Green Trade and Value Chains: Defining the Opportunities* (both free with registration). These new reports are the product of the new [Low-Carbon Growth Economy Centre](#) at the Conference Board of Canada.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Business attitudes](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Energy policy](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate bargaining: a proposed model and a hint of urgency for progress

Posted on **September 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A Research Note published in the *Journal of Industrial Relations* in July 2017 outlines how climate change and workplace relations are linked, noting that "The link between climate change and ER is not simply a matter of industrial change, job loss and green jobs' inferior wages and conditions." The article provides a brief review of academic studies on the issue, which notes how much it is on the margins, with the vast majority of research focused on a socio-political approach. The main purpose of the article is the real world responses of the primary actors— unions and employer associations: unions, with policy responses focused on Just Transition, and employers, with their own corporate social responsibility response.

Most importantly, the article then provides examples of "climate bargaining", based on bargaining agreements, union policy documents and union reports from the U.K., Canada and Australia, from 2006 to 2014. With a focus on two "leadership" unions, the Australian National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) of the United

Kingdom, the author concludes that “ER and climate change appear to be developing in two forms: embedded institutional and voluntary multilateral responses. Embedded institutional responses seek to integrate environmental commitments into EBAs via green clauses, while voluntary multilateralism moves away from formal clauses within legal frameworks and instead sees unions and employers pursue strategic workplace environmental projects that directly engage management and employees in environmental initiatives.... The voluntary multilateral model appears to offer a more successful and exciting integration of climate change and ER than simply bargaining for green clauses in enterprise agreements. Nevertheless, both approaches highlight the important role of the state in supporting these models via regulation and government-funded programmes.”

“[Climate change and employment relations](#)” was written by Caleb Goods, who was a Co-Investigator in the Adapting Canadian Work & Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project and is now a Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. His previous work includes [Why Work And Workers Matter In The Environmental Debate](#) (2016), and [Greening Auto Jobs: A critical analysis of the green job solution](#) (2014). Go to “[Climate change and employment relations](#)” to download the article for a fee; only the abstract is available for free.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [collective agreements](#), [green clauses](#), [labour union policies](#), [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Pollution cost Canada \$2 billion in Lost Labour Output alone

Posted on [September 8, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The June 2017 report, *Costs of Pollution in Canada: Measuring the impacts on families, businesses and governments* reviews and synthesizes existing studies to produce the most comprehensive assessment of pollution and its costs in Canada to date. Some quick facts: the cost of climate change-related heat waves in Canada is estimated to have been \$1.6 billion in 2015; Smog alone cost Canadians \$36 billion in 2015. But the report also provides detailed estimates, organized in three categories: 1. Direct Welfare Costs: (Harm to health and well-being such as lower enjoyment of life, sickness and premature death); 2. Direct Income Costs – (Direct out of pocket expenses for families (e.g. medications for asthma), businesses (e.g. increased maintenance costs for buildings) and governments (remediation of polluted sites); and 3. Wealth impacts.

Direct Welfare Costs of pollution, the most studied and understood, are estimated as at least \$39 billion in 2015, or about \$4,300 for a family of four. The Direct Income Costs that could be measured amounted to \$3.3 billion in 2015, but the study cautions that this many important costs could not be measured, and full impacts on income were likely in the tens of

billions of dollars. In this category, the study estimates Lost Labour Outputs, using a metric derived from the 2016 OECD study, *The Economic Consequences of Outdoor Air Pollution*. The OECD estimates outdoor air pollution to cost 0.1% of national GDP, which, when applied to Canada's 2015 GDP of approximately \$1,986 billion, implies a costs of about \$2 billion in lost labour output alone. And finally, Wealth impacts, or costs on value of assets, are said to be the least understood of pollution costs, about which, "We simply do not know how much pollution costs us in terms of lost wealth".

Costs of Pollution in Canada: Measuring the impacts on families, businesses and governments was prepared by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), with funding from the Ivey Foundation; the full report is available in English- only. Summaries are in [English](#) and [French](#). Short videos were derived in cooperation with the Conference Board of Canada to focus on key topics: e.g. [extreme weather](#), [contaminated sites](#), and [smog](#).

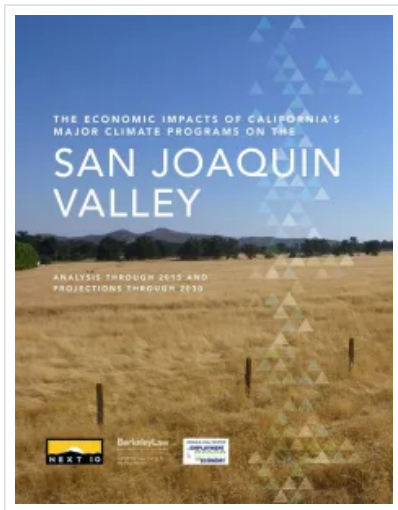
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Clean Energy Jobs a pathway to decent work for California's disadvantaged workers; plus economic benefits of California's climate policies

Posted on [September 6, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Three recent studies from University of California at Berkeley provide evidence of the job benefits of clean energy industries. The first, "[Diversity in California's Clean Energy Workforce](#)", from Berkeley's Center for Labor Research and Education Green Economy Program, claims to be the first quantitative analysis of who is getting into apprenticeship programs and jobs on renewables. It states that "Joint union-employer apprenticeship programs have helped people of color get training and career-track jobs building California's clean energy infrastructure". The authors attribute this to the recruitment efforts by unions, as well as the location of many renewable power plants in areas where there are high concentrations of disadvantaged communities. It presents data for the ethnic, racial and gender composition of enrollment in apprenticeship programs in 16 union locals for electricians, ironworkers and operating engineers. The report finds significant variation in racial and ethnic diversity amongst unions, with women's participation minimal, (ranging from 2 – 6%) in all cases. Uniquely, the study also examined the impact of clean energy construction on disadvantaged workers, finding that 43% of entry-level workers live in disadvantaged communities, and 47% live in communities with unemployment rates of at least 13%. Further, it states: "Most large-scale renewable energy plants have been built under project labor agreements. These agreements require union wage and benefit standards and provide free training through apprenticeship programs."



Two other reports were released by the [Center for Labor Research and Education](#), the [Center for Law, Energy and the Environment \(CLEE\)](#) at UC Berkeley Law, and advocacy group [Next 10](#). *The Economic Impacts of California's Major Climate Programs on the San Joaquin Valley: Analysis through 2015 and Projections to 2030* (January) and *The Net Economic Impacts of California's Major Climate Programs in the Inland Empire: Analysis of 2010-2016 and Beyond* (August) examine the impact of climate programs on California's most environmentally vulnerable regions. The "Inland Empire" (defined as the counties of San Bernardino and Riverside) report, examined four key policies: cap and trade, the renewables portfolio standard, distributed solar policies and energy efficiency programs. These policies were found to have brought a net benefit of \$9.1 billion in direct economic activity and 41,000 net direct jobs from 2010 to 2016. Policy recommendations to continue these benefits: "reward cleaner transportation in this region; help disburse cap-and-trade auction proceeds in a timely and predictable manner; and create robust transition programs for workers and communities affected by the decline of the Inland Empire's greenhouse gas-emitting industries, including re-training and job placement programs, bridges to retirement, and regional economic development initiatives."

The three reports were released to be part of the public debate about [extending the cap and trade legislation](#) (passed in July) and about California's Senate Bill [SB100](#), which passed 2nd reading in the legislature on September 5. SB100 would toughen existing targets to 60% renewable electricity by 2030, and require utilities to plan for 100% renewable electricity by 2045.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Apprenticeship](#), [California](#), [Clean energy industry](#), [disadvantaged workers](#), [employment impacts](#), [labour union policies](#), [Project Labor Agreements](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition for the coal industry is expensive – but cheaper than failure to address the needs

Posted on [September 5, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

July 2017 saw the release of *Lessons from Previous Coal Transitions: High-level Summary for Decision-makers*, a synthesis report of case studies of past coal mining transitions in Spain, U.K., the Netherlands, Poland, U.S., and the Czech Republic – some as far back as the 1970's. Some key take-aways from the report: "Because of the large scale and complexity of the challenges to be addressed, the earlier that actors (i.e. workers, companies and regions) anticipated, accepted and began to implement steps to prepare and cushion the shock of the transition, the better the results"; "the aggregate social costs to the state of a failure to invest in the transition of workers and regions are often much higher than the costs of not investing from an overall societal perspective." While the level of cost details varies in the case studies, it is clear that costs are significant. For example, the case study of Limburg, Netherlands states that the national government spent approximately 11.6 billion Euros (in today's prices) on national subsidies to support coal prices and regional reconversion, in addition to several 100 million per year in EU funds. "One estimate also suggested that in the Dutch case, all told, regional reinvestment in new economic activities also cost about 300 to 400 000€/per long-term job created."

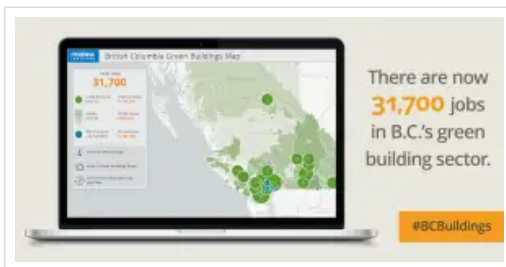
Limburg is also cited as “remarkable for the relatively consensual nature of the transition between unions, company and government.” (see page 10).

The Synthesis report and individual case study reports of the six countries are available [here](#) . These are the work of the [Research and Dialogue on Coal Transitions project](#), a large-scale research project led by [Climate Strategies](#) and the [Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations \(IDDRI\)](#) , which also sponsors the [Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project](#). Future reports scheduled for 2018: a Global report, and a Round Table on the Future of Coal.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [case studies](#), [coal mining industry](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A map of green building jobs in B.C.; Edmonton benchmarks its energy efficiency

Posted on **August 31, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On August 23, the Pembina Institute [released an update](#) to the British Columbia *Green Buildings Map*, first launched in 2015 . The [updated interactive map](#) of 2017 shows where approximately 20,000 energy-efficient homes and buildings are located throughout B.C.. Pembina’s research also states that there are 31,700 people employed in the green building sector – an impressive increase from the 23,200 in 2015, especially given the decline in energy-efficient retrofitting which occurred when the previous provincial government ended its LiveSmart rebate program in 2014.

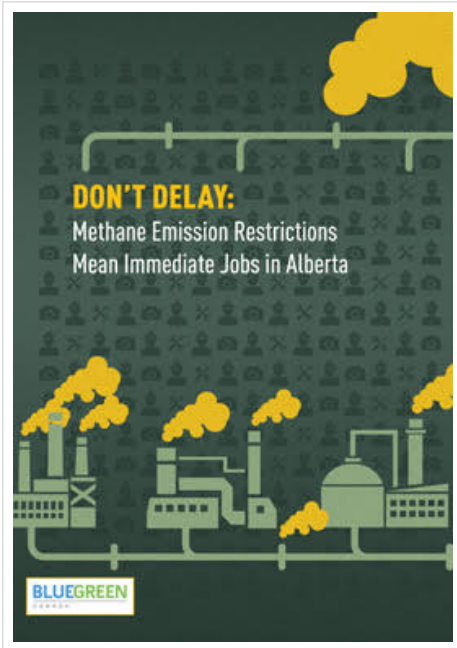
Related documents recently released: A discussion paper from the Pembina Institute and The Atmospheric Fund, reminding us that net-zero standards for new construction will lead to a significant but insufficient reduction in GHG emissions – retrofitting of existing buildings is also required. The Pan-Canadian Framework committed to the development of a national model code for existing buildings by 2022. [Energy Regulations for Existing Buildings](#) identifies the opportunities and challenges for the federal government to consider as it works with the provinces to create and implement supporting measures such as financing, incentives, and energy labeling, as well as ambitious and clear building codes and regulations.

From the Conference Board of Canada in August: [Doing More with Less: Energy Efficiency Potential in Canada](#). The report surveys the existing studies about energy efficiency in Canada at the national and provincial level – highlighting the barriers that exist as well as the potential for savings in energy consumption and GHG emissions. It concludes that energy efficiency measures such as incentive programs, retrofits, audits, land-use measures, building standards and renewable subsidies can substantially reduce Canada’s energy consumption, with the most promise for energy savings to be found in lighting, space heating and household electronics for residences, and lighting, computer and HVAC equipment in the commercial sector.

And on the ground, the City of Edmonton, Alberta launched a three-year [Large Building Energy Reporting & Disclosure pilot program](#) in June. Participants will benchmark the energy performance of the city’s largest buildings, using Natural Resources Canada’s Energy STAR Portfolio Management tool. The full Program details are [here](#) ; a summary is [here](#) . At the end of the 3-year pilot, the city will evaluate whether to maintain the program as a voluntary one, or require mandatory reporting.

Methane regulations: a path to lower emissions and more jobs for Alberta

Posted on **August 23, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A July 2017 [report by Blue Green Canada](#), argues that the Alberta government should implement methane regulations immediately, rather than wait for the [proposed federal regulations](#) to take effect in 2023. Speeding up regulations “could reduce air pollution, achieve our climate targets more cost-effectively, and create thousands of high-paying jobs in a single step”, according to [Don't Delay: Methane Emission Restrictions mean Immediate jobs in Alberta](#). Blue Green estimates that Alberta's oil and gas operations release \$67.6 million worth of methane annually, and recovering it for energy use could create more than 1,500 new jobs in the province – well paid jobs, including work in engineering, manufacturing, surveying, and administration.

Environmental organizations, labour groups and technology companies sent a joint Open Letter to Premier Rachel Notley in August, urging her to view the [proposed federal methane regulations](#) as a floor, not a ceiling, and reiterating the argument for economic opportunity: “There are a number of innovative companies in Alberta ready to supply methane capture and detection technologies and services and a large majority of these companies report being poised for strong growth given the right regulatory signals.” The letter, from Blue Green Canada, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Iron and Earth, Keepers of the Athabasca, Pembina Institute, Peace River Environmental Society, Progress Alberta, Questor Technology, Unifor, and United Steelworkers is [here](#).

Accelerating the target date for regulations is not the only concern. “[Five Ways Alberta Can Raise the Bar on Methane Regulations](#)” at DeSmog Blog, (August 1) makes recommendations for tighter rules for venting and flaring, improved monitoring, and expanded scope. Also in August, the Environmental Law Centre of Alberta released [Methane Reduction under the Climate Change Leadership Plan](#), the latest paper in its Climate Change Legal Roadmap series, which makes recommendations for improvements to both the provincial and federal regulations. The task of developing methane regulations in Alberta falls to the [Alberta Energy Regulator \(AER\)](#), which has said that it is currently reviewing the feedback from its draft regulations, and will release a document for public comment in Fall 2017.

Alberta's [Climate Leadership Plan](#) in 2015 called for 45 per cent reduction in methane emissions from the oil and gas industry by 2025. The Pan-Canadian Framework included a commitment to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40 to 45 per cent from 2012 levels by 2025, and in May 2017, the federal government [released draft regulations](#) beginning in 2020, with a second phase beginning in 2023.

Earlier, related reports: In April, Environmental Defence [released *Canada's Methane Gas Problem: Why strong regulations can reduce pollution, protect health and save money*](#), which demonstrated that methane emissions are higher than reported by industry: 60% higher in Alberta. Research funded by the David Suzuki Foundation and [released in April](#), found that methane emissions in B.C. are 250% higher than reported. [The Cost of Managing Methane Emissions](#), a June blog from the Pembina Institute, sheds light on the GHG savings to be had by instituting regulations.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Emissions Regulations](#), [Job Creation](#), [Methane Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A closer look at electric vehicle growth: impact on pollution, and labour conditions in the mines supplying raw materials

Posted on [August 23, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The summer started with several “good news” stories about the surge of electric vehicles, such as [“Starting in 2019, Volvo will use electricity to power every new model”](#) from the *Washington Post* (July 5), quoting Volvo’s CEO: “This announcement marks the end of the solely combustion engine-powered car.” [Bloomberg Business Week](#), summarizing the findings of its latest New Energy forecast, stated on July 7, “in just eight years, electric cars will be as cheap as gasoline vehicles, pushing the global fleet to 530 million vehicles by 2040”, and “Electric cars will outsell fossil-fuel powered vehicles within two decades as battery prices plunge, turning the global auto industry upside down and signaling economic turmoil for oil-exporting countries”. On July 6, France [announced](#) it would end the sale of gas and diesel cars by 2040, and on July 26 the U.K. [released](#) its Clean Air Plan, which included a ban on the sale of new diesel and gas cars after 2040, with only electric vehicles available after that.

Response to the U.K. announcement is mixed. In [“Electric cars are not the solution to air pollution”](#) Professor Frank Kelly, a professor of environmental health at King’s College London and chair of the government’s [Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants](#) states that “The government’s plan does not go nearly far enough,” “Our cities need fewer cars, not just cleaner cars.” In his role as a member of the [Centre for London’s commission on the future of the capital’s roads and streets](#), Professor Kelly provides more detail about the problem of particle pollution and states: [“London should lead in showing electric cars will not tackle air pollution”](#) in *The Guardian* (August 4). His conclusion: “The safe and efficient movement of people around the city can only be achieved through a clean and expanded mass transit system served by buses, overground trains and the underground system – and as much active transport in the form of walking and cycling as is feasibly possible.”

Others are raising issues about electric vehicles on other grounds, specifically the environmental costs and labour conditions of producing the lithium ion batteries that power them. These are not new concerns: Carla Lipsig Mumme and Caleb Goods raised the flag in June 2015 with “[The battery revolution is exciting, but remember they pollute too](#)” in *The Conversation*. In January 2016, Amnesty International published a detailed documentation of the hazardous working conditions and the use of child labour in cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in [This is what we die for: Human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo power the global trade in cobalt](#). (Cobalt is also used in mobile phones, laptop computers, and other portable electronic devices). The report is available in English, French and Chinese from [this link](#).

More recently, “[Politically charged: do you know where your batteries come from?](#)” appeared in *The Conversation* (July 26), providing an overview of the geography, politics, and environmental impact of lithium-ion battery raw materials. Briefly, the current major producers of lithium are Australia, Chile, Argentina and China, with Australia and Chile accounting for about 75% of the total. The main environmental concern, especially in Chile, is that the extraction can impact water supply in desert areas. The article also looks at supply chain issues and states: “With almost half of the world’s cobalt ore reserves concentrated in Democratic Republic of Congo for the foreseeable future, and with a large proportion of refining capacity located in China, the supply chain could be more vulnerable.” Not to mention the vulnerability of the miners Amnesty International has documented.

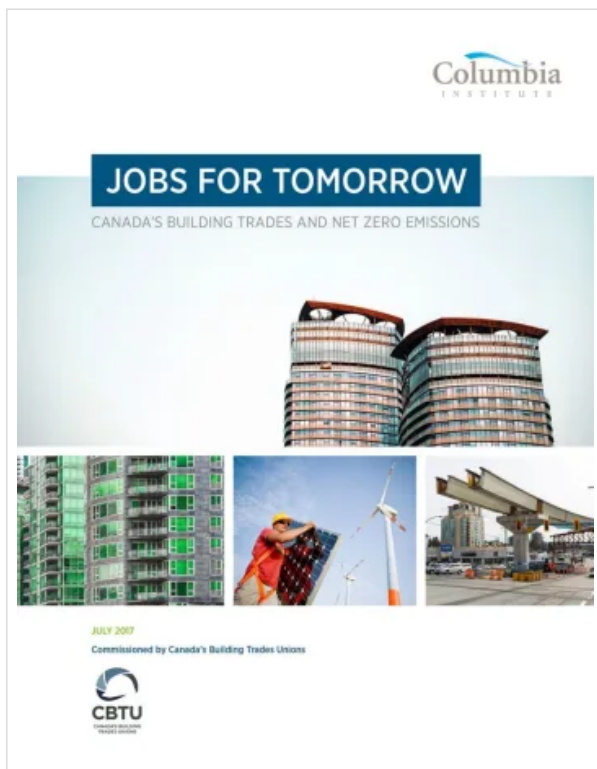
A Canadian viewpoint on the issue of supply: “[Clean Energy Spurs Lithium Rush, Demands Response to ‘Dirty Mining’](#)” in the *Energy Mix* (August 8). In the article, *Financial Post* columnist Peter Tertzakian states: “it takes the equivalent of 15,000 cell phone batteries to make one battery for an electric car,” and “ramping up raw material inputs to build millions of car batteries a year fills the back of the envelope with scalability issues.” These supply issues may lead to a growth of “dirty mining” practices. Will Canada be affected by the push for clean energy raw materials? We do not currently produce lithium, although the article states that engineers are trying to isolate it from [tar sand/oil sand waste](#). We are a minor producer of other battery components, graphite and cobalt, and the 3rd largest producer of nickel in the world. According to [Bloomberg News](#) in August, the growth of electric vehicles will drive a doubling of demand for nickel by 2050. However, Bloomberg reports that mining giant BHP Bilton will invest in Australia to make it the world’s largest producer of nickel for electric vehicle batteries.

A final troubling issue with electric vehicles: disposal. “[The rise of electric cars could leave us with a big battery waste problem](#)” according to *The Guardian* (August 10), which cites the International Energy Agency estimates of 140m electric cars globally by 2030, resulting in a possible 11 million tonnes of spent lithium-ion batteries in need of recycling. Two solutions are profiled in the article: recycling and reuse. The recycling profile features the CEO of Canadian battery recycling start-up company, [Li-Cycle](#), which is pioneering a wet chemistry process which would retrieve all of the important metals from batteries. The proponents of the re-use solution include Aceleron and carmaker Nissan, which has patented a process for re-use. The article states that car batteries can still have up to 70% of their capacity when they stop being good enough to power electric vehicles, so that they can be broken down, tested and re-packaged for functions such as home energy storage.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [alternative fuel vehicles](#), [diesel cars](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [France](#), [Lithium Ion Batteries](#), [mining industry](#), [Recycling](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Decarbonizing Canada’s economy offers huge construction job opportunities

Posted on [August 23, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A July report asserts that Canada's ability to meet our climate goals will be based on multiple paths to decarbonization, including construction of new electricity-generation facilities using renewable sources, including hydro, wind, solar, tidal, biomass and geothermal energy. In addition, it will require the construction and maintenance of more efficient buildings, and transportation infrastructure. The tradespeople who can build such low-carbon solutions include masons, boilermakers, pipefitters, insulators, electrical workers, glaziers, HVAC, linemen, ironworkers and others .

The July report, *Jobs for Tomorrow: Canada's Building Trades and Net Zero Emissions* makes job creation projections for construction occupations, based on an aggressive emissions reduction target of Net-zero emissions by 2050 (Canada's current national emissions reduction commitment is 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030) . Overall, the report concludes that the Net-zero emissions reduction target could generate nearly 4 million direct building trades jobs, and 20 million indirect, induced and supply chain jobs by 2050. Some examples from the report: building small district energy systems in half of Canada's municipalities with populations over 100,000 would create over 547,000 construction jobs by 2050. Building solar installations would create the next-highest level of construction jobs: 438,350. Building \$150 billion of urban transit infrastructure (rapid transit tracks and bridges, subway tunnels, and dedicated bus lanes) would create about 245,000 direct construction jobs by 2050.

Jobs for Tomorrow is much more than a laundry list of job projections. Authors Tye Bridge, Richard Gilbert, and Charley Beresford were supported by advisers Lee Loftus, President BC Building Trades; Bob Blakely, Canadian Operating Officer, Canada's Building Trades Unions; and Tom Sigurdson, Executive Director, BC Building Trades. As a result, the report provides a depth of understanding of the construction industry, which is put in the context of solidly researched overviews of Canada's current economic and climate change policy. The report was commissioned by Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU), an umbrella organization affiliated with 15 international construction unions, and released by the Columbia Institute, Vancouver. A French version, *Les emplois de demain : Les métiers de la construction du Canada et les émissions nettes zero* is available [here](#) .

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Construction Industry](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Green Infrastructure](#), [Job Creation](#), [Skilled Workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The complex challenge of emissions reduction in the movement of goods

Posted on **June 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The State of Freight: Understanding greenhouse gas emissions from goods movement in Canada is a detailed examination of the factors driving the increase of emissions from goods movement, and the complex of federal, provincial, and municipal programs and legislation. The report makes a convincing case for the importance of this issue: Freight (defined as road, rail, ship and plane), accounted for 10.5 per cent of total emissions in Canada in 2015; freight is the fastest-growing segment of the transportation sector, and the transportation sector is the second highest source of emissions in Canada – and the largest sectoral source of emissions in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. And simply put: “Any business with a supply chain depends on freight. And nearly everything we purchase as consumers has to be transported to the purchase or delivery point.”

The report focuses most attention on the movement of goods using heavy-duty trucks, and identifies the main actors in that industry, as well as examples of international programs to improve efficiency, including the U.S., California, and the EU. Good companion reading on that issue is the April 2017 Pembina report, *Improving Urban Freight Efficiency: Global best practices in reducing emissions in goods movement*, which provides case studies from New York City, Toronto, Sweden, and London. A 2014 report by Pembina also focuses on Toronto: see *Greening the Goods: Opportunities for low-carbon goods movement in Toronto*.

The State of Freight identifies as the key opportunities to reduce emissions: carbon pricing and the forthcoming federal Clean Fuel Standard; Phase 2 heavy-duty vehicle efficiency regulations; Continued rollout and adoption of efficiency technologies; Build-out of fuelling infrastructure – biofuels, natural gas, electric and hydrogen; and integration of goods movement into regional and municipal land use planning.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Supply chains](#), [Transportation](#), [Trucking Industry](#), [Urban Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Review of Australia’s Electricity future seeks political compromise; unions see some hints of Just Transition

Posted on **June 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The [Final Report of the Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market](#) was submitted to the Australian government by its Chief Scientist, Alan Finkel, on June 9 – the government press release is [here](#) . Given that Australia currently obtains approximately two-thirds of its electricity from coal-fired generating units, it is controversial territory. The Finkel Review seeks compromise ground: it doesn't recommend a return to Australia's previous emissions trading scheme , nor a carbon tax – instead, it recommends a “clean energy target”, where cleaner power generators would get financial rewards relative to the amount of CO2 emitted per megawatt hour. In “[Australia: New climate policy same old politics](#)”, *Climate Home* states: A “major review of Australian climate policy has been compromised by the malignant politics that has sent Australia to the back of the international pack”. Even more critical is “[Alan Finkel's emissions target breaks Australia's Paris commitments](#)” in *The Guardian* (June 9), which states that the Finkel recommendations would result in emissions levels 28% below 2005 levels by 2030 for the electricity sector – less than needed, and less than called for in a 2016 report by the Climate Change Authority, [Policy options for Australia's electricity supply sector](#) . *The Guardian* also published “[Finkel review anticipates lower power prices, but weak electricity emissions target](#)”, with detail of the recommendations and the political response.

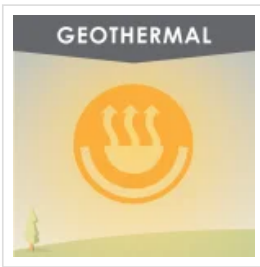
The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) response to the Finkel report is muted, and focused less on the strength of the emission targets and more on the recommendations for an orderly transition of the sector, and a three year notice period before generator withdrawal. From the ACTU [press release](#): “it is immediately clear that the report states the need for an orderly transition that includes workforce preparedness....The report also recommends a three year notice period before generator withdrawal, which would provide some notice for workers and communities.” The ACTU has previously recommended the establishment of the Energy Transition Authority to navigate the transition to a clean energy economy.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Australian Council of Trade Unions](#), [electricity sector](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

\$2 Billion Low-Carbon Economy Fund announced, but Saskatchewan headed in a different direction

Posted on **June 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 15, Canada's Federal Environment and Climate Minister announced details of the government's five-year, \$2-billion [Low Carbon Economy Fund](#) , to support the goals of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. The Low Carbon Economy Fund consists of two parts: the larger, Leadership Fund of \$1.4 billion, for projects proposed by provinces and territories that have signed on [Pan-Canadian Framework](#) , and the Low Carbon Economy Challenge, which will be launched in fall 2017, to support projects submitted by all provinces and territories, municipalities, Indigenous governments and organizations, businesses and both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. As described in “[Only fair': McKenna on excluding Saskatchewan, Manitoba from \\$2B carbon fund](#)” , Manitoba and Saskatchewan must sign on to the Pan-Canadian Framework by December 2017 to be eligible to receive any funding .



A [CBC report summarizes](#) the response by Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall – who [states](#), “If this fund, which Saskatchewan taxpayers have helped create, is really about reducing carbon emissions, how does withholding those funds for green initiatives in Saskatchewan help that objective?” Saskatchewan objects to the carbon tax mandate of the Pan-Canadian Framework, and has directed its climate change fight to carbon capture and storage, and more recently, Canada’s first geothermal power plant. The press release from SaskPower regarding the geothermal power purchase agreement is [here](#). Read [this article from DeSmog blog](#) for a wide-ranging description of Saskatchewan’s energy policy and the announcement of its geothermal plant.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Geothermal energy](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta Oil Sands Advisory Group recommends a roadmap for the 100 megatonne emissions cap

Posted on [June 22, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The provincial government [released](#) the consensus report of Phase 1 of the Alberta Oil Sands Advisory Group on June 16 – proposing a process to comply with the the legislated 100 megatonne emissions limit for oil and gas production, as required by the Climate Leadership Plan. The recommendations for early action focus on encouraging lower emission intensity production through technological innovation, and building information and reporting systems to drive improvements. Those information systems could also trigger reviews and possible penalties if emissions approach 80% or 95% of the 100 megatonne limit. According to an [article in Energy Mix](#), “The industry is staking its future on the hope that it can simultaneously increase production and reduce production emissions, an approach that is seen as favouring the largest operators in the tar sands/oil sands over smaller companies.” An [article in the Edmonton Journal](#) provides commentary from the oil industry perspective.

The Executive Summary of the report is [here](#) ; the full Report is [here](#) . The government will start consultations with key stakeholders immediately, before proceeding with Phase 2 of policy design. The goal is to have regulations in place by 2018.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and Gas Regulations](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Transform TO will reduce Toronto’s emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050 – Recommendations passed on July 4th

Posted on [June 22, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Old and new Toronto City Hall from Flickr

John Cartwright, President of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, wrote an Opinion piece “[How Toronto could lead the climate change charge in Canadian cities](#)”, which appeared in the *National Observer* on June 15. The focus of Cartwright’s article is the [Transform TO](#) plan currently being debated in Toronto City Council after two years of public engagement, expert input and in-depth analysis. Cartwright is a member of the cross-sectoral Modelling Advisory Group that informed the Transform TO project. The target is to reduce carbon emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050. Given that half of the Toronto’s carbon emissions come from buildings, 41 per cent from transportation and 11 per cent from waste, key Transform TO recommendations are: 100% of new buildings to be designed and built to be near zero GHG emissions by 2030; 100% of transportation options- including public transit and personal vehicles – to use low or zero-carbon energy sources, and active transportation to account for 75% of trips under 5 km city-wide by 2050; and 95% of waste to be diverted by 2050 in all sectors – residential, institutional, commercial and industrial.

Details of the plan are presented in [Staff Report #1](#), approved by City Council in December 2016, and [Staff Report #2](#), approved by the Environment and Parks committee in May, and slated for a Council vote in early July. Technical reports are [here](#).

UPDATE: See [this CBC report](#) summarizing the Council vote on July 4th, where the recommendations were passed, but with financial concerns.

An overview is available in [2050 Pathway to a Low-Carbon Toronto Report 2: Highlights of the City of Toronto Staff Report](#). Report #2 highlights that Transform TO will provide significant community benefits, such as improved public health, lower operating costs for buildings, and local job creation and training opportunities for communities that have traditionally faced barriers to employment – with an estimate that the planned building retrofits alone would create 80,000 person years of employment.

Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are members of [C40](#), a network whose goal is to act on climate change and reduce emissions. In cooperation with Sustania and Realdania, C40 compiled case studies from [100 cities](#) (including Toronto and Vancouver), meant to showcase innovative programs. Their most recent blog, “[Mayors lead the global response to Trump’s pull out of the Paris Agreement](#)” is a blunt rebuke to Trump and a determination to continue to work at local solutions. Similarly, [Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre repeated](#) that the mayors of the world would honour the Paris Agreement, as he welcomed more than 140 mayors and 1,000 international and local delegates gathered to the annual Metropolis World Congress from June 19 to 22.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Toronto](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Parliamentary committee recommends a legislated right to a healthy environment in its review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act

Posted on **June 21, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 15, the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled its report, *Healthy Environment, Healthy Canadians, Healthy Economy: Strengthening the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*, and the French version, *Un Environnement Sain, des Canadiens et une Économie en Santé : Renforcer la Loi Canadienne sur la Protection de l'environnement (1999)*.

Called a “ground-breaking” report by the David Suzuki Foundation, this review of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)* makes 87 recommendations to modernize the law. The Ecojustice blog, “[Much to celebrate in committee report on Canadian Environmental Protection Act](#)” summarizes some of the recommendations, including the introduction of national drinking water and air quality standards; “stronger enforcement provisions to ensure polluters are held to account; improved transparency, public reporting and consultation requirements; and faster timelines to ensure regulatory action is taken swiftly once a toxic threat is identified”. Most important, however, is the recommendation that the Act recognize and protect the right of every person in Canada to a healthy environment – a right recognized in 110 other countries.

The [reaction](#) from East Coast Environmental Law also notes this right to a healthy environment, and emphasizes the environmental justice implications: “The Report... suggests that the importance of environmental rights to Indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations should be emphasized. ... The Report acknowledges that environmental burdens aren’t shared equitably by communities across Canada, it also makes a number of recommendations that address environmental injustice. For example, it recommends that the Act be expanded to include an obligation to protect the environment in a non-discriminatory way; that it enhance the procedural rights that protect access to information, access to justice, and public participation in environmental decision-making; that it address the inequitable burden of toxic exposure in Canada; and that it recognize the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

The [response](#) from the David Suzuki Foundation also summarizes the recommendations, and makes clear that these are not yet law. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and eventually Cabinet, will consider the report, with legislation expected in the fall. Ecojustice calls it “a once-in-a generation opportunity to dramatically improve our most important environmental law.”

Environment and Climate Change Canada has compiled links to a [history of CEPA](#). The Standing Committee website is [here](#), with links to witnesses and the 68 briefs received.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change Law](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Environmental law](#), [Environmental Protection](#), [First Nations](#), [toxic chemicals](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

An agenda for U.S. progressive unions: Resist, reclaim, restructure for climate justice and energy democracy

Posted on **June 21, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Towards a Progressive Labor Vision for Climate Justice and Energy Transition in the Time of Trump is a new discussion paper by Sean Sweeney and John Treat, acknowledging the work of the progressive unions affiliated with the Labor Network for Solidarity and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, and proposing an “ambitious and effective agenda for progressive labor to respond to the converging environmental crises, and to pursue a rapid, inclusive approach to energy transition and social justice.” To set the stage, the authors acknowledge and describe the divisions within the U.S. labour movement, especially those around the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines. They applaud Bernie Sanders for breaking new ground in the 2016 Presidential elections by making climate change a central part of the progressive political agenda – notably his call for a just transition for fossil fuel workers and for a national ban on fracking. They label “Green Jobs” as “a Tired Phrase, an Unconvincing Promise”, and find glaring problems with the existing blue-green alliance approach, stating that the accomplishments are not unimportant, “but the “green jobs” narrative has failed to engage numerous constituencies of potential allies in the struggle for better health, workplace and environmental protections for all, and for broader social, economic and ecological justice.”

In its place, the authors look internationally for inspiration, and propose “an ambitious, pro-active, independent, labor-led program of action”, built on actions which “resist, reclaim, restructure”, with Just Transition, Solidarity, and Internationalism as important principles. Some specific examples: **Resist**: energy-related land seizures, despoliation, and violation of indigenous rights and territories; Resist shale oil and gas drilling and associated infrastructure (pipelines, export platforms, etc.), especially on federal and tribal lands.” **Reclaim**: “Fight to reverse state-level “electricity market restructuring” and to reform Investor Owned Utilities; Review the Public Utilities Regulatory Policy Act (PURPA) in order to determine whether it should be repealed in order to restore States’ power to make their own energy choices; Re-invent regulatory bodies for the power industry, establish mechanisms for meaningful public involvement and democratic decision-making; Investigate and pursue new ways to use union pension funds in order to maximize their impact for a “public goods” approach to energy provision and climate change mitigation; Reinvent public infrastructure, beginning with the postal service in order to drive local renewable energy generation and to provide financial services for working class people who need them.” **Restructure**: “Demand energy sector reform to allow for a just transition to renewables under public and community control; Demand establishment of dedicated, priority revenue streams for public renewables and a “just transition fund,” to be funded via a Financial Transaction Tax; Reject costly Power Purchase Agreements; Demand adequately funded, modern and available public transit systems, including the development of public fleets of electric vehicles for urban mobility.”



Towards a Progressive Labor Vision for Climate Justice and Energy Transition in the Time of Trump was released on June 1 by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, and submitted for discussion to [Labor for Our Revolution](#), a network of unions and labor activists engaged in campaigns to support workers’ rights and contribute to building a broader movement for social and economic justice. LFOR endorses the work of [Our Revolution](#), the network which grew out of the Bernie Sanders campaign in the U.S.. Our Revolution states it has three intertwined goals: “to revitalize American democracy, empower progressive leaders and elevate the political consciousness. “

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BlueGreen Alliance](#), [Labor for our Revolution](#), [Labor Network for Sustainability \(LNS\)](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Unions call for Transformative Transition and Energy Democracy

Posted on **June 21, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Public and Commercial Services Union of the U.K. (PCS), with 180,000 civil service members, chose its annual delegate conference in late May to release *Just transition and Energy Democracy*, a thorough discussion of climate change impacts and solutions, which argues that “Far from being a distraction, climate change can reinforce trade union organisation, show their contemporary relevance particularly to young members, and start to place trade unions at the very centre of the crucial and urgent debate about what we mean when we talk of a just transition.” The paper argues for energy democracy as a fundamental right, and references a 2016 report *Public ownership of the UK energy system – benefits, costs and processes*, which states that energy democracy is necessary for the development of renewable energy and financially possible to achieve. *Just Transition and Energy Democracy* sets out a framework for the public sector role in this energy transition, and states, “For PCS therefore we advocate that a just transition is also a transformative process for economic and social justice, going beyond market based solutions and negotiation within a framework of green capitalism.” In the transformative scenario a just transition “will address the inherent inequality and injustice of the capitalist system”. Step one in the process would be the creation of a National Climate Service similar to the U.K.’s National Health Service (NHS), to ensure there is a body to create the jobs needed to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The University and College Union (UCU) also debated and carried a [resolution](#) concerning climate change and Just Transition at its convention in June, and adopted a [resolution](#) to take to the TUC conference in September, enumerating actions, including support for energy democracy.



— Photo by Sophie Brown, from Wikipedia Commons

Reaction of unions to the surprise Labour surge in the U.K. election is summarized in the [June/July newsletter](#) of the Greener Jobs Alliance. All cite the importance of the Labour Party manifesto, *For the many, not the few*, which included proposals for energy democracy through publicly owned, locally accountable energy companies and cooperatives. It also proposed an industrial and skills strategy to drive investment in electric vehicles, home insulation, new low carbon technologies for heavy industries like steel, and a ban on fracking.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Distributed energy](#), [energy democracy](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [public ownership](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

NDP-Green alliance promises a new chapter for B.C. government and climate change policies



— B.C. Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver and B.C. NDP Leader John Horgan (photo by The Canadian Press/Chad Hipolito)

According to a June 12 [press release](#), the Legislature of British Columbia will be recalled on June 22, when a confidence motion will determine who will lead the government after the [cliff-hanger election](#) of May 9. Read [“Greens to prop up NDP’s Horgan in minority BC government”](#) in the *National Observer* (May 29) for an overview of the alliance reached between the Green Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP) as they prepare to form the new provincial government. What have they agreed on? The [text of the “Supply and Confidence” agreement](#), “founded on the principles of good faith and no surprises”, is available at the B.C. NDP website. Major points of agreement on climate change issues are: implacable opposition to the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline; an increase in the province’s carbon tax by \$5 a tonne each year from April 2018, rising to the nationally required \$50 a tonne by 2021; a six-month, independent review of the unpopular Site C hydroelectric project (a concession by the Greens, who had wanted to axe it outright); revival of the province’s Climate Leadership Team; and an investigation into the safety of fracking. Read also [“What does a NDP-Green Alliance mean for Climate Change?”](#) in the *Climate Examiner* (June 8), and for the larger picture beyond climate change-related issues, see [“BC NDP-Green agreement offers historic opportunity for game-changing new policies”](#) by Seth Klein and Shannon Daub of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C., or [“NDP and Greens Promise Electoral Reform Referendum, Big Money Ban and Higher Carbon Tax”](#) in *The Tyee* (May 30).

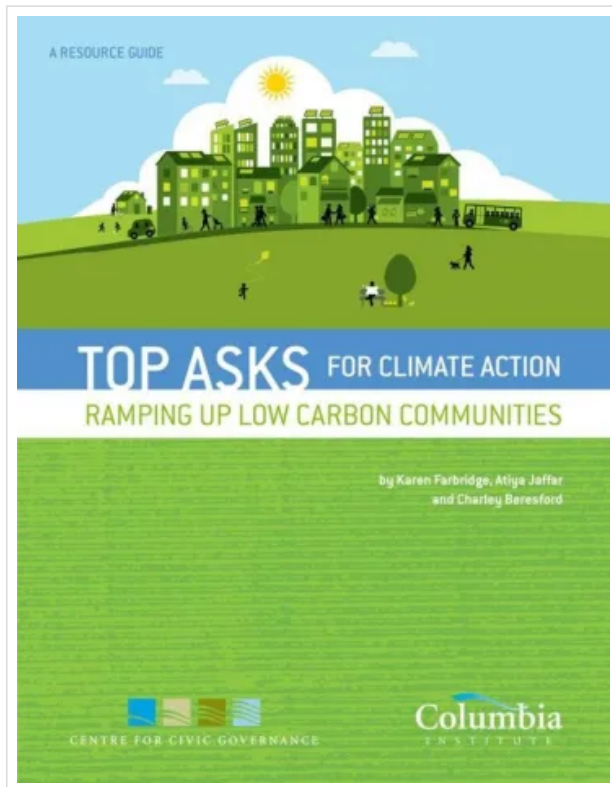
The national implications of the coming changes to B.C. energy policy are raised by Kathryn Harris in [“A Historic moment for B.C. Politics and our Environment”](#) in the *Globe and Mail* (updated June 1), who states: “At the heart of the Trudeau government’s 2016 climate plan lies a political compromise: a commitment to pursue reductions in Canada’s own greenhouse gas emissions in exchange for expansion of fossil-fuel exports to other countries via new pipelines. The looming NDP-Green partnership in British Columbia reveals both the political fragility of that compromise and the contradiction of climate leadership funded by fossil-fuel development.”

In that controversial pipeline debate: new, required reading from the Parkland Institute: [Will the Trans Mountain Pipeline and Tidewater Access Boost Prices and Save Canada’s Oil Industry?](#). Author David Hughes challenges the contention by pipeline proponents (for example, Alberta Premier Rachel Notley) that Alberta would benefit from a “tidewater premium” by reaching global markets, and concludes that “The new BC government would be wise to withdraw the Province’s approval for this project.” And [“Showdown looms for LNG project”](#), an overview article in *The Globe and Mail* indicates the changes likely to come on that file, although the NDP-Green agreement doesn’t explicitly address the LNG issue.

The Pembina Institute offers an alternative to the Clark fossil fuel economy, in their [Vision for Clean Growth Economy](#) for B.C., released in May. It outlines five key priorities and makes specific recommendations for their achievement: 1. Build a strong clean tech sector 2. Position B.C. to be competitive in the changing global economy 3. Make clean choices more affordable 4. Stand up for healthy and safe communities, and 5. Grow sustainable resource jobs.

Paths forward for decarbonization in Canada: two new reports

Posted on **June 12, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In June, the Columbia Institute's Centre for Civic Governance released [the first annual progress report](#) on the 18 federal and 24 provincial/territorial policies that it had identified in its 2016 report, *Top Asks for Climate Action: Ramping Up Low Carbon Communities*. The 2016 report focuses on local government issues and the policy support they need from the federal, provincial and territorial governments in the areas of capacity building, funding, buildings, transportation and smart growth. The [2017 Report Card](#) credits the federal government for some accomplishments – such as establishing a national price on carbon – and highlights nine key areas where “room for improvement” remains. These are: 1) establishing scientific GHG targets that will meet Paris Agreement commitments; 2) Establishing a mechanism that will guarantee new infrastructure spending that won't lock Canadians into a high carbon path; 3) Moving faster on eliminating fossil fuel subsidies; 4) Providing more robust tools for retrofitting homes and commercial buildings; 5) Providing all communities with energy, emissions and natural capital baseline data; 6) Prioritizing transit and active transportation over auto-only infrastructure; 7) Giving priority to community and Indigenous -owned renewable energy projects to advance energy democracy in Canada; 8) Developing a national thermal energy strategy; 9) Helping local governments transition to low carbon fleets. A [June 5 article](#) in the *National Observer* summarizes the report, and provides response from the federal government.

A second new report, *Re-Energizing Canada: Pathways to a Low-Carbon Future*, takes a more academic approach, but includes many of the same issues. The report, published by Sustainable Canada Dialogues, is the product of input from Canadian academics and First Nations, establishes a framework of our energy system, and examines the important issues in Canadian energy policy with statistics and analysis. The report identifies governance issues as central to a successful low-carbon energy transition, and states: “we believe that the key barriers to accelerating the low-carbon energy transition are social, political and organizational.” Many of its recommendations relate to governance structures needed for policy

harmonization. *Re-energizing Canada* was Commissioned by Natural Resources Canada in Fall 2016, and published by [Sustainable Canada Dialogues](#), a Canada-wide network of over 80 scholars from engineering, sciences and social sciences. It is an initiative of the UNESCO-McGill Chair for Dialogues on Sustainability and is housed in Montreal.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Decarbonization](#), [Energy policy](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

2 million electric vehicles globally, and less than 30,000 in Canada. How best to encourage more?

Posted on **June 12, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— From Wikimedia Commons

The latest edition of the *Global EV Outlook 2017* was released by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in June, reporting that the global electric car stock, (mainly Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs)), surpassed 2 million units in 2016 – an increase of 60% from 2015. China is the leader with the most vehicles, at 648,770 units, followed by the U.S. at 563,710. China is also the leader in other electrified modes – with over 300,000 electric buses. In terms of market share, Norway, with its small [population of 5.25 million](#) is the leader: its 133,260 units represent a 28.76% market share. Canada, with its population of [36.5 million people](#), is well behind the pack with an electric vehicle stock of 29,270 units, representing a market share of 0.57%, according to the IEA. (Perhaps not so bad, considering that electric vehicles still only represent 0.2% of all passenger cars worldwide) . Besides tabulating national statistics and trends regarding vehicle stock and charging stations, the report includes a substantial discussion of supportive policies amongst the member countries.

Canada committed to developing a national strategy to increase the number of zero-emission vehicles on Canadian roads by 2018 in the [Pan-Canadian Framework agreement](#), and the policy process is currently under review – as summarized in [an article](#) in the *National Observer* . On May 26, the Minister of Transport [announced](#) that: “ a national Advisory Group has been established to contribute to developing options for addressing the key barriers for greater deployment of these technologies in five areas: vehicle supply, cost and benefits of ownership, infrastructure readiness, public awareness, and clean growth and clean jobs. The Advisory Group includes representatives from governments, industry, consumer and non-government organizations and academia. ” One of the members of the Advisory Group is the non-profit [Équiterre](#) , which at the end of May [released](#) a new report : *Accelerating the transition to electric mobility in Canada* . The report modelled three scenarios for ZEV adoption and concluded that only “the scenario with a legal mandate to sell a certain number of electric vehicles resulted in the market share necessary to drive down greenhouse gas emissions in line with international targets.”

Another new report, from the Ecofiscal Commission, *Supporting Carbon Pricing: How to identify policies that genuinely complement an economy-wide carbon price*, provides a detailed case study on electric vehicle subsidies in Quebec, including a consideration of how they interact with other emissions regulations. The Ecofiscal report suggests that the current subsidy system results in a high cost for emissions reduction, and that flexible regulations “might be a more cost-effective approach to increasing ZEV uptake” than a supply-side mandate. Currently, Quebec is the only Canadian jurisdiction with such supply-side regulation; under [Bill 104](#), passed in October 2016, 3.5 % of the total number of vehicles sold or leased by car manufacturers in Quebec must be zero emissions vehicles starting in 2018, and by 2020, the standard will rise to 15.5 %. For an overview of the issue and support for the rebate policy option, see Clare Demerse’s article in *Policy Options*, “Rebates should be part of electric car strategy” (June 9).

Canada has signed on to a new international campaign, [EV 30@30](#), which was announced on June 8 at the 8th [Clean Energy Ministerial \(CEM8\)](#) held in Beijing. The [press release](#) for the campaign states a target of at least 30 percent new electric vehicle sales by 2030, and: “The campaign will support the market for electric passenger cars, light commercial vans, buses and trucks (including battery-electric, plug-in hybrid, and fuel cell vehicle types). It will also work towards the deployment of charging infrastructure to supply sufficient power to the vehicles deployed.” A large part of the implementation will be through efforts to increase public and private sector commitments for EV fleet procurement and deployment. The program will also establish a Global EV Pilot City program to reach 100 electric vehicle-friendly cities around the World over five years, and encourage research into all aspects of deployment. Full explanation of the 30@30 campaign is [here](#).

Along with Canada, other countries signing on to the EV30@30 campaign include China, Finland, France, India, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. (The U.S., U.K., Korea and South Africa are members of the CEM Electric Vehicle Initiative, but did not sign on to the 30@30 initiative). In addition to participant countries, the following groups support the campaign: C40, the FIA Foundation, the Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI), the Natural Resource Defence Council (NRDC), the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT), The Climate Group, UN Environment, UN Habitat, and the International Zero Emission Vehicle Alliance (ZEV Alliance).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [Quebec](#), [transportation policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

\$1.5 billion will buy new renewable energy projects, good green jobs, and environmental justice in New York State

Posted on **June 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 2, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that his state would invest \$1.5 billion in renewable energy projects through the Clean Climate Careers Initiative. The program has three elements: “supercharge” clean energy technologies, create up to 40,000 clean energy jobs by 2020, and achieve environmental justice and Just Transition for underserved communities. Both the Governor’s [press release](#) and [one from the Worker Institute](#) at Cornell University Industrial and Labor Relations School attribute the inspiration for the new renewable energy initiative to the “Labor Leading on Climate” program at the Worker Institute.



- Download the report at <https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/ilr.cornell.edu/files/InequalityClimateChangeReport.pdf>

The Institute has just published *Reversing Inequality, Combatting Climate Change: A Climate Jobs Program for New York State* (June 2017), in which Lara Skinner and co-author J. Mijin Cha argue for an “audacious” job creation plan which would create decent green jobs in the building, energy, and transport sectors. The report provides case studies and specific proposals to reduce GHG emissions – for example, to retrofit all public schools in the state to reach 100 percent of their energy efficiency potential by 2025, reduce energy use in all public buildings by 40 percent by 2025, install 7.5 GW of offshore wind by 2050, rehabilitate New York City public transit, and construct and improve the existing high-speed passenger rail corridor between Albany and Buffalo, and between New York City and Montreal. The report also includes a recommendation to establish a Just Transition Task Force – a recommendation incorporated in Governor Cuomo’s plan.

In [the plan announced](#) by Governor Cuomo, \$15 million has been committed “to educators and trainers that partner with the clean energy industry and unions to offer training and apprenticeship opportunities, with funding distributed to the most innovative and far-reaching apprenticeship, training programs and partnerships. ” The state is also committed to the use of a Project Labor Agreement framework for the construction of public works projects associated with the initiative.

A Working Group on Environmental Justice and Just Transition has been appointed and staffed, with a first meeting scheduled for June. It will advise the administration on the integration of environmental justice principles into all agency policies, and to shape existing environmental justice programs. The [press release](#) includes endorsements from the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance and unions, including: Greater New York Building Construction Trades Council, New York State AFL-CIO, New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, IBEW Local 3, Transport Workers Union, Utility Workers Union Local 1-2, United Association Plumbers & Pipefitters, and the past Secretary Treasurer of Service Employees International Union.

Governor Cuomo’s Renewable Energy initiative was announced one day after Donald Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, and after the Governor had signed an [Executive Order](#) reaffirming New York’s commitment to the Paris goals, and had [launched a Climate Alliance](#) with the states of California and Washington.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Apprenticeship](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Mars](#), [New York City Environmental Justice Alliance](#), [New York State](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [retrofitting](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [Training](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.N. Working Group makes recommendations to protect human rights, labour rights in Canada

Posted on **June 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a [Statement at the end of visit to Canada by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) on June 1. This is a preliminary document – the official mission report will be presented to the 38th session of the Human Rights Council in June 2018, and should be worth watching for. The preliminary Statement provides a summary of the results of fact-finding meetings with government officials, business organizations related to Canada's mining and oil and gas industries, and Indigenous people. Most importantly, it makes a number of recommendations regarding human rights, labour rights, environmental and social impact consultation, and the right to consult for Indigenous people.

Some Highlights:

“Part of the backdrop to our visit were visible protests by indigenous communities to several large-scale development projects, such as the proposed expansion of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline, the construction a large-scale hydroelectric dam (Site C Dam), and continued expansion of development projects of extractives industries. Several of these cases have also been repeatedly raised by UN human rights human rights mechanisms, such as the situation of the Lubicon Cree Nation, whose territories are affected by extensive oil sands extraction. In several indigenous territories, extensive mining and oil and gas extraction are accompanied by significant adverse environmental impacts affecting the right to health.”

Regarding the established “duty to consult” with Indigenous people regarding mining projects, the Working Group encourages the Canadian government to ratify the ILO Convention No. 169 and for provincial and the federal government to promote more inclusive consultation regarding development projects.

The Working Group also urges the federal government to “follow up” on the April 2017 recommendations by the Expert Panel regarding Environmental Assessment in [Building Common Ground: A New Vision for Impact Assessment in Canada](#) “to include indigenous peoples in decision-making at all stages through a collaborative process that is developed in partnership with impacted indigenous communities.”

Regarding the dam breach and tailings spill at the Mount Polley mine, the Working Group states: “We encourage the British Columbia government to complete expeditiously the impact study, continue to monitor closely the short-term and long-terms impacts of the tailings discharge, and communicate more widely their findings and proposed actions. Moreover, the provincial government should consult more broadly with indigenous communities who may have concerns about the breach and its impact on their lives. We also recommend the British Columbia government to consider establishing an independent body to assume compliance and monitoring of mining regulations, as recommended in the Auditor General's report”.

Regarding the Westray Law, the Working Group states: “We heard concerns that the Westray law is not being properly implemented and enforced. We heard that there was a lack of coordination between key government parties, to secure sites of industrial accidents, for further investigation and inspection. We note that the Government of Alberta recently signed a new memorandum of understanding with ten police forces and Alberta Justice, that defines protocols for notification, investigation and communication between departments when there is a serious workplace incident. Other provinces should follow Alberta's lead”.

Regarding the need to protect the right to peaceful protest: “During our visit, we were told of the criminalization of peaceful protests and the use of security personnel and police to break up and arrest activists who were exercising their democratic right to protest against extractive projects both within and outside Canada. The government should work all relevant stakeholders to ensure more space for peaceful dissent and protest at home and abroad.” And also: referring to Ontario and Quebec, “we would encourage other provincial governments to develop similar Anti-SLAPP legislation. “

In conclusion: The Working Group revives a 2006 proposal for an Ombudsperson with a mandate to investigate allegations of business-related human rights abuse, and “we encourage the federal government to work together with provincial

governments to develop a comprehensive national action plan on business and human rights.”

For Oxfam Canada’s summary of the Working Group, see the Huffington Post article [here](#) , and [here](#) for the reaction of the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability .

The Working Group Statement was also concerned with human rights abuses overseas by Canadian mining companies: see the analysis of the Working Group statement by Human Rights Watch [here](#), or see “The ‘Canada Brand’: Violence and Canadian Mining Companies in Latin America”, an extensive report in the Osgoode Law Research Paper Series (December 2016).

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Corporate Environment Policy](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [duty to consult](#), [Environmental Assessment](#), [First Nations](#), [Human Rights](#), [mining industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ILO Director-General report identifies key themes in the greening of work, and worker delegates respond

Posted on **June 7, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 106th Session of the International Labour Conference convenes from



June 5-16 in Geneva – see an overview [here](#) . To open the annual Conference, Director General Guy Ryder presented his report, *Work in a changing climate: The Green Initiative* , and for those who question the role of the workplace in the fight against climate change, the report states: “... if climate change is a consequence of human activity, then that activity is, for the most part, work or work-related. It is no coincidence that climate change tends to be benchmarked against pre-industrial levels. And if work is the predominant cause of climate change, then inevitably it must be central to strategies to prevent, mitigate and adapt to it.”

The main body of the Director-General’s Report describes and updates the accomplishments of the ILO Green Centenary Initiative, which was launched in 2013, “to promote the considerable potential for creation of decent work associated with the transition to a low carbon sustainable development path and to minimize and manage the inevitable dislocation that will accompany it.” The report emphasizes the need for research and policy analysis, and announces that the 2018 edition of the ILO *World Employment and Social Outlook Report* will focus on “greening with jobs”, with sectoral and country-specific information.

Some important themes: The report emphasizes the need for tripartite responses to climate change, and offers the examples of countries with tripartite consultations: Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru , South Africa, and Brazil, which developed its Intended Nationally- Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement with tripartite involvement.

Global carbon pricing is identified as “an outstanding question of the greatest magnitude –a political game changer in the eyes of some.” And, “Independently of the specific merits of taxing carbon, the general message is clear: predictable and

appropriate regulation, together with informed tripartite involvement, are key ingredients for successful just transition.”

Regarding the greening of the work process, the report states: “The extraordinary process of structural transformation in production systems, made necessary by the fight against climate change, needs also to incorporate two further ingredients which have a proven record in facilitating socially acceptable and beneficial change at work: skills development and social protection.”

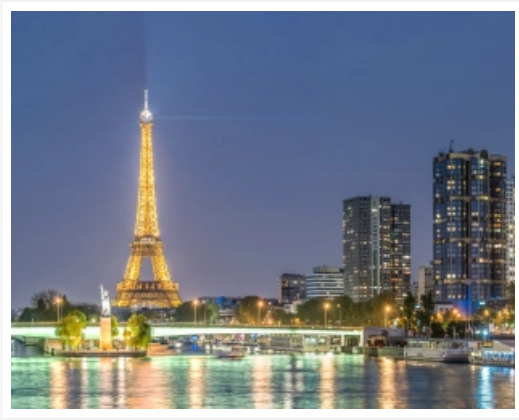


Canadian Labour Congress [Secretary-Treasurer Marie Clarke Walker](#) was elected [Vice-President \(Workers\)](#) on June 5, and is a member of the ILO Governing Body. [Luc Cortebeek](#), Chairperson of the Workers' Group, presented a [Discussion of the Director-General's report](#) on June 7. The 3-page discussion is generally constructive, for example, congratulating the ILO for its climate neutrality goals and its the recognition of the need to aim for zero emissions as soon as possible, and pledging support for Skills for Green Jobs initiatives. However, it highlights differences about the goals for the future, stating: “Such an ambitious assessment on the state of affairs does not seem to be followed by an equally ambitious take on future measures.” Further, “The workers' group regrets the absence of references to the importance of piloting in as many countries as possible the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition, as a means to show they are a useful tool for tackling climate change in a socially progressive way.” The Workers Group also considers it “vital” that the ILO develop and execute its own economic modelling research regarding the potentially negative distributional aspects of carbon pricing and regulation, and not rely on research by the [OECD](#) and other active agencies.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Markets](#), [International Labour Organization](#), [Just Transition](#), [Tripartitism](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement : how did Canada react? How did the labour movement react?

Posted on [June 7, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



— From Wikimedia Commons

As anyone alive must know by now, Donald Trump announced that the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement on June 1, 2017. NPR offers an annotated, fact-checked transcript of Trump's announcement [here](#). The Editorial Board of the *New York Times* called it "[Our Disgraceful exit from the Paris Accord](#)"; Bill McKibben called it "[Trump's Stupid and Reckless Decision](#)" in a *New York Times* OpEd, and *Vox* headlined: "[Quitting the Paris Climate Agreement is a moral disgrace](#)". Leaders from business, government, and civil society around the world reacted with dismay: see a compilation of global reaction from [the Daily Climate](#), or from *The Conversation*, a compilation of analysis by academic experts: "[Why Trump's decision to leave Paris accord hurts the US and the world](#)" – including Simon Reich from Rutgers University who states: "many may well claim that June 1, 2017 was the day that America's global leadership ended."

Almost immediately, the states of [California](#), [Washington](#) and [New York](#) stepped forward into the leadership gap with the June 1 launch of a U.S. Climate Alliance. By June 5, according to a [New York press release](#), 10 more states had joined: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia. The mayors of hundreds of U.S. cities have also committed to the Climate Alliance, including Atlanta, Washington, D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, Philadelphia, San Antonio, San Diego, Dallas, San Jose. The Alliance is committed to achieving the U.S. Paris Agreement goal of reducing emissions 26-28 percent from 2005 levels, and to meeting or exceeding the targets of the federal Clean Power Plan. Read "[Bucking Trump, These Cities, States and Companies Commit to Paris Accord](#)" in the *New York Times* and "[These Titans of Industry just broke with Trump's decision to exit the Paris accords](#)" in the *Washington Post* (June 1) to see the extent of immediate push-back over the decision.

HOW DID CANADA REACT TO TRUMP'S DECISION? The [official government position](#) was stated by Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change: "While Canada is deeply disappointed that the United States has chosen to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, we remain steadfast in our commitment to work with our global partners to address climate change and promote clean growth. It is the right thing to do for future generations and will create good jobs as we grow a clean economy."

Canada will continue to take leadership on climate change.

In September, we will co-host a Ministerial meeting with China and the European Union in Canada to move forward on the Paris Agreement and clean growth.... With or without the United States, the momentum around the Paris Agreement and climate action is unstoppable."

And by June 5, Canada was on the world stage as [the official host](#) of World Environment Day .

Other Canadian reaction to Trump's decision: In the mainstream press: "[World reacts to Trump's climate move: 'He's declaring war on the planet itself'](#)" in the *Globe and Mail* (June 2); from the CBC, "[Trump quitting the Paris accord might not](#)

necessarily be the end of the world” . In *Maclean's* magazine, Catherine Abreu, Director of Climate Action Network Canada, wrote “[What Trump's retreat really means for Global Climate Action](#)” (June 2), which provides a concise analysis of the impacts, affirming a theme put forth by others – Trump's move is damaging but not an insurmountable problem, and others are stepping up to the task, and in fact, are galvanized to greater effort.

Other Canadian reaction: From Mitchell Beer in *Policy Options* (June 7), “[Trump's Paris Withdrawal, Canada's Opportunity](#)”; Matt Horne's Opinion piece, from a Vancouver point of view, in the *Globe and Mail* (June 4) “[Environmental progress is possible despite Trump's climate-change agenda](#)”; from the *Energy Mix*: “[World Leaders Respond, U.S. States and Cities Step Up as Trump Blunders Out of Paris Agreement](#)” (June 2) ; “[Canadian big city mayors defiant in face of Trump's exit from Paris Accord](#)” in the *National Observer* (June 1), which quotes Canadian mayors assembled at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Big City Mayors' Caucus in Ottawa on June 1; and [Denis Coderre, Mayor of Montréal](#) and president of Metropolis, a 140-member world association of major cities : “in spite of this setback, cities will not just stand down; ...Mayors from around the world will be meeting in Montreal from June 19 to 23 at the Metropolis World Congress. ... climate change will be at the heart of our deliberations, in collaboration with other networks of cities such as the C40 Climate Leadership Group and ICLEI.”

HOW DID UNIONS REACT TO THE TRUMP DECISION? In “[Unions respond to US announcement on Paris climate change agreement](#)” (June 2), Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff states: “While President Trump's decision on Paris represents a set-back to united action on climate change, it doesn't change the fact that the rest of the world is moving forward. Canadian government, civil society and industry recognize the need to adapt to a low-carbon economy.” The CLC also references the response by the ITUC (included below).

From the AFL-CIO, a brief 2- paragraph response: “[Paris Climate Agreement Withdrawal a Failure of American Leadership](#)” (June 1) ; from the Service Employees' International Union, “[Trump's wrong decision on Paris won't stop working Americans from pushing for progress on climate change](#)” , and in his blog on June 2, Leo Gerard, United Steelworkers' International President states: “[Workers Want a Green Economy, Not a Black Environment](#)” . He refutes Trump's reference to serving Pittsburg not Paris by detailing the pollution problems caused by the steel mill and zinc plants in Pittsburg in the 1940's and '50's, and concludes: The U.S. “has an obligation to lead the world in combatting climate change. Great leaders don't shirk responsibility. ” The Labor Network for Sustainability [Facebook post of June 1](#) concludes with: “In taking this step, Trump has abandoned his opportunity to lead, and it is up to the U.S. labor movement to step up and provide support and leadership to communities, cities and states who are committed to solving the climate crisis; to ensure that workers are not left behind, and that we can all make a living on a living planet.”

Internationally, the [International Trade Union Confederation](#) reacted with: “The clear commitment by governments in the Paris Agreement to give workers, including those depending on the fossil fuel economy, a key role in developing a Just Transition strategy, will be undermined by the US announcement, which will also inhibit industrial and economic transformation in the US.” The ITUC statement continues with a statement from the Richard Trumka of the AFL-CIO , which interestingly does not name Donald Trump, but rather blames the decision on the advice of EPA head Scott Pruitt.

From UNI Global Union: “[Planet first, Trump last – UNI condemns Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate deal](#)” , which states that “President Trump is on the wrong side of history,” ... “This latest miscalculated act makes us even more determined than ever to work for people and planet.”

And on June 9, in advance of the G7 Environment Summit in Bologna: [Our jobs, Our planet](#) was released by the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), with the support of trade union confederations from G7 countries. The declaration states: “ Today, we reaffirm once again our commitment to support ambitious climate action and the Paris Climate Agreement. Pulling out of the Paris climate agreement from ambitious climate pathways equals abandoning a cleaner future powered by good jobs”.

In the U.K., the Greener Jobs Alliance reaction, [Reasons to be Fearful](#) , is written in the context of the British national elections, scheduled for June 8, and criticizes Prime Minister May for her weak criticism of the Trump decision. This theme is taken up by DeSmog UK, “[How the UK's Climate Science Deniers \(and Government\) Reacted to Trump's Paris Agreement Withdrawal](#)” (June 2) .

The Australian Council of Trade Unions, in response to the Australian government's reaffirmation of its own commitment to the Paris Agreement on June 2, released their position: "Commitment to Paris crucial for ensuring a Just Transition for workers".

Posted in [Environmental Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy, Donald Trump, international agreements, labour union policies, Paris Agreement, U.S. Climate Alliance](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Scrap the Infrastructure Bank, says CUPE

Posted on **May 30, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The federal government first announced its plans for an Infrastructure Bank in the Fall 2016 Economic Statement, and fleshed out an implementation schedule and funding in the [Budget released in March 2017](#) . The [Infrastructure Bank website here](#) describes: "If approved by Parliament, the Bank would invest \$35 billion from the federal government into transformative infrastructure projects. \$15 billion would be sourced from the over \$180 billion Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, including: \$5 billion for public transit systems; \$5 billion for trade and transportation corridors; and, \$5 billion for green infrastructure projects, including those that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, deliver clean air and safe water systems, and promote renewable power." It will function as an arms-length Crown corporation "and would work with provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous, and private sector investment partners to attract pension funds and other institutional investors to new revenue-generating infrastructure projects that are in the public interest." A May 13 [press release](#) from the responsible Minister of Infrastructure and Communities announces that the selection process for senior management positions has begun, and the goal is to launch the Bank in 2017. The enabling legislation is buried deep in the enormous [Bill C-44, the Budget Implementation Act](#) (as Division 18 of Part 4) . Bill C-44 is now in 2nd reading in the House of Commons, and the Finance Committee began a clause-by-clause review of the legislation in the week of May 29.

There is no shortage of criticism and critics of the Infrastructure Bank, from across the political spectrum. In "[Where Were They Going Without Ever Knowing the Way? Assessing the Risks and Opportunities of the Canada Infrastructure Bank](#)", (May 4) economists at the University of Ottawa Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy argue that the case for the infrastructure bank is weak since Canada doesn't yet have a comprehensive inventory of the status of existing infrastructure. (The [May 18 report](#) submitted to Canada's Climate Change Adaptation platform may answer some of those objections) .

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is leading the union charge of criticism , mostly on the grounds that the infrastructure bank encourages and enables privatization of public projects. Even before the March budget was delivered, CUPE Economist Toby Sanger wrote [Creating a Canadian infrastructure bank in the public interest](#) , published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. After the budget was delivered, CUPE's [initial response](#) was published in April . In May, CUPE compiled expert criticisms [here](#) , and on May 29, the union issued the call to "[Scrap bank of privatization, build infrastructure for Canadians](#)" . CUPE also presented a [detailed brief](#) to government committees in May, with ten points of criticism and recommendations for change so that public bridges, roads and waterways remain under public control.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Union of Public Employees \(CUPE\), Energy Investment, Green Infrastructure, Green Investment, Infrastructure Investment, labour union policies, privatization](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Still advocating for Environmental Rights as Human Rights. Evidence from Alberta, and innovative proposals for Nova Scotia

Posted on **May 29, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Pembina Institute recently compiled three case studies related to energy development in Alberta, in an effort to document the adverse effects on individuals, communities and regions that result from weak environmental laws or regulatory enforcement. The [Environmental Law Centre](#) in Alberta also published a [series of reports](#) in late 2016, including a module, [Substantive Environmental Rights](#), which discusses environmental rights as a human right. Since 2014, the [Blue Dot campaign](#), led by the David Suzuki Foundation and [Ecojustice](#), has been advocating for environmental rights to be enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

Now, from the Pembina Institute comes [The Right to a Healthy Environment: Documenting the need for environmental rights in Canada](#). It consists of: Case Study #1: [Individual impacts of intensive hydraulic fracturing activity in rural Alberta](#); #2 [Community impacts of air pollution in urban central Alberta](#) (related to coal-fired electricity plants), and #3 [Regional impacts of oilsands development in northern Alberta](#) (which examines the rights of First Nations).

In Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Environmental Rights Working Group of the [East Coast Environmental Law Association](#) released their proposed and innovative [Nova Scotia Environmental Bill of Rights](#) on April 21 2017. The bill states that the people “have a right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment”, and that the “primary responsibility” to protect and conserve that environment falls to the province. It also states that “there is a history of environmental racism in Nova Scotia that has disproportionately and negatively affected historically marginalized, vulnerable, and economically disadvantaged individuals, groups or communities, particularly Indigenous People and African Nova Scotians”. The bill is based on the Precautionary Principle, the Polluter Pays Principle, the Non-Regression Principle, the Intergenerational Equity Principle, and the Principle of Environmental Justice and Equity. Nova Scotians go to the polls in a general election on May 30; a guide to the policy positions of the Liberal, Conservative and NDP parties is [here](#) at the CBC website. According to the [Ecology Action Centre](#) in Halifax, the provincial NDP party has pledged to support an Environmental Bill of Rights .

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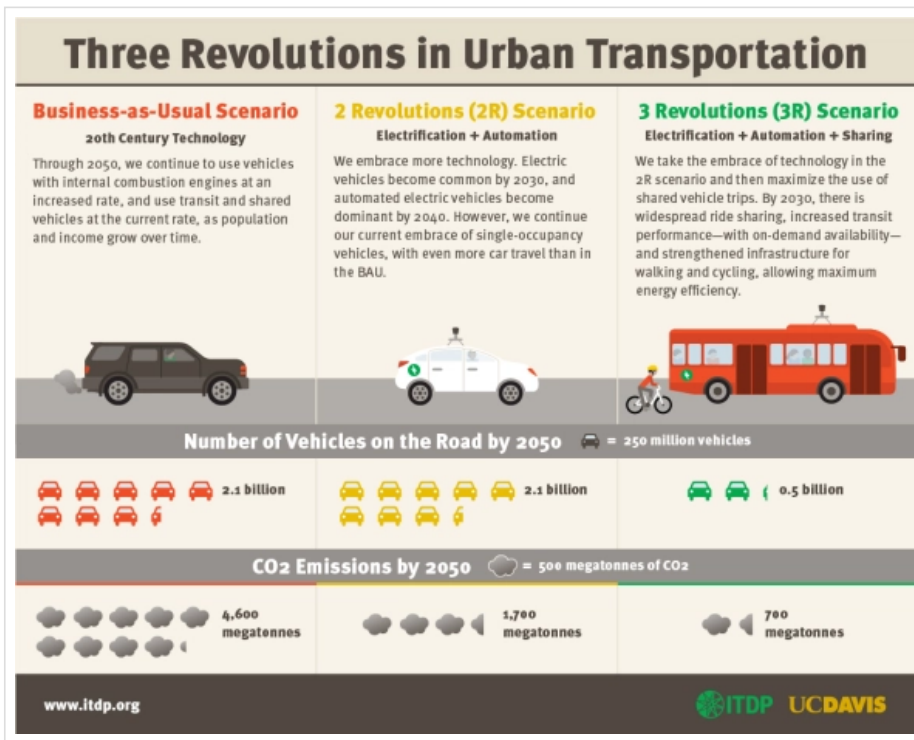
Catching up to the transportation revolution: Canada will have a national electric vehicle strategy by 2018

Posted on **May 29, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On May 26, Canada's Minister of Transportation [announced](#) that Canada will develop a national electric vehicle strategy by 2018 in consultation with provincial and territorial governments, as promised in the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change agreement](#). A national Advisory Group has already been established to develop options in five areas: vehicle supply, cost and benefits of ownership, infrastructure readiness, public awareness, and clean growth and clean jobs. The Advisory Group includes representatives from governments, industry, consumer and non-government organizations and academia. In November 2016, the Minister had released a vision document, [Transportation 2030: A Strategic Plan for the Future of Transportation in Canada](#), which included all modes of transportation – air, ships, trucks and trains, as well as a section on [Green and Innovative Transport](#). According to the government [press release](#) on May 26, transportation accounts for about 24 percent of Canada's emissions, mostly from cars and trucks. The [Pembina Institute states](#) that there are only 21,000 electric cars on the road in Canada in 2017.

Relevant views of the future: [Expect the Unexpected](#), a report from Carbon Tracker Initiative in February 2017, forecasts that electric vehicles will account for over two-thirds of the road transport market worldwide by 2050. "[The Transportation Revolution is Closer Than You Think](#)", a May 22 blog from Climate Works Foundation summarizes several recent studies. And a new report, [Three Revolutions in Urban Transportation](#) envisions three scenarios up to 2050, and states: "The world is on the cusp of three revolutions in transportation: vehicle electrification, automation, and widespread shared mobility (sharing of vehicle trips). Separately or together, these revolutions will fundamentally change urban transportation around the world over the next three decades." ...Our central finding is that while vehicle electrification and automation may produce potentially important benefits, without a corresponding shift toward shared mobility and greater use of transit and active transport, these two revolutions could significantly increase congestion and urban sprawl, while also increasing the likelihood of missing climate change targets. In contrast, by encouraging a large increase in trip sharing, transit use, and active transport through policies that support compact, mixed use development, cities worldwide could save an estimated \$5 trillion annually by 2050 while improving livability and increasing the likelihood of meeting climate change targets." [Three Revolutions](#) was published by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy and Sustainable Transportation Energy Pathways at UC Davis.



Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [ride sharing](#), [Transit Policy](#), [Transportation](#), [Urban Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IRENA forecasts 24 million renewable energy jobs worldwide by 2030

Posted on **May 24, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In its fourth annual report, *Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2017*, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) presents statistics on renewable energy employment, both by technology and in selected countries. For this 2017 edition, it includes statistics for large-scale hydropower, and also the results for a workplace survey in the Middle East and North Africa on barriers to women in clean energy labour markets. The worldwide statistics show that renewable energy employed 9.8 million people in 2016 – a 1.1% increase over 2015. Solar photovoltaic (PV) power was the largest employer, with 3.1 million jobs (an increase of 12% from 2015); global wind employed 1.2 million people (an increase of 7%); large hydro employed 1.5 million people, with around 60% of those in operation and maintenance. However, given that Canada is the world's 2nd biggest hydropower producer (after China), and that Canada is not included in the IRENA numbers, this figure could be questioned. China, Brazil, the United States, India, Japan and Germany accounted for most of the renewable energy jobs.

In general, IRENA reports that the rate of for renewable job growth slowed down in 2015 and 2016, with the exception of the solar PV and wind categories, which have more than doubled since 2012. In contrast, employment in solar heating and cooling and large hydropower has declined. Nevertheless, IRENA predicts that “the number of people working in the renewables sector could reach 24 million by 2030, more than offsetting fossil-fuel job losses and becoming a major economic driver around the world”. It also notes that “significant efforts in training and education is needed to provide the labour market with the required skills.”

The gender discrimination survey of labour markets in the Middle East and North Africa was conducted jointly by IRENA, the Clean Energy Business Council (CEBC) and Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF). The survey found that discrimination seems less pronounced in renewable energy employment than in the energy sector at large, but “challenges remain for women in regard to employment and promotion.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Gender Equality](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Hydropower](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar Industry](#), [wind energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to phase out Alberta’s Oil Sands by 2040, including Just Transition principles

Posted on **May 24, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Gordon Laxer, Professor emeritus at the University of Alberta and founding director of the Parkland Institute, has released a new report, *Act or be Acted Upon. The case for phasing out Alberta’s Sands*. He summarized the report in an article, “The case for phasing out Alberta’s Tar Sands”, which appeared in *Resilience* on May 23. The full report reflects the author’s long and deep understanding of the political economy of Alberta. His fairly brief discussion of Just Transition principles occurs at the end of the report.



— From Wikimedia, in the public domain. Syncrude Lake Mildred plant, Alberta.

Section 1 of *Act or be Acted Upon* discusses the market forces and policy environment in which the oil sands continues to operate – including a discussion of the cap on emissions put in place in the Alberta government’s Climate Leadership Plan, and the issues of divestment and stranded assets. Looking for lessons to be learned, Section 2 examines the international and Canadian progress in banning coal-fired power, with a detailed look at Ontario’s experience and Alberta’s current efforts. The author emphasizes the importance of the health-based arguments in Ontario’s campaign against coal, and suggests two possible motivators for an Alberta campaign against the oil sands: first, the under-reported health effects on residents and workers around Fort McMurray, the Peace River country, and the Aboriginal community of Fort Chipewyan, and second, the devastating wildfire in Fort McMurray in 2016.

Section 3: “Phasing out the oil sands”, calls for a permanent moratorium on new projects and a schedule for shutting down older projects that have paid off their capital costs- starting with the Suncor and Syncrude projects which are over 50 years old. Finally, the author calls for replacing the existing emissions cap under the Climate Leadership Plan with “an annually lowering GHG ceiling on all remaining Sands projects until they collectively reach zero by 2040.”

The final section of the Green Paper states: “It’s vital that phasing out the Sands be accompanied by a well-thought-out plan to provide workers and communities in the Sands with alternative work and retraining.... A just transition is the right thing to do, but it is also needed because if workers involved in the Sands don’t see a sure-fire alternative, they will fight hard to hang on to the Sands jobs they currently have, which will hamper the changes Alberta and Canada need to make.” Those looking for new approaches to Just Transition will have to hope that Professor Laxer writes another paper – in this one, he goes only so far as to endorse the Just Transition principles set out in the October 2016 paper from the UNFCCC, *Just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs* . To recap, those are: • Develop skills and retraining for green jobs • Develop green enterprises • Promote government programmes to help the unemployed find work • Provide social protection • Minimize hardship for workers and address their needs • Consult all stakeholders to plan for a just transition.

Recalling the huge federal and provincial government research subsidies in the 1960’s that launched the oil sands, Professor Laxer concludes with this: “The same governments now need to devote as much research money in today’s dollars to plan useful employment for Sands workers necessitated by the shift to a low-carbon future.”



Act or be Acted Upon. The case for phasing out Alberta’s Sands is a “Green Paper”, commissioned by the Alberta Institute of Agrologists and presented to them in March 2017. Related reading: Gordon Laxer’s book from 2015 , *After the Sands. Energy and Ecological Security for Canadians* ; and from the Parkland Institute: *Restructuring in Alberta’s oil industry: Internationals pull out, domestic majors double down* (April 2017); *Five things to know about Alberta’s oil sands emissions cap* (Feb. 2017); *Extracted Carbon: Re-examining Canada’s Contribution to Climate Change through Fossil Fuel Exports* (Jan. 2017).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Alberta Climate Leadership Plan](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A shorter work week can slow climate change in a post-growth economy

Posted on **May 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two recent articles have been added to the long-standing discussion of the “degrowth” movement – including about the potential of a shorter work week to make an impact on climate change. In relation to their recently published book, “*Just Cool It! The Climate Crisis and What we can do*”, David Suzuki and co-author Ian Hanington posted a blog item on May 11: “Long work hours don’t work for people or the planet”. The article describes “a seemingly endless cycle of toil and consumerism” which has been the norm throughout the 20th century, and says “It’s time to pause and consider better ways to live”. They reference the U.K. thinktank New Economics Foundation, which in 2010 proposed “[21 Hours – the case for a shorter work week](#)”, arguing that a shorter work week would address a number of interconnected problems: “overwork, unemployment, over-consumption, high carbon emissions, low well-being, entrenched inequalities, and the lack of time to live sustainably, to care for each other, and simply to enjoy life.” The Suzuki/Hanington article also refers to

“[Reducing work hours as a means of slowing climate change](#)” published by the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington D.C. in 2013. The author, David Rosnick, used economic modelling to argue that reducing average annual hours by just 0.5% per year through shorter workweeks and increased vacation would “likely mitigate one-quarter to one-half, if not more, of any warming which is not yet locked-in.”

Another recent article, “[How to kick the growth addiction](#)” was posted at The Great Transition Initiative website and re-posted by *Resilience* on May 17. The article is a transcript of an interview with ecological economist [Tim Jackson](#), the author of the classic book, *Prosperity Without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow*. It provides some insight into Jackson’s latest thinking about a “post-growth” economy. He states: “Can we imagine an economy in which enterprise provides outputs that enable people to flourish without destroying ecosystems; where work offers respect, motivation, and fulfillment to all; where investment is prudential in terms of securing long-term prosperity for all humanity; and where systems of borrowing, lending, and creating money are firmly rooted in long-term social value creation rather than in trading and speculation?” The second edition of *Prosperity without Growth* was released in 2017, discussing four pillars of a post-growth economy—enterprise as service, work as participation, investment as commitment, and money as a social good.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [degrowth](#), [hours of work](#), [Job Quality](#), [post growth economy](#), [shorter work week](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Buildings and Infrastructure: the state of Canadian adaptation to climate change

Posted on **May 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The National Infrastructure and Buildings Climate Change Adaptation State of Play Report was released on May 18, providing a gold mine of detail about the current Canadian system of climate change adaptation, and how it affects water infrastructure, transportation systems, telecommunications, and buildings (both private housing and commercial and multi-unit buildings such as hospitals and penitentiaries).



Reflecting the strong influence of insurance concerns in the report, it provides a catalogue, with damage estimates and many photographs, of recent natural disasters, including the Calgary and Toronto floods in 2013, the Fort McMurray fire, as far back as the Eastern Canada ice storms of 1998. The report identifies a wide range of barriers and problems to adaptation progress, but also provides case studies of innovative initiatives, and compiles a list of 62 “opportunities or next steps” for those identified as the key actors – all levels of government, private companies, professional associations, and citizens. Recommendations reflect an understanding of the need for more climate change training and professional education for engineers, consultants, and the insurance industry, and calls on private companies to emphasize and “Better integrate climate change considerations into organizational planning, decision-making and risk management processes.”

Appendices include an extensive bibliography; a table of national and provincial standards and regulations (e.g. for stormwater management); climate risks, and others. The final appendix presents case studies of innovative initiatives,

including Toronto Hydro Electrical Distribution Infrastructure Case Study ; British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Provincial Highway Infrastructure Case Study; City of Castlegar Stormwater Infrastructure Case Study (B.C.); Municipality of the District of Shelburne Wastewater Treatment Plant Case Study ; Elm Drive: Low Impact Development Demonstration Site Case Study (Toronto); Fraser Health's Climate Resilience and Adaptation Program (B.C.); Linking Climate with Water Infrastructure and Social Vulnerabilities Credit Valley Conservation (Ontario).

The report was prepared by Amec Foster Wheeler Environment & Infrastructure of Burlington, Ontario, in collaboration with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority of Mississauga, for the Infrastructure and Buildings Working Group (IBWG) – a joint enterprise of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss and Engineers Canada. It will be one of many inputs to the Infrastructure and Buildings Working Group of [Canada's Climate Change Adaptation Platform](#) in their discussions of their work plan for the next four years.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change impacts](#), [Disasters](#), [Flooding](#), [Fort McMurray](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Transportation Infrastructure](#), [water management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal government releases “Backstop” policies for provinces not already pricing carbon – Comment period open till June 30

Posted on **May 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As part of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, the federal government had outlined the [Pan-Canadian Approach to Pricing Carbon Pollution](#), a national carbon pricing system with mandatory benchmarks for each province. Most provinces, representing 97% of the population, already have, or are in the process of designing, their own systems – British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia (in process). On May 18, the Government of Canada addressed the remaining 3% – most notably in the province of Saskatchewan – with the release of its [Technical Paper on the Federal Carbon Pricing Backstop](#).

The “Backstop” refers to the fact that the policies will only apply to provinces that do not have a carbon pricing system of their own in place by 2018. The proposal is composed of two parts: a levy on fossil fuels, and a cap and trade system, patterned after Alberta's output-based allocation system, to price pollution from industry. The levy system would include solid, liquid and gaseous fossil fuels: gasoline, diesel fuel, natural gas, coal and coke – and notably, aviation fuel. Rates would initially be set for 2018 to 2022, progressing with \$10 per tonne increments annually from \$10 per tonne of CO₂-equivalent (CO₂e) in 2018 to \$50 per tonne in 2022. The federal commits to return direct revenues from the carbon levy to the jurisdiction of origin, but there is flexibility about how the provinces can redirect that revenue.

UPDATE: The EcoFiscal Commission released a helpful blog post on May 24: [Explaining Output-Based Allocations \(OBAs\)](#), with a promise of a further explainer about the pitfalls of OBAs, to be released soon.

Public comments about the proposals are accepted until June 30, 2017, at Carbonpricing-tarificationcarbone@canada.ca and will be used to design the final carbon system and enabling legislation and regulations. A sampling of reaction (below) gives the government high marks for protecting Canadian competitiveness while reducing emissions.

“Is Canada's carbon-pricing policy striking the right balance?” (May 18) in the *Globe and Mail* is a general affirmation of the federal proposals by three experts from varied points of view: Christopher Ragan (Chair of the Ecofiscal Commission), Peter Robinson (CEO of the David Suzuki Foundation), and Steve Williams (CEO of Suncor Energy). A business response, in a press release from TD Economics, covers similar ground: “[Feds Stick to their carbon-pricing guns](#)” (May 18). It states: “Bottom Line: Carbon pricing is the most efficient way of reducing emissions, and today's announcement should help Canada achieve meaningful emissions reductions. However, follow-through post-2022 will be crucial to achieving the 2030 target. The details of the carbon pricing backstop strike a good balance, providing clear incentives for emissions reduction while taking competitiveness issues into account, recognizing that a large industrial base cannot be “turned on a dime” and will continue to face competition from non-carbon priced jurisdictions.”

From environmental advocacy groups : In [“Five things to know about Ottawa’s carbon pricing plan”](#) , Clean Energy Canada highlights the similarities of the Alberta and Saskatchewan economies, and commends the output-based credit system, saying “there’s no question that a made-in-Alberta approach will also fit Saskatchewan’s economy very well.” Clean Energy notes that the open question of distribution of revenues will cause much future debate, as will working out the details of the allocations for heavy industry, due by 2019.

The Pembina Institute response, [“Ottawa taking carbon pricing cues from provinces”](#) also commends the output-based allocation system, and concludes: “It’s worth taking a moment to celebrate how far we’ve come as a country – in large part due to the vision and ambition of provincial premiers – and to reflect on how to maintain this momentum despite choppy international waters.”

The elephant in the room that everyone is talking about is the anticipated court challenge from the government of Saskatchewan, whose Premier Brad Wall has stated that the federal government lacks the constitutional authority to enact a federal carbon price, and who likened the Technical paper to “a ransom note.” The *Globe and Mail* summarizes the tension in [“Ottawa, Saskatchewan brace for battle over carbon pricing”](#) . The Pembina Institute has published a [Q & A interview](#) with Professor Nathalie Chalifour of the University of Ottawa, who also wrote [“The feds have every legal right to set a carbon price”](#) in October 2016 in *iPolitics* .

Saskatchewan’s preferred route to emissions reduction was clearly laid out in its [White Paper on Climate Change](#) released in October 2016, which states: “We should be focusing our efforts on innovation and adaptation, not taxation” – “innovation” largely meaning Saskatchewan’s investment in carbon capture and storage. And while [CBC reports](#) that Saskatchewan environmental groups are backing the federal Technical paper, there is widespread support for the Premier’s opposition. According to a [CBC report in March](#), the Saskatchewan Taxpayers Federation, the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association, and the United Steelworkers Local 5890, sent Prime Minister Trudeau a joint letter outlining how a federal carbon tax would hurt Western Canada. In a CBC report on May 19, [‘You can’t buy a Prius and move dirt’: Critics say carbon tax will punish industry](#) , those two industry groups make the case that “there aren’t green alternatives for building roads, hauling trailers and working with heavy machinery.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Bold recommendations from the Expert Panel on Modernization of the National Energy Board – but experts call for more

Posted on **May 16, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In November 2016,

Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources commissioned an 5-person Expert Panel on the Modernization of the National Energy Board , mandated “ to position the NEB as a modern, efficient, and effective energy regulator and regain public trust”. After public hearings and submissions, the results are in, in the form of 26 recommendations released on May 15, in their report: [Forward, Together: Enabling Canada’s Clean, Safe, and Secure Energy Future](#) . Chief among the recommendations: replace the current Board with a new organization called the Canadian Energy Transmission

Commission, to be based in Ottawa rather than Calgary, with radically increased scale and scope of stakeholder engagement, and especially with an increased role for Indigenous people. The report also calls for a new, independent Canadian Energy Information Agency to provide energy data, information, and analysis. The Panel lays out a detailed vision of a new process, based on 5 core principles of: Living the Nation-to-Nation Relationship with Indigenous Peoples; Alignment of Regulatory Activities to National Policy Goals; Transparency of Decision-Making & Restoring Confidence ; Public Engagement Throughout the Lifecycle; and Regulatory Efficiency and Effectiveness.

For summaries and a range of immediate response to the Panel's recommendations, see : [“Trudeau- appointed panel recommends replacement of the National Energy Board”](#) in the *National Observer* , which provides summary, reaction, and background based on its ground-breaking, sustained investigations into the NEB process; [“Scrap NEB and replace it with 2 separate agencies, expert panel recommends”](#) from CBC Calgary, with a sense of Alberta's reaction; [“National Energy Board needs major overhaul, Panel says”](#) in the *Globe and Mail*, which seems to greet the news with a yawn.

For substantive response, see [“NEB Modernization Panel report: The good, the workable and the ugly”](#) from West Coast Environmental Law, which states: “environmental lawyers say that the report completely misses the mark when it comes to how projects like oil pipelines should be assessed, and disagree with the Panel's approach to determining whether individual energy projects are in the national interest.”

The [“Statement by Environmental Defence's Patrick DeRochie on the report from the Expert Panel on National Energy Board Modernization”](#) says: “the Panel's proposal for the Federal Cabinet to determine whether a project is in the national interest before it undergoes an environmental assessment is problematic. Responsibility for environmental assessments must be removed from the energy regulator and be completed before a Cabinet decision.” Environmental Defence also states that the NEB's review of the Energy East pipeline must be put on hold until NEB modernization is complete.

From DeSmog Canada, [“Trudeau promised to fix the National Energy Board. Here's what his Panel Recommends”](#) summarizes the contents. In [“Will a Repackaged National Energy Board Be Able to Meet Canada's 21st Century Challenges?”](#) Chris Tollefson of the Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation frames the report in its larger context, and states: “What the Expert Panel fails to address, however, is the need fundamentally to reform the *assessment* that major energy projects must undergo before we, as a society, allow them to proceed. These assessments must be capable of supporting informed, transparent and defensible social choices about future development. This is quite different from regulatory processes that are principally aimed at mitigating anticipated harms. where this Expert Panel has failed, and where the *CEAA, 2012 Expert Report* adds enduring value, is in confronting the legitimacy crisis that pervades decision making around fossil fuel infrastructure development. ”

From the Pembina Institute: [“NEB Expert Panel report two steps forward, one step back on climate”](#) : “The Expert Panel's recommendations are only as good as the federal government's next steps. It's up to Prime Minister Trudeau and his Cabinet to seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform Canada's energy project review landscape by ensuring NEB modernization works in sync with other elements of the federal environmental law reform process. ... now is the time to outline a credible pathway that builds upon recommendations from the EA and NEB expert panels to ensure this outcome is achieved.”

A public comment period on the Expert Panel report is open until June 14th; click [here](#) to participate in French or English. You can read research reports and position papers already submitted to the Expert Panel [here](#). The submissions already received are not available – only Panel-generated summaries of the engagement sessions, which are [here](#).

What next for the recommendations of this Expert Panel, and the other regulatory reviews in process (for example, the [Report of the Expert Panel on Environmental Assessment](#) , released on April 5)? According to the Natural Resources Canada [press release](#): “Over the next few months, the Government of Canada will review the expert panel's report in depth along with the reports from the other three environmental and regulatory reviews to inform the development of next steps.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act](#), [Energy policy](#), [Environmental regulation](#), [National Energy Board](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal government about to release its proposals for promised national carbon pricing system as California debates radical changes to its cap-and-trade program

Posted on **May 15, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In advance of a consultation paper by the federal government, [expected to be released](#) in the week of May 15, the Pembina Institute released a Backgrounder report , *Putting a price on carbon pollution across Canada* . The Pembina report outlines the current federal and provincial carbon pricing policies in Canada, and makes recommendations for the national benchmark plan promised by 2018. Recommendations include that any benchmark should at least provide guidance on treatment of Export Import Trade Exposed sectors and be designed to minimize carbon leakage and competitiveness impacts; and stipulate that cap-and-trade systems must have a cap decline rate in line with a 30% reduction below 2005 levels by 2030. Pembina places emphasis on the need for a 2020 carbon pricing review, as well as frequent carbon pricing and climate policy reviews to ensure that Canada meets its obligations under the Paris Agreement.

A briefer paper on carbon pricing, also released in May, also summarizes the existing provincial carbon pricing plans – but from a right-wing point of view. From the Fraser Institute: *Poor Implementation undermines Carbon Tax efficiency in Canada* .

Also on the topic of carbon pricing, Pembina posted a [blog](#) on May 11 “Time for Premier Brad Wall to focus on carbon price implementation” , in which Nathalie Chalifour, a Professor of Law at University of Ottawa, explains her opinion that the federal government is within its constitutional authority to impose a carbon pricing mechanism on the provinces, despite Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall’s [recently stated opinion](#) to the contrary.

Meanwhile, as reported in the *National Observer* (May 4) , [“California tables new cap-and-trade plan that jumps ahead of Quebec and Ontario”](#) . Quebec and California have a linked carbon credit market that expires at the end of 2020, and Ontario’s cap and trade plan is schedule to link to the California–Quebec system in 2018. Continued partnership with California will demand that those provinces raise their minimum price per tonne of carbon and abolish offsets, among other changes outlined in the bill currently before the California state Senate . For a full discussion of the proposed legislation, read [“California is about to revolutionize climate policy ... again”](#) (May 3) in *Vox*. Author David Roberts states: “ The changes that SB 775 proposes for the state’s carbon trading program are dramatic — and, to my eyes, amazingly thoughtful. I know some environmental groups have reservations (on which more later), but in my opinion, if it passes in anything close to its current form, it will represent the most important advance in carbon-pricing policy in the US in a decade. Maybe ever.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [California](#), [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Ontario](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Why U.S. unions supported the Washington March for Climate, Jobs and Justice

Posted on **May 15, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The May 5th Newsletter of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy provides an early assessment of “[Why U.S. unions marched for the climate](#)”. The article lists some of the many unions who marched in Washington D.C. on April 29 in the March for Climate, Jobs and Justice, highlighting the unique perspective of the National Nurses Union and 1199 SEIU, who see the public health effects of climate change in their daily work. TUED also mentions a meeting convened by Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis and hosted by the American Postal Workers Union, “bringing together roughly 30 labor, community and social movement activists and organizers, to reflect on possibilities for building on the Canadian [Leap Manifesto](#) framework to advance the struggle for energy democracy and just transition in the U.S. context.”

Finally, the TUED article credits the [Labor Network for Sustainability \(LNS\)](#) with much of the work in building participation in the March. The latest LNS newsletter reports that over a dozen unions and more than 3000 members marched in Washington, including 100 members from AFSCME’s local DC37 in New York. The newsletter also describes marches on the West Coast, where climate change was included in the May 1 messages. The [LNS Facebook page](#) has more details and photos.

A [joint press release](#) (April 26) includes brief statements from each of the members of the labour steering committee for the march: Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Communications Workers of America (CWA), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) (including the local from the EPA), and BlueGreen Alliance.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Labor Network for Sustainability \(LNS\)](#), [labour union policies](#), [Leap Manifesto](#), [People’s Climate March](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New green jobs policy adopted at the Canadian Labour Congress Convention-Updated with link to Policy document

Posted on **May 15, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The 28th Constitutional [Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress](#) was held in Toronto from May 8 to 12, 2017 under the theme “Together for a Fair Future”. The agenda was packed – including equity issues, younger workers, putting an

end to precarious work, and the fight to implement a \$15 minimum wage. Executive officers were elected, and Hassan Yussuff was acclaimed as President for a second mandate – all serving from 2017 to 2020. On May 10th, the Convention addressed the issue of climate change, and heard from a Green Jobs Panel, consisting of Sharan Burrow of the ITUC, Sheila Watt-Cloutier from Inuit Circumpolar Council, Matt Wayland of the IBEW, and Patrick Rondeau of the FTQ, with Rick Smith of the Broadbent Institute moderating. Although no documents have been posted to the CLC website yet, a [Unifor press release](#) states: "... As one of the greatest challenges facing workers in Canada the Convention adopted a plan, outlined in the Green Jobs for a Fair Future policy, to guide the country through a necessary just transition to a green economy. Unifor's delegation voted overwhelmingly to support the position paper and delegates pledged to take action for just transition...The policy paper calls on the CLC to lobby and work towards green jobs in home and building retrofits, expand public transit, ensure responsible resource development, and at the core, just transition for workers whose lives are already dramatically changed by climate change."

Updated on May 29: By permission of the CLC, the 20-page policy statement is available [here](#) at the ACW Digital Library. It lays out detailed proposals and establishes a Climate Change Task Force to carry the initiatives forward until 2020, with extensive lobbying for policy changes at the federal government level. Proposals include expansion of renewable energy, building retrofits, expanded transportation and transit infrastructure, and labour market policies to promote a Just Transition for workers and communities who are affected by the shift from oil and gas to clean energy. The document also announces an initiative for the CLC and local labour councils to create and train a network of environmental representatives at the workplace level, based on the occupational health and safety model.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [environmental representatives](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Union calls for a legal responsibility on employers to address a crisis in U.K. air pollution

Posted on **May 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council (BWTUC) is the Southwest London arm of the Trades Union Congress and a founding supporter of the Greener Jobs Alliance. The BWTUC has undertaken [a campaign against toxic air](#), and argues that employers are the root cause of diesel emissions – from their transport fleets as well as the individual journeys to and from work made by workers. As part of its campaign against what it calls the “number one public health issue”, BWTUC will help local unions to carry out monitoring of pollution levels where they work, and is also producing online training modules which will be available at the [Greener Jobs Alliance website](#) after a May 27 launch. Finally, it is advocating for a Clean Air Act, as stated in the [Greener Jobs Alliance Top 10 Election Demands](#) : #10: “ Introduce a Clean Air Act to tackle air pollution once and for all. Place a clear legal responsibility on employers and businesses to address air quality and develop a network of low emission zones in pollution hot spots.”

The U.K. government has addressed the issue of roadside air pollution in [Improving air quality in the UK: tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities: Draft UK Air Quality Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide](#) (May 2017). Unlike the BWTUC, the government clearly sees pollution as an individual, not employer, responsibility. “The UK Government is clear that any action to improve air quality must not be done at the expense of local businesses and residents. Therefore local authorities must work closely with local people to create an approach which works for them. Everyone has a role to play in helping to

address NOx by considering how they can reduce emissions through their day-to-day activities, for example by choosing cleaner vehicles.” The government does propose incentives for low carbon fuel vehicle fleets, and for clean busses for commuting, but the plan is controversial and inadequate – see “UK’s new air pollution plan dismissed as ‘weak’ and ‘woefully inadequate’” and “Air pollution plan: sacrificing the nation’s health to save an election campaign”, both of which appeared in *The Guardian* on May 5.

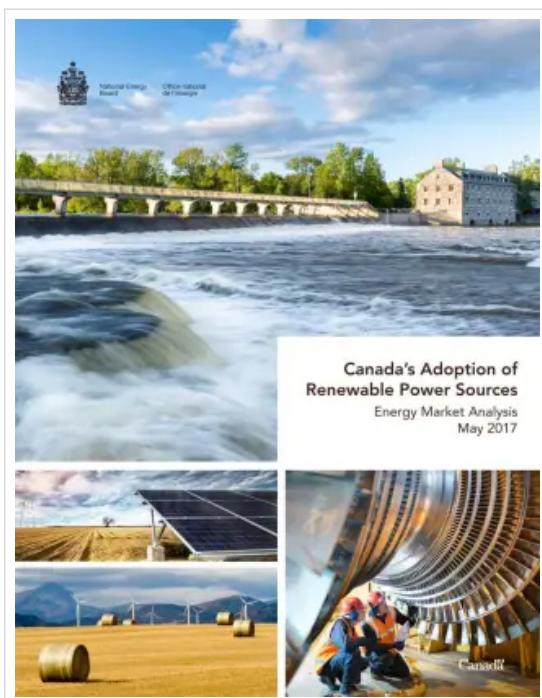


According to a [BWTUC press release](#), the people of Battersea/Wandsworth have a lot at stake: “In 2016 Putney High St had the dubious distinction of being the most polluted road in the whole of Europe. By law hourly levels of Nitrogen Dioxide must not exceed 200 micrograms per cubic metre more than 18 times in one year. In fact, the hourly limit was exceeded over 1,200 times in 2016. In January 2017 the standard was breached 11 times in one day.” “In April, the Wandsworth Guardian quoted a report that showed 29 schools in the borough located in areas exceeding the safe legal limit.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [diesel cars](#), [labour union policies](#), [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

66% of Canada’s energy in 2015 came from renewable sources, and other facts

Posted on **May 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A Canadian Press story in early May highlighted that renewable energy accounted for 66% of energy generated in Canada in 2015, and appeared widely – for example, in the *Globe and Mail* (May 2) and the *Toronto Star*. The information behind

the news was drawn from [Canada's Adoption of Renewable Power Sources – Energy Market Analysis May 2017](#) by the National Energy Board , which provides much more detail about each type of renewable energy, and notes the factors influencing their adoption rates (including costs, technological improvement, environmental considerations, and regulatory issues). The NEB also compares Canada to other countries, and perhaps most interestingly, includes a section on [Emerging Technologies](#) , which highlights tidal power, off-shore wind, and geothermal. Canada has no existing production capacity for either off-shore wind or geothermal, although the report outlines proposed developments.

Some highlights from the [Canada's Adoption of Renewable Power Sources](#): the 2015 proportion of 66% renewables in our energy mix is an increase from 60% in 2005; only five countries (Norway, New Zealand, Brazil, Austria, and Denmark) produce a similar or larger share of electricity from renewable sources; China leads the world in total hydropower production – Canada is second; over 98% of Canada's solar power generation capacity is located in Ontario.

Other useful NEB publications: [Canada's Renewable Power Landscape](#) (October 2016), which documents historical growth rates for renewable power in Canada, and each province and territory, and for the latest in energy projections, see [Canada's Energy Future 2016: Update – Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2040](#) . These projections, which include fossil fuels as well as renewables, were published in October 2016 and therefore don't reflect the policies of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Geothermal energy](#), [Hydropower](#), [Offshore Wind](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [solar](#), [tidal energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trends in international climate legislation since the Paris Agreement, built on a new public database

Posted on **May 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A [new database](#) , launched in May, compiles national climate change legislation for 164 countries in the world, as well as an integrated climate litigation database for 25 countries, including Canada. [U.S. litigation is available](#) in a separate database hosted by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University . The entire project is the work of the Grantham Institute at the London School of Economics and the Sabin Center.

The database was the foundation of a new report, [Global Trends in Climate Change Legislation and Litigation 2017](#) , the sixth in a series that began in 2010. The report highlights the global stock of climate laws, the pace of law-making, the focus of legislation, and climate legislation in least developed countries . The second part of the report, for the first time ever, examines trends in litigation , describing the number of climate litigation cases in 25 jurisdictions, the objectives of the cases, who the plaintiffs and defendants were , and the outcomes of litigation so far. A press release states: “These developments in climate legislation and policies since Paris should be taken in context. The 14 new laws and 33 policies add to a stock of more than 1,200 climate change or climate change-relevant laws worldwide: a twentyfold increase in the number of climate laws and policies over 20 years when compared with 1997 when there were just 60 such laws in place. ... Most countries now have the legal basis on which further action can build.” The [summary of the report](#) by [The Guardian](#) highlights this optimistic note.

The report is the work of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, and the Sabin Center on Climate Change Law at the Columbia Law School, with the support of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the British Academy. It was launched at the [UNFCCC meetings in Bonn](#) on May 9.

The database is available to the public, and “users are welcome to download, save, or distribute the results electronically or in any other format, without written permission of the authors.” Acknowledging that the database is not yet comprehensive, contributions are also invited: “Please send your comments (attaching supporting documents if possible) to: gri.cgl@lse.ac.uk.”

Net-Zero and Net-Positive Green Building: Vancouver's New Policy, and a Pilot Project in Waterloo, Ontario

Posted on **May 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On May 1, the Green Building Policy for Rezoning took effect in the city of Vancouver, mandating that new commercial and multi-unit residential buildings be built to standards modeled after the international [Passive House standards](#), with airtight design, exceptional insulation, and good ventilation. The Policy, originally approved in November 2016, is part of Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan and its [Zero Emissions Building Plan](#). Matt Horne, the city's Climate Policy Manager, writes in an [OpEd in the Vancouver Sun](#) that the new rules will result in buildings which emit half as much carbon pollution, with slightly lower construction and operating costs. Vancouver's new rezoning policy is in line with the province-wide standard for energy efficiency in new construction, the [B.C. Energy Step Code](#), which came into force in April, 2017 in an effort to upgrade municipal building codes across the province.



The Pembina Institute praises Vancouver's new Rezoning policy and its benefits for workers in "[Vancouver's green buildings policy is good news for homeowners and renters](#)": "Constructing new energy-efficient homes and offices will be a boon to Vancouver's green building sector. In B.C., the sector already employs over 23,000 people, and the industry is ready to respond to increased demand. New trades training is being offered by such institutions as the British Columbia Institute of Technology, which recently launched a new hands-on High-Performance Building Lab. Passive House Canada now trains hundreds of people a year, including designers, builders, and government staff. Energy-efficient buildings are one of B.C.'s biggest opportunities for real and lasting job creation." A February article in the *Globe and Mail*, "[The Economic Case for Retrofitting Buildings](#)" echos this "ready to work" idea in the context of retrofitting: "we have the know-how and technology to be a key player in meeting a steep challenge. Building efficiency isn't just low hanging fruit, it's the fruit that's ripened and ready to fall into our lap."

Evolv1 is a net positive building project in Waterloo Ontario, being described as a “game-changer”, “groundbreaking”, and “iconic”. Evolv1 will generate more energy than it needs for its own operation from 1.5 acres of solar panels on the roof and carport, allowing it to power the building’s 14 electric vehicle charging stations and sell any remaining excess to the provincial electricity grid. The building is also aiming for LEED Platinum certification through the use of triple-glazed glass, very high levels of insulation, digitally-controlled LED lighting with occupancy and light level sensors, natural light, a three-storey green wall to improve air quality, and a geo-exchange system that extracts heat from the ground for winter heating and returns excess heat to the ground in the summer. Finally, the building will have direct access to the city’s light rail transit system to reduce the environmental impact of commuters. Completion is scheduled for 2018. The project is being built by Cora Group construction, in partnership with Sustainable Waterloo Region and the University of Waterloo, as well as anchor tenant, consultants EY Canada. The [Cora Group website](#) provides illustrations.

Evolv1 was highlighted in the *Waterloo Region Record* in “An office building so green it actually produces energy” (Feb. 17), and in the [May issue](#) of the Natural Resources Canada Newsletter, *Heads-Up*. Sustainable Waterloo released its own press releases about the project: “Raising the Standard” , and a [description of the vision](#) for the project.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [energy efficiency](#), [green buildings](#), [LEED](#), [net positive building](#), [passive house](#), [retrofitting](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [Vancouver](#), [Waterloo Ontario](#), [zero emissions building](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Another federal government consultation: Canada’s Energy Future

Posted on [May 2, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources quietly launched a new consultation process on April 21, called Generation Energy, building on the previous engagement on clean technology in the natural resources sector . (The [report from the clean technology process](#) was released in December 2016). Now, Canadians are being invited to share their ideas about how Canada should make, move, and use energy in the future – a very broad scope. Participation is through a web portal at <http://www.generationenergy.ca/> which accepts submissions and allows comments, with a Forum of experts and stakeholders to discuss the ideas and themes generated in October.

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After the March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate: What next?

Posted on [May 2, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



— From Edmonton, photo by Abdul Malik, posted on People's Climate Movement Facebook page

The March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate drew thousands to Washington D.C., and cities around the world, including communities across Canada. Coverage in Canada, so far, seems limited to brief overviews – see the [CBC](#) and [here](#) and the [Energy Mix](#). For the most complete photos and posts from across Canada, as well as video from Washington, go to the [People's Climate Movement Canada Facebook page](#) – where the group is hosting a conference call on May 3 for a discussion of “what's next?”.

A report in [Vox](#) brings together photos and video of the Washington crowds, while noting that, compared to the Science March on April 22, the Climate March was “more explicitly anti-Trump, more intersectional, and more social justice oriented.” Organizers are quoted as claiming more than 150,000 people attended, including 43 labor union buses, indigenous people and communities of color, and a big faith and youth contingent. Other U.S. reports are at [Think Progress](#) ; [Inside Climate News](#) , and mainstream media, which generally focussed on crowd estimates and photos of “the best signs”: “Climate March draws thousands of Protesters Alarmed by Trump's Environmental Agenda” in the *New York Times* , and the *Washington Post* report , which was republished in the *Toronto Star* .

As for that obvious question of “what's next?”, read “It can't just be a march it has to be a movement. What's next for climate activists” (April 30) in the *Washington Post* or “The Climate March's Big Tent Strategy Draws a Big Crowd: But will it make a difference?” in *The Atlantic* (Apr. 30), which states: “Whether the protest will eventually result in political success is an open question. Due to the hyperpolarized politics of climate change, it may ultimately depend on other factors—whether the Democratic Party can harmonize a political message, for instance. And the lack of any one unifying climate policy may prove troublesome when it comes time for the movement's leaders to govern again.

But protests are not only about legislative success. ...Rather it is for people to register their mass discontent and mobilize around a movement's shared goals. For the moment, the People's Climate Movement seems to have accomplished that. ”



— From Sudbury Ontario Climate March, posted at People's Climate March Facebook page

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [People's Climate March](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Solar Job Training report and growth forecasts for solar and wind energy

Posted on **May 1, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Solar job growth is strong in the U.S., according to *The Solar Training and Hiring Insights report* , released by the Solar Training Network , a program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Initiative and administered by The Solar Foundation. The report aggregates data from several sources, including an extensive survey of more than 400 solar installers, as well as smaller case studies and in-depth interviews with dozens of solar employers, trainers, and workforce development boards in the U.S. Amongst the findings: Solar employers expect to add 26,258 positions in 2017, a 10% growth in the workforce; the largest growth in the industry has occurred in installation, with 93,199 installation-related jobs added between 2010 and 2016; average wage range for an inexperienced, new installer was \$10 – \$23, progressing to \$20 – \$48 for a crew-leader; 77% of industry respondents did not have formal mentorship or apprenticeship programs.

The report also provides insight into the prevalence and structure of in-house training programs, and employer attitudes to such issues as the importance of experience and certification in hiring decisions.

The *2016 U.S. Wind Industry Annual Market Report*, released on April 19th by the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), states that wind power added jobs at a rate more nine times greater than the overall economy in 2016; domestic wind-related manufacturing jobs grew 17% to over 25,000 factory jobs in the U.S. According to the Association spokesman, "bigger, better technology enables new wind turbines to generate 50 percent more electricity than those built in 2009 and at 66 percent lower cost ... With stable policy in place, we're on the path to reliably supply 10 percent of U.S. electricity by 2020." Further, "The average modern wind turbine installed here in the U.S. creates 44 years of full-time employment over its lifetime." The report also emphasizes the importance of jobs and revenues to rural economies, where wind projects are concentrated. Other reports re wind energy: also from the AWEA, a white paper, *Wind brings jobs and economic development to all 50 states* ; from Navigant Consulting, *Economic Development Impacts of Wind Projects* released in March 2017 states that "the U.S. wind industry will drive over \$85 billion in economic activity over the next four years while wind-related employment will grow to reach 248,000 jobs in all 50 states in 2020." The Navigant forecasts measure the impact of the extension of the Production Tax Credit (PTC) programs in the U.S.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Green Jobs](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [Training](#), [wind energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ILO report about Indigenous People's role in the green economy; Canadian First Nations and clean energy

Posted on **May 1, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An April report released by the ILO, *Indigenous peoples and climate change: From victims to change agents through Decent Work* rejects the characterization of Indigenous people as "victims". The report states that indigenous peoples, numbering over 370 million worldwide , "are at the vanguard of running modern green economies", and "if they have access to decent work opportunities; if they are empowered to participate in decision making; if their rights are protected;

and if policies address their social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities while honing their positive potential as partners, workers, entrepreneurs and innovators, indigenous peoples will become empowered agents of change who can play a vital role in spurring green growth and combating climate change.”

As if to prove the points of the ILO report, [a press release](#) on April 24 announced the results of a survey conducted by the University of Victoria Environmental Studies for B.C. First Nations Clean Energy Working Group and [Clean Energy B.C.](#) . *First Nations and Renewable Energy Development in British Columbia* reports the results of a survey conducted from October 2016 to February 2017, showing that 47% of the 105 First Nations respondents are involved in the clean energy industry in some way – from ownership to receiving royalties. There are currently 78 operating projects, (in which they have invested over \$35million), plus 49 projects under development and an additional 249 projects that they want to build, ranging from wind farms to solar installations to run of river power generation. 61% of First Nation respondents said the biggest barrier for their projects is the lack of opportunity to sell power to B.C. Hydro, because the utility has stopped buying power from independent producers, projecting a surplus of power from the controversial Site C dam. (DeSmog Canada compiles the latest news and research about the Site C project [here](#).)

First Nations across Canada are also active investors in green energy, according an article in the *Toronto Star* April 26, “[Six Nations of Grand River lead the charge on green energy](#)” . The article mentions projects in Quebec and Manitoba, and highlights the Ontario [Six Nations of the Grand River](#) solar and wind projects as exemplary – most recently, the [Oneida Business Park](#) in Ohsweken, Southwestern Ontario, which was awarded Aboriginal Project of the year by the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association in summer 2016.



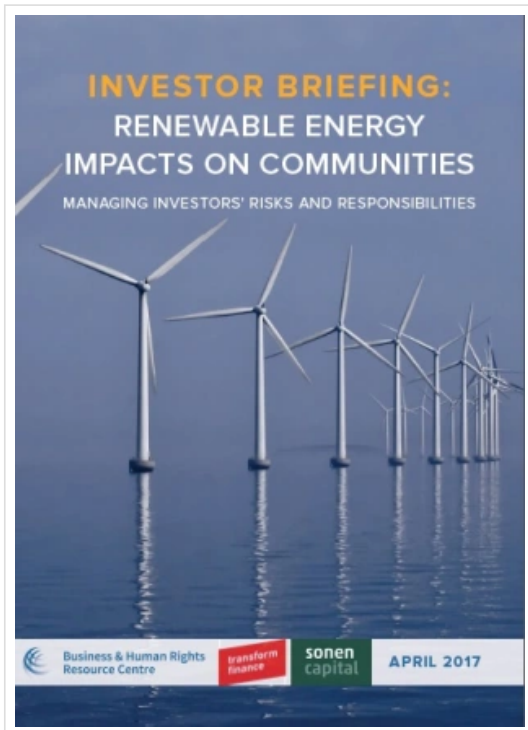
Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation (SNGRDC) manages the Six Nations’ economic interests in 17 renewable energy projects and numerous economic development opportunities. It employs over 100 people. SNGRDC’s current green energy portfolio is capable of producing over 900 MW of renewable energy through its direct or indirect involvement in 10 solar, 6 wind and one hydroelectric project(s). Consultation is currently underway about [another investment in a solar project](#) near the now-decommissioned Nanticoke coal-burning power plant – which will consist of 175,000 to 210,000 solar photovoltaic panels on 4 parcels of land either owned or leased by Ontario Power Generation. The Grand River Employment and Training (GREAT) administration is involved to promote employment of First Nations workers in the construction phase.

In January 2016, the Whitesand First Nation [also received an OSEA award](#) for their sustained efforts to launch a 3.64 MW combined heat and power biomass plant, which will provide electricity to three communities of the Far-north.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [First Nations](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [Site C Dam](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Case studies of Community and human rights impacts of Renewable energy companies, and a ranking of multinationals in Ag/Food, Apparel and Mining

Posted on [April 26, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



An April 2017 report from the London-based advocacy group, [Business and Human Rights Resource Centre](#) asks, “What adverse impacts can renewable energy projects have on communities around the world?” *Renewable Energy investor briefing: Managing risks & responsibilities for impacts on local communities* (April 2017) is directed at financial and investment professionals who are considering investment in renewable energy projects- in this report, comprised of wind and small-to-medium hydro, but excluding solar . It starts from the premise that Just Transition principles are essential, then explains the international human rights responsibilities of companies. The report also provides examples of the kinds of questions that should be asked in shareholder meetings and before investment decisions are made, and gives examples of best practice policies – for example, inclusion of community benefits agreements. One of the main issues it discusses is the [right to free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples](#), which is an ongoing topic monitored by the BHRRC.

The report provides case studies, including six positive examples, including: the [Ixtepec community-owned wind project in Mexico](#); the [Jeffreys Bay Wind Farm in South Africa](#); and a [cluster of wind projects in Jämtland, Sweden](#), for which OECD guidelines are being used in negotiations between the company and affected Indigenous people. The full suite of case studies is presented in a [searchable database](#) which allows searching by company name, issue, country, and more. There are no Canadian projects included in the 2017 report, although a [profile of Ontario Power Generation](#) is available as part of the Centre’s [ongoing database](#) of human rights in the energy sector .

In March 2017, the Centre also launched an updated and expanded [Corporate Human Rights Benchmark](#) website , which ranked 98 of the world’s largest publicly traded companies, from the Agriculture, Apparel, and Extractive industries. The Benchmark is intended to drive a “race to the top” and is directed at business, government, and “ to empower civil society, workers, communities, customers, and the media with better public information to reward, encourage, and promote human rights advances by companies and make well-informed choices about which companies to engage with.” A 50 page summary report is [here](#) . There are six thematic measurement categories, including “ Company Performance: Human Rights Practices” which includes rankings related to living wage, freedom of association and right to bargain collectively, health and safety, amongst others.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Agriculture](#), [Apparel Industry](#), [Community benefits](#), [Corporate Environment Policy](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [Human Rights](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), [Labour Rights](#), [mining industry](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Supply chains](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How the B.C. Insulators Union fights climate change and promotes green awareness in the construction industry

Posted on **April 25, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The [Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change](#) research project has released two papers relating to the built environment, and more specifically, the accomplishments of one labour union in British Columbia to promote major climate change improvements in the construction industry. [Evaluating the Impact of the BC Insulators' Union Campaign to Promote Improved Mechanical Insulation Standards in BC's Construction Industry](#) (April 2016) described the campaign by BC Insulators union Local 118 to encourage municipalities in B.C. to require higher insulation standards in their building requirements and procurement contract tenders. To do this, the union “funded [independent, technical research papers](#), commissioned best practice manuals with detailed guidelines on installing MI and initiated an extensive and carefully organized public education campaign to pressure industry and government to raise standards. It approached municipalities, building contractors, government officials, property developers, industry professionals and trade organizations to alert them to the importance of reducing the energy footprint of buildings. It pressured governments to raise MI standards in procurement of new and refurbished buildings and implement tougher requirements in their building codes. And it introduced climate change literacy into the curriculum of the apprenticeship system it oversees.”



The climate literacy curriculum is the subject of a new report released in April 2017: [Promoting Climate Literacy in British Columbia's Apprenticeship System: Evaluating One Union's Efforts to Overcome Attitudinal Barriers to Low Carbon Construction](#) describes the 'Green Awareness' course the union provides as part of the apprenticeship training for all mechanical insulation trades workers in British Columbia. The two-module course was introduced in 2011 and is taught over the course of the first two years of the four-year program. After conducting a review of the 'Green Awareness' course content, the research team performed qualitative interviews with a cohort of 2nd and 4th year apprentices to determine how effective the training had been. These findings indicate the need for further refinements in the content and delivery of the 'Green Awareness' course material. The authors conclude that incorporating climate change-related course content into the training process is an important step in fostering climate literacy within the industry and should be encouraged in other trades. They caution, however, that its degree of impact will be limited unless more sweeping changes are made to the organization and culture of the construction industry itself.

Both papers were authored by John Calvert and Corinne Tallon. The evaluation of the climate literacy program was presented at the International Labour Process Conference (ILPC), Sheffield, United Kingdom, April 4 – 6, 2017.

BC Insulators
Heat and Frost Insulators Local 118

Ontario's Climate Action Plan: beyond job creation to job quality for building trades workers

Posted on **April 25, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A report released on April 19th aims to contribute to a strong, future-proofed green jobs strategy for Ontario. *Building An Ontario Green Job Strategy: Ensuring the Climate Change Action Plan creates good Jobs where they are needed most* focuses on the building sector provisions within *Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan* (June 2016) – which are estimated at 28 – 31% of the budget allocations of the Action Plan.

Building an Ontario Green Job Strategy states: "Ontario's investment of C\$1.91 billion to \$2.73 billion in retooling buildings, as outlined in the Climate Change Action Plan of 2016 , could create between 24,500 to 32,900 green jobs over the five-year funding plan with a further 16,800 to 24,000 jobs created from the reinvestments of energy cost savings into the economy." Job creation forecasts were calculated using three job multipliers, including that from the 2012 report by Heidi Garrett-Peltier, *Analysis of Job Creation and Energy Costs Savings* , published by the Institute for Market Transformation and the Political Economy Research Institute at University of Massachusetts.

Beyond the evidence of the job creation potential of energy efficiency investments, the report also makes significant recommendations to ensure job quality. Amongst the recommendations for the provincial government: Conduct a high-carbon jobs census and low-carbon skills survey so that workforce planning will work from an accurate base; make use of existing training programs and facilities; push for rigorous standards (specifically, run a pilot project of a Canadian Building Performance Institute, modelled after the U.S. BPI, to oversee credentialling and certification for trades), and consider an Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard; investigate support for domestic industries (avoiding any WTO sanctions by following a Sustainable Energy Trade Agreement model); work to implement carbon border adjustments to avoid carbon leakage ; and design programs to stand the test of time and changes to the governing party.

Building an Ontario Green Job Strategy recognizes that the Ontario *Climate Change Action Plan* included language about Just Transition, but it recommends strengthening and clarifying that language. It also holds up two models for tendering and procurement processes: Community Benefits Agreements (CBA), which ensure that infrastructure investments result in social and economic benefits to the community and citizens of the immediate neighbourhood – with a case study of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project in Toronto, and High Road Agreements, where contractors are assessed against an established set of sustainable contracting standards and community benefits- with a case study of a Portland Oregon retrofit project.

The report was written by Glave Communications for the [Clean Economy Alliance](#) , [Environmental Defence](#), and [Blue Green Canada](#) , "with the participation of the United Steelworkers, UNIFOR, Clean Energy Canada, the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, the Labour Education Centre, the Columbia Institute, Canadian Solar Industries Association, Ontario Sustainability, the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, and Evergreen."

How Trump's budget will rob coal workers and communities of federal aid for transition and retraining

Posted on **April 25, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An April Issue Brief from the Center for American Progress examines the Trump actions to date and concludes that "[The Trump Budget Cuts Hit Coal Communities and Workers Where It Hurts](#)". In a concise, well-documented overview, the paper explains the widely-accepted facts about the decline of the coal industry – that it is caused not by over-reaching environmental regulation, but by market forces and declining productivity, especially in the Appalachian coal mines. But the thrust of the report is to estimate in detail how the [Trump budget proposed for 2018](#) would eliminate \$1.13 billion in federal funding for 7 of the 12 Obama-era programs, undoing the current efforts to diversify the economies of coal mining communities and provide workforce training.

In 2015, then-President Barack Obama launched the [Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization, or POWER, Initiative](#), which funded efforts by 12 federal agencies to align, scale up, and target federal economic and workforce development assistance to coal communities and coal economy workers. Coordinated by the Department of Commerce, the Initiative included the Appalachian Regional Commission, which had been established in 1965 to invest in economic and workforce opportunities in Appalachia, and the National Dislocated Worker Grants program, part of the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, which channeled funding to state workforce development agencies to provide employment and training services. The CAP issue paper was co-authored by Jason Walsh, who was a senior policy adviser in the White House under President Obama, involved in the design and coordination of the POWER Initiative.

A new report from Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy asks "[Can Coal make a Comeback?](#)" and with detailed statistics and discussion of coal in the context of the global energy industry, answers the question as "No". The paper concludes with some examples of local economic diversification programs, stating: "There is a lot the federal government can do to help accelerate locally driven economic diversification efforts... But this all requires a clear-eyed assessment of the outlook for the coal industry and a commitment to put sustainable solutions ahead of politically expedient talking points."

The Columbia paper also calls for the federal government to help provide retirement and healthcare security by passing the [Miners' Protection Act](#). But an April 19 article in the *New York Times* "[Retired Miners Lament Trump's Silence on Imperiled Health Plan](#)" (April 19) describes the uncertainty for the miners and the political horse-trading in Congress – part of the government funding showdown due April 30. The fates and possibly the lives of more than 20,000 retired miners rests on extending federal funding to the health benefits fund, depleted by coal industry bankruptcies. For the best explanation see "[Mine wars: The struggle for coal miners' health care and pension benefits comes to a head](#)" in *The Conversation*, published April 26 and updated April 30th with the news that Congress had extended health care benefits until May 5. This will be the latest of several extensions, without a resolution to the issue.

In addition to the economic analysis of the Columbia University report, the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) published a brief on April 21, "[U.S. Coal Phase-out, Blow by Blow: Plant Closings and the Likely Corresponding Effect on Specific Companies and Mines](#)"— which "focuses on how the scheduled closures, conversions or curtailments of 46 coal-fired generating units at 25 electricity plants in 16 states stand to affect the U.S coal-mining industry through 2018, including the loss of nearly 30 million tons of coal demand." It does not estimate job losses or community impacts.

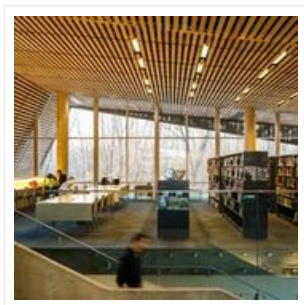
Architects speak out for climate change mitigation and public advocacy

Posted on **April 18, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On April 17, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) issued a [press release](#), announcing eight [principles](#) governing how architects can mitigate climate change, and urging the U.S. government “to protect policies designed to conserve energy and reduce carbon in the built environment”. An excerpt from the AIA statement “[Where we stand on Climate Change](#)” : “We know that carbon neutral design and construction is a growth industry. Employers from roughly 165,000 US companies doing energy efficiency work expect employment to grow 13 percent over the coming year, adding 245,000 more jobs. In Philadelphia alone, 77 percent of the city’s buildings need energy retrofits, supporting the creation of 23,000 jobs. We call on policymakers to protect financing and incentives to help communities design, build and retrofit their building stock.”

The AIA’s Energy Leadership Group had also recently issued a [commentary](#) which summarizes and updates their long history of attention to sustainability. “As stewards of the built environment, architects and our collaborators must be leaders in providing a powerful response to climate change. In order to achieve carbon neutral design as standard practice by 2030, we need to urgently shift our practices to apply passive design techniques, energy efficiency measures, embodied carbon reduction strategies, and renewable energy in all of our projects. By implementing these techniques, architects provide our clients with increased value, through benefits to human health and productivity, energy cost savings and resilience.

Architects must also expand our roles beyond design practice, by engaging in public policy to ensure the design, preservation, and construction of sustainable communities and high-performance buildings. This requires our active participation and leadership in the development, evaluation, and use of codes, standards, evidence-based rating systems and financial mechanisms.”



— [Bibliotheque du Boise, Montreal, from the RAIC website](#)

Most recently in Canada, in August 2016, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) joined with 11 other organizations in an [Open Letter to the federal government](#), with recommendations for a national plan for improving the energy efficiency of Canada’s buildings.

Illustrating what is possible in sustainable designs, the Bibliothèque du Bois  in suburban Montreal was [announced](#) as the winner of the 2017 Green Building Award, given by the RAIC and the Canada Green Building Council. The annual award recognizes outstanding achievement in buildings that are environmentally responsible and promote the health and wellbeing of users. The building’s sustainability strategies include “an innovative integration of mechanical systems: a passive heating system uses the heat accumulated in a glass prism for redistribution through a geothermal loop. Low-flow

ventilation through the floors reduces the number of ducts required. The building relies mostly on natural light, combined with task lighting, for energy savings: 75 percent of the library's floor area receives natural light. The project emphasized the use of certified wood, low-emitting materials, and recycled or regional materials."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [architects](#), [Architecture](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

EU Industry pledges no new coal plants as Australians mobilize to fight the giant Adani coal project

Posted on **April 18, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Union of the Electricity Industry (EURELECTRIC), representing 3500 companies across Europe, released [a statement](#) on April 5, pledging that no new coal-fired plants will be built in the EU after 2020. "The European electricity sector believes that achieving the decarbonisation objectives agreed in the Paris Agreement is essential to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the global economy. EURELECTRIC's members are committed to delivering a carbon neutral power supply in Europe by 2050, and to ensuring a competitively priced and reliable electricity supply throughout the integrated European energy market." Poland and Greece remain outside the agreement, and apparently outside the mainstream.

The Guardian calls the EU position [a "death knell for coal"](#), and in a separate piece, summarizes the decline of coal-fired electricity around the world. ["Coal in 'freefall' as new power plants dive by two-thirds"](#) (March 22) quotes a new report by [Greenpeace](#), [Sierra Club USA](#), and [Coalswarm](#): ["Boom and Bust 2017: Tracking The Global Coal Plant Pipeline"](#). Its findings show a 62 percent drop in new construction starts, and an 85 percent decline in new Chinese coal plant permits. A senior Greenpeace official states: "2016 marked a veritable turning point". "China all but stopped new coal projects after astonishing clean energy growth has made new coal-fired power plants redundant, with all additional power needs covered from non-fossil sources since 2013. Closures of old coal plants drove major emission reductions especially in the U.S. and UK, while Belgium and Ontario became entirely coal-free and three G8 countries announced deadlines for coal phase-outs."



Yet in Australia, environmentalists are waging an epic environmental battle against a giant, \$16.5-billion coal mine adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef, proposed by Indian energy conglomerate Adani. Government supporters, including the Prime Minister and politicians in Queensland, have argued that the mine would bring jobs and would not increase GHG emissions globally because Australian coal is cleaner than any other that India would be able to source from other countries; see an [article in Climate Home](#) for the rebuttal to that. Voices in opposition include Bob Brown, a former Green Party leader, [who states](#): "This is the environmental issue of our times and, for one, the [Great Barrier Reef](#) is at stake. The Adani corporation's dirty coalmine is an impending disaster with effects which will reach far beyond Australia." Or read: ["It's either Adani or the Great Barrier Reef – are we willing to fight for a Wonder of the World?"](#) in *The Guardian*. Thirteen community groups, claiming to represent 1.5 million Australians have joined the [Stop Adani Alliance](#) since its launch in March, and the Australian Conservation Foundation is behind [another high-powered campaign](#). For context, see ["The coal war: Inside the fight against Adani's plans to build Australia's biggest coal mine"](#) from the *Sydney Morning Herald*. For a

catalogue of “the ten most-absurd things about the Adani mine ” , see “Australia’s Climate bomb: the senselessness of Adani’s Carmichael coal mine” in *The Conversation* (April 12).

UPDATE: An April 24 analysis of the bleak prospects of the Carmichael Mine proposed by Adani for Australia “Adani: Remote Prospect: Carmichael Status Update 2017” .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Coal Industry](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [EU](#), [European Union](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

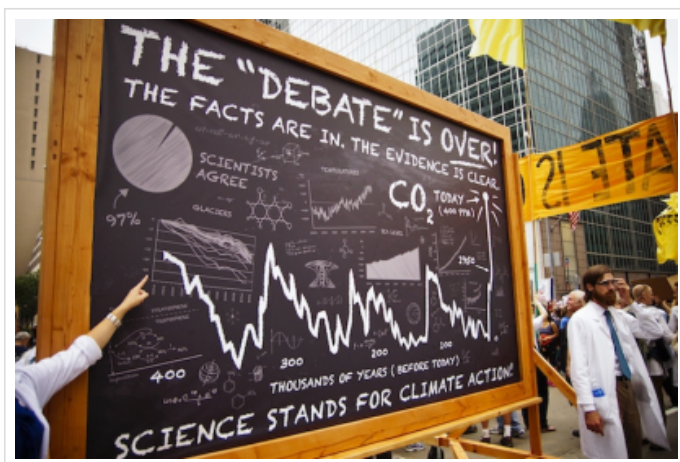
Two Marches in April: for Climate action and Science-Based Policy

Posted on **April 18, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In releasing its most recent working paper , the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) states : “On the eve of the second Peoples’ Climate March, we offer this as a contribution to the conversation that we must continue in earnest and move us to bold, decisive and immediate action.” Comments are invited, as is participation in Labor Contingent of the [People’s Climate March](#) in Washington D.C. on April 29. [According to 350.org](#) , more than 100,000 people have already RSVP’ed for the Washington March alone, as of April 13. See information about the [March in Toronto](#) or [Vancouver](#).

The LNS paper, *Jobs for Climate and Justice: A Worker alternative to the Trump Agenda* , describes a Jobs for Climate and Justice Plan – a four-part strategy to defeat the Trump ideas, and develop a climate-safe and worker-friendly economy. Author Jeremy Brecher states that “protecting the climate requires a massive and emergency mobilization” comparable to the industrial transformation of World War 2. The paper suggests ideas to create new climate-friendly jobs and protect the workers and communities who are threatened by climate change, and while most of these have appeared in [earlier LNS publications](#) , the sheer number of positive, concrete examples of worker initiatives across the U.S. makes this an inspiring document .

According to an article in Common Dreams, “[The Fights to Protect Science, People and Planet Are Inherently Connected](#)” (April 6) . A blog post from Legal Planet, “[The War on Science continues](#)” also makes clear how the Trump administration disregard for science is impacting climate change research, and how closely intertwined the two issues are. So on April 22, Earth Day, watch for or join the [March for Science](#) “the first step of a global movement to defend the vital role science plays in our health, safety, economies, and governments”. “..... We are [advocating](#) for evidence-based policy-making, science education, research funding, and inclusive and accessible science.”



The main Science March is set for Washington D.C., but there are sister marches around the world, including in [18 cities across Canada](#) . The Canadian organizers, Ottawa-based [Evidence for Democracy](#) , state: “*The politicization of science, which has given policymakers permission to reject overwhelming evidence, is a critical and urgent matter. It is time for people who support scientific research and evidence-based policies to take a public stand and be counted*”. This is not just

an American issue. Canadians remember the [muzzled scientists of the Harper era](#), and can see current examples – Evidence for Democracy published a report on April 6, [Oversight at Risk: The state of government science in British Columbia](#) – the first of several planned surveys of provincial government scientists . Some results: 32 per cent said they cannot speak to the media about their research; 49 per cent think said political interference reduces their department's ability to create policies and programs based on scientific evidence.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [community action](#), [Just Transition](#), [Muzzled Scientists](#), [People's Climate March](#), [scientists](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Election 2017: focusing on energy and the environment amid all those scandals

Posted on [April 17, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The sitting Liberal government of British Columbia, led by Premier Christy Clark, is facing an election on May 9, amid allegations of corruption – most recently, in [“How Teck Resources benefits from being the largest BC Liberal donor”](#) from West Coast Environmental Law (April 6). The [Energy Mix reports](#) that the Supreme Court of B.C. will begin a review of the government's ties to Kinder Morgan, the company behind the Trans Mountain pipeline, on May 3rd . There are also wider, older allegations of “cash for access” and donation scandals – for examples, see the [Dogwood Institute reports](#) .

The election is full of contentious issues – follow “B.C. in the Balance”, a special series of election reports by [The Tyee](#) , or [DeSmog Canada](#) , or the [CBC Vancouver website](#) for ongoing coverage. Context is provided by a [CCPA-BC Policy Note](#) (April 4), which summarizes the results of a recent survey of B.C. residents' concerns: affordable housing and the cost of living (26%), the environment (24%), and jobs and the economy (15%).

For a climate change-related viewpoint, West Coast Environmental Law has published [a comparison](#) of the climate change-related elements of the platforms of the three parties, and a [scorecard](#) .

The [Liberal party platform](#), released on April 10, states: “ To keep B.C.'s economy strong and growing, today's BC Liberals will get Site C built – employing thousands, and guaranteeing a 100-year supply of clean, affordable, reliable power. And the platform outlines key actions to strengthen forestry, secure new mining investments, and grow B.C.'s energy sector, including LNG.” The [Pembina Institute reaction](#) speaks for most environmentalists in opposing the government's continuing focus on LNG development: “The platform released today continues ... doubling down on an LNG industry that would be responsible for 20 million tonnes of B.C.'s carbon pollution in 2050. B.C.'s legislated 2050 target for carbon pollution is 13 million tonnes. Clearly, LNG is not a climate solution.”

Irene Lanzinger, President of the [B.C. Federation of Labour](#) and member of [Green Jobs BC](#) is critical of the Liberal record on green jobs, in an [April 13 article in The Tyee](#) , and points to the Green Jobs BC priorities for green job growth: clean energy, transit, building retrofits and forestry.

The [Green Party platform](#) includes a statement on [Building the New Economy](#), and the platform on [climate leadership](#). The Green Platform is most notable for its pledge to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year, reaching \$50 per tonne by 2021. (as recommended by the shelved [2016 Climate Leadership Plan](#)). [David Suzuki praises](#) the Green platform but states: "Missing from this announcement are details of a funding framework for public transit infrastructure investment and a firm commitment to expand the use of low-impact renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and tidal power to achieve the province's energy needs." According to West Coast Environmental Law, neither the Green nor NDP platform makes any statement about fossil fuel subsidies.

The NDP platform is [here](#), and was [welcomed by the Pembina Institute](#) on its release: "We are pleased to see the commitment to implementing the recommendations of the premier's Climate Leadership Team, which plot a course to significantly reduce B.C.'s carbon pollution — in particular, the pledge to adopt the proposed 2030 target and sector-by-sector targets for emissions."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BC LNG](#), [British Columbia](#), [Green Party](#), [NDP](#), [Political parties and policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian GHG emissions decreased by 2.2% from 2005, according to the latest report to UNFCCC

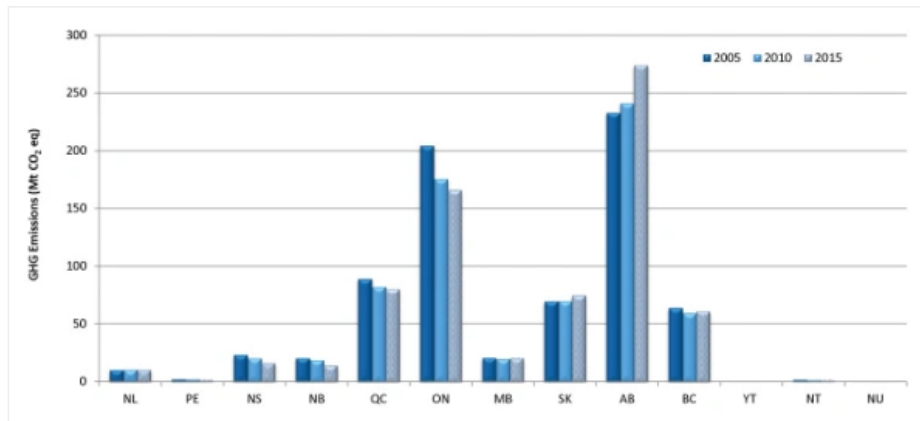
Posted on [April 17, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) posted the National Inventory Reports of greenhouse gas emissions from most countries of the world in the second week of April 2017, including [Canada's National Inventory Report 1990–2015: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada](#). The full 3-part report, available only at the UNFCCC website, is an exhaustive inventory emissions of GHG's, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, perfluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride, and nitrogen trifluoride, reported for the country and for each province and territory. Statistics are given for five economic sectors, as defined and required by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): Energy, Industrial Processes and Product Use, Agriculture, Waste, and Land Use, and Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF). An [Executive Summary](#) is posted at Environment and Climate Change Canada, and includes statistics using Canadian economic sector definitions.

A few highlights: In 2013; Canada represented approximately 1.6% of total global GHG emissions. Canada remains one of the highest per capita emitters, although that is decreasing since 2005 and was the lowest yet in 2015, at 20.1 tons. In 2015, Canada's GHG emissions were 722 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – a net decrease of 2.2% from 2005. The Energy Sector (as defined by IPCC, consisting of Stationary Combustion Sources, Transport, and Fugitive Sources) emitted 81% of Canada's total GHG emissions; Agriculture emitted 8%; Industrial Processes and Product Use emitted 7%; the Waste Sector emitted 3%.

Using Canadian economic sector definitions, our Oil and Gas sector showed a 20% increase in emissions from 2005 to 2015; Transportation increased by 6% in that time.

Nationally, we posted a 31% decrease in emissions associated with electricity production. The permanent closure of all coal generating stations in the province of Ontario by 2014 was the determinant factor.



— From: *National Inventory Report 1990 – 2015 Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada*; Figure S-9 Emissions by Province in 2005, 2010, and 2015

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Cap-and-Trade proposals for Nova Scotia – and beyond?

Posted on **April 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A discussion paper released in early March by the government of Nova Scotia proposes the structure of a cap-and-trade system for the province, as required by the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. Nova Scotia is a reluctant participant in the national carbon pricing regime of the *Framework*, having walked out of one of the federal-provincial meetings on the topic in October 2016.

The Discussion paper, *Nova Scotia Cap and Trade Program Design Options*, proposes a plan which covers only those sectors required by the *Framework*, and grants free allocations to them, including Nova Scotia Power and the suppliers of fossil fuel. Sectors not included represent about 10% of emissions, and would be allowed to sell offsets into the system. Fugitive emissions will not be included. As stated in the Discussion paper, the system will not align itself with any other provinces. Yet, days after the release, and in apparent contradiction to the Discussion paper, the CBC reported that the Premier is still in discussion with the provinces of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island about a regional system: see “Welcome to join: Atlantic cap and trade system explored”.

An excellent summary of the features and failings of the plan appears in a post from the [Environmental Law blog](#) from Dalhousie University. It states that the proposed plan seems designed to meet the minimum GHG emission reductions obligations under the Pan-Canadian Framework, while also minimizing any impact on Nova Scotia’s economy. “We are clearly far from getting our C&T system right. To do so, would take time, careful analysis and a public dialogue on priorities and values rather than starting assumptions that all we care about is trying to preserve the status quo for as long as we can.” Unfortunately, the deadline for public submissions was March 31, less than a month after the release.

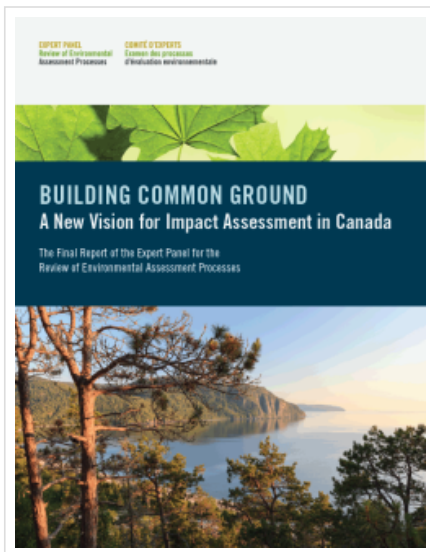
“Political Manipulation Could Derail Nova Scotia’s Cap and Trade System” in the *Halifax Examiner* is also highly critical. Author Brendan Haley decries the lack of time and opportunity for public input, and states that political expediency seems to be motivating the design of the carbon pricing system. The Ecology Action Centre [also has concerns](#) over the proposed system – their position paper is [here](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Carbon Markets](#), [Nova Scotia](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Reports re environmental regulation arrive to positive response – next up in May: the Expert Panel on modernizing the National Energy Board

Posted on **April 11, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Government of Canada launched four reviews of government environmental and regulatory processes in June 2016, and recently, the appointed Expert Panels have begun to deliver their reports. The [Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans](#) was released on February 24 – to a [welcoming review by West Coast Environmental Law](#): “We are pleased that the Committee has listened – to First Nations, to conservation and community groups, to scientists and concerned citizens across the country – and has recommended reinstating the *Fisheries Act*’s key prohibition on habitat alteration, disruption and disturbance .



The Report of the Expert Panel on Environmental Assessment was released on April 5, and is open for public comment – only until May 5 at www.letstalkea.ca/. The report, *Building Common Ground: A New Vision for Impact Assessment in Canada* incorporates a fundamental idea in its title: what is now “environmental assessment” should become “impact assessment”. The Panel recommends that: an Impact Assessment Commission should be established as an independent, arm’s length government agency, “with a broad leadership mandate to conduct project, region-based and strategic-level assessments. The Commission would also be mandated to generate its own independent science so that assessments are evidence-based and agency-led... and the Panel should commit to ensuring that the projects are not developed without the early involvement of potentially affected Indigenous peoples and the public. ”

One of the first responses to the Expert Panel comes from [Chris Toellofson at the Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation \(CELL\)](#) , who states: “the Panel deserves kudos for both for its ambitious commitment to process, and the innovative and balanced way it has charted the law reform road ahead.” The article continues with a thorough summary

and analysis of the report, including: “Our biggest concern with the Report is that it has mainly focused on procedures, values and governance – and has therefore not engaged with some of the substantive legal tests that must be embedded in a federal assessment law to give it real traction. For example, the Report does not address the need for assessments to include “worst case scenario” modeling, and only briefly touches on the need for “alternatives” assessment. These legal requirements, as our experience in the Northern Gateway, Kinder Morgan, and Pacific NorthWest LNG reviews underscore, can be of critical importance, both scientifically and legally.”



West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL) also [responded positively](#) though briefly, calling the report “not perfect but a step in the right direction”, and calling on the government to translate the recommendations into law quickly. WCEL had convened a Federal Environmental Assessment Reform Summit meeting in Ottawa in May 2016, attended by approximately 30 of Canada’s leading environmental assessment experts, academics, lawyers and practitioners. The [summary of those discussions](#) was published in August 2016, and offers a context for any review of the recommendations of the government’s Expert Panel report.

Next up in May: the Report of the [Expert Panel regarding the Modernization of the National Energy Board](#) , scheduled to be delivered to the Minister of Natural Resources on or around May 15, 2017. Anticipating that release, Ecojustice published a blog, [Modernizing the National Energy Board : Let’s get it right](#) on April 4, which states : “Today, the NEB is riddled with systemic failures. Some of the most glaring problems include, no flexible timelines for reviews, lack of inclusive public participation, and limitations on public hearings such as no cross-examination and no meaningful consideration of climate change impacts...The NEB, as we’ve come to know it, is dominated by industry insiders and conventional industry perspectives. As a result, it fails to objectively evaluate the need for, and the consequences of, new oil and gas projects. As we transition to a decarbonized energy system in which we are less likely to build new oil and gas infrastructure, the NEB’s role — chiefly concerned with regulating oil and gas and in particular interprovincial and international pipelines — should diminish. In other words, the NEB should get out of the business of environmental assessment.... The NEB’s function should be limited to technical matters traditionally within its regulatory expertise (related to pipeline safety, for instance). It could also turn its attention to technical plans for decommissioning and remediating energy infrastructure, such as pipelines, that are redundant in a decarbonizing economy.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act](#), [Environmental Protection](#), [Environmental regulation](#), [Fisheries Act](#), [Fisheries Industry](#), [National Energy Board](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How the government’s new procurement program could cut emissions and grow clean tech jobs

Posted on [April 11, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

One of the commitments stated in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change was to “modernize procurement practices, adopt clean energy and technologies, and prioritize opportunities to help Canadian businesses grow, demonstrate new technologies and create jobs.” In Budget 2017, the government announced measures to support technological innovation; the section entitled “A Nation of Innovators” includes the allocation of \$50 million to launch **Innovative Solutions Canada**, a procurement program modelled on the U.S. [Small Business Innovation Research](#) program. On April 7, Clean Energy Canada stepped up on this issue with a policy primer to suggest best practices from around the world: *The Power of Procurement: How the government can drive growth, cut carbon and create jobs*

The Power of Procurement cites a 2016 [OECD report](#) which states that in Canada, the procurement of goods and services by the federal government alone accounts for approximately 13% of Canada’s GDP. With Canada’s [current Green Procurement Policy](#) established in 2006, and with our clean tech export market share declining, Canada has a lot of catching up to do. The Clean Energy Canada report offers five Best Practices for consideration as the federal government fleshes out its new Innovative Solutions Canada program. Included in the Best Practices: a focus on low-carbon as a clearly defined parameter in decisions; lifecycle costing which includes the purchase price, installation cost, operating costs, maintenance and upgrade costs, and residual value; target-setting for specific outcomes; and support for commercialization and exporting capability for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), which dominate Canada’s cleantech sector.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Federal Budget](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Green Innovation](#), [Green procurement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Is Europe on track to meet its Paris commitments? Is Canada?

Posted on [April 3, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Carbon Market Watch released a policy briefing report in March which found that only Sweden, Germany and France are making successful efforts towards meeting their Paris Agreement targets. *EU Climate Leader Board: Where Countries Stand On The Effort Sharing Regulation – Europe’s Largest Climate Tool* ranked the EU nations for their actions towards meeting the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR), currently under negotiation to set binding 2021-2030 national emission reduction targets for sectors not covered in the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS), including transport, buildings, agriculture and waste. “Only three member states on track to meet Paris goals”, appeared in the *EurActiv* newsletter, summarizing the report and pointing to many failings by member nations, including some “who exploited loopholes in United Nations forestry rules to pocket carbon credits worth €600 million”. The *National Observer* noted the Climate Market Watch report in “[Here’s How Europe ranks in the race against climate change](#)”, and asks “Where does that leave Canada?”. As part of its own answer, the article cites a report in The *National Post* newspaper on March 30: “[Secret briefing says up to \\$300-per-tonne federal carbon tax by 2050 required to meet climate targets](#)”. The article is based on a briefing note to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in November 2015, obtained through a Freedom of Information request. The briefing note tells the Minister that in order to meet Canada’s 2030 emissions targets, a carbon price of \$100 per tonne would need to be in place by 2020, with a price as high as \$300 per tonne by 2050. The [current national price](#) for those provinces who agreed to the the Pan-Canadian Framework is \$10 per tonne, rising to \$50 per tonne by 2022.

Another answer to the question, “where does that leave Canada?” might be the report released by Environment and Climate Change Canada: *Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators: Progress Towards Canada’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Target*, which shows that Canada could be emitting at least 30% more GHG emissions than promised by 2030. The report, however, is based on the policies in place as of November, 2016 – before the current [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#). The government is downplaying its own report, calling it only a set of “plausible outcomes”, rather than a forecast.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Climate change policy](#), [European Union](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario investing in transit, vehicle R & D

Posted on [April 3, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On March 31, the [Government of Ontario announced](#) that it will invest \$13.5 billion in the GO Regional Express Rail project – expanding the existing GO commuter rail system in the Toronto-Hamilton area by building 12 new stations and increasing the frequency of service. This expansion will also include creating a “transportation hub” at the western terminus of the Toronto subway, according to a [subsequent announcement on April 3](#) . The goal is to increase the number of weekly trips across the GO train network from 1,500 today to roughly 6,000 by 2025. The federal government will also contribute more than \$1.8 billion to the GO Transit Regional Express rail project, using funds from the Harper-era New Building Canada Fund – Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component. A further \$200 million has been committed to 312 projects across Ontario through the [Public Transit Infrastructure Fund](#) . [Click here](#) for a list of Ontario projects. [Click here for the corporate explanation](#) of the Regional Express Rail project.

Newmarket – a bedroom community of the Toronto area – [announced](#) on March 27 that it will be part of the Pan-Ontario Electric Bus Demonstration and Integration Trial, joining another GTA suburb, Brampton, already enrolled. Newmarket will purchase six electric powered heavy-duty transit buses – four from New Flyer Industries of Winnipeg, Manitoba and two more from Nova Bus, of St. Eustache, Quebec. Overhead-charging stations will be designed and manufactured by Siemens and ABBGroup. The local utility, Newmarket-TayPower Distribution Limited, will purchase and operate an on-route charging station. The initiative is the result of a partnership between the municipality, the utility, and the [Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium \(CUTRIC\)](#) , incorporated in August 2014 to support industry-academic collaborations to develop next generation technologies for Canadian transit and transportation systems.

In [another press release](#) , the government of Ontario announced a joint partnership with the federal government and Ford Motor Company of Canada, providing Ford with a conditional grant of up to \$102.4 million to establish an advanced manufacturing program at its Windsor plant. According to the press release, “the investment will create 300 new jobs at Ford operations in Ontario and protect hundreds more.” Ford will also establish a Research and Engineering Centre in Ottawa, employing engineers and scientists to focus on infotainment, in-vehicle modems, gateway modules, driver-assist features and autonomous vehicles.

Return of oil and gas jobs? New pipelines and new technology are essential conditions

Posted on **April 3, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The headline of a *Calgary Herald* story on March 30 warns: “Another 8,700 oil jobs are at risk if prices drop below US\$50 for a sustained period, according to new study” . Based on a labour market study by Enform consultancy, the *Herald* states that this possible job loss would follow the loss of 52,500 direct jobs between 2015 and 2016, without even taking into account the job turmoil caused by the 2017 mergers and acquisitions in the Canadian oil sands: Canadian Natural Resources and Shell ; Cenovus Energy and Conoco Phillips; and most recently, Enbridge and Spectra Energy .



The original Enform study on which the newspaper article is based provides much more detail. [Labour Market Outlook 2017 to 2021 for Canada's Oil and Gas Industry](#) was prepared by PetroLMI, a Division of Enform, and was partly funded by Canada's Sectoral Initiatives program. It reports that the oil and gas industry directly employed an estimated 174,000 workers at the end of 2016, (down by 25 per cent from the industry peak of over 226,000 in 2014). It forecasts job growth for two different scenarios – oil prices well above or well below US\$50 per barrel from 2017- 2021 . The “modest recovery” scenario, (prices above US \$50) is forecast to support an annual average of 554,000 direct and indirect jobs in the next five years; the “Delayed Recovery” is forecast to support 508,000 jobs. The report provides detailed statistics by subsectors, occupations, and regions. The report also notes the shrinking labour pool, as workers are discouraged from remaining or entering the sector, and as older workers retire. Although the forecast expects limited job recovery in the next two years, it concludes that the peak employment levels will not return. “Heading towards 2021 and beyond, accessing world markets via new pipelines will be critical for full job recovery. Equally important will be investing in technology, innovation and a highly-skilled and technical workforce to sustain the productivity and efficiency gains achieved in the last few years. These things will be critical if the industry is to compete globally and make a transition through carbon regulations.” See the full suite of forecasts for the oil and gas industry, including the LNG industry, [here](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [labour market forecasts](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Oil Sands Jobs](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Opposition to Trump's Executive Order targeting the Clean Power Plan

The Labor Network for Sustainability in the U.S. released a new paper, "[Trump's Energy Plan: A Brighter Future for America's Workers?](#)", which urges the labour movement to "unwrap the package" and examine the proposals in Trump's [America First Energy Policy](#), released on the first day after his Inauguration. LNS reviews and refutes the major planks in that policy, including the "bring back the coal industry" claim, and states, "Our hard-hit coal miners and communities deserve a plan that will enable them to find decent livelihoods in the future, not one that lures them with illusions that it will bring the coal industry back." LNS has previously published its plan, [The Clean Energy Future: Protecting the Climate, Creating Jobs, Saving Money](#), written by Synapse Economics .



The most recent installment of the *America First Energy Policy* was released on March 28: the [Presidential Executive Order on Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth](#), replete with the illusory promise to bring back coal jobs. Summaries and explanations are easy to find: from the [Office of the White House Press Secretary](#); the [Brookings Institute](#); "The Giant Trump Order is Here. What it is, what it does" in *The Atlantic*; "Trump just gutted U.S. policies to fight climate change" from Think Progress. Dismay and outrage is also widespread, summed up by *Vox*: "This is it. The battle over the future of US climate policy is officially underway". Even the mainstream *Washington Post* brings out the battle imagery in its headlines: "[The standoff between Trump and green groups just boiled into war](#)" (March 30), and "[The assault on climate science is evil, and evil must be fought](#)" (March 31).

Although disguised in the language of job creation for coal miners, the Executive Order goes beyond the attack on the Clean Power Plan and coal-fired power plants – empowering the Cabinet to review and rollback other Obama-era policies, including limits on methane leaks, a moratorium on federal coal leasing, and the use of the social cost of carbon to guide government actions. The Editorial Board of the *New York Times* sums up the scale of the attack: "[President Trump risks the Planet](#)" (March 28).

The claim of "bringing back coal jobs" has been disproved repeatedly and convincingly. Typical is the [press release](#) from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, which sees "zero employment impact" from Trump's measures, stating, "Market forces overwhelmingly favor natural gas-fired electricity generation and renewable energy, and the trend away from coal will continue".... Coal is simply being outpaced. It is an industry in decline, and the fundamentals are inescapable." "[A simple way to see why Trump's climate order won't bring back many coal jobs](#)" in *Vox* refers to the Department of Energy [Annual Energy Outlook 2017](#), which projected that without the Clean Power Plan, U.S. coal consumption would rebound only as far as the historically low levels of 2015, when there were approximately 63,000 coal miners in America. Today, there are approximately 50,000. Compare this to the solar workforce, which created 51,000 jobs in 2016 alone – to bring the total number to 260,077 U.S. solar workers, according to the Solar Foundation's [National Solar Jobs Census](#). Even the CEO of Murray Energy, the largest privately-owned coal company in the U.S., acknowledged in a [report in The Guardian](#), that coal jobs are not coming back.

What the Trump Executive Order could do, according to [modelling by consulting firm the Rhodium Group](#), is to limit U.S. greenhouse gas emission reduction to around 14 percent below 2005 levels by 2025 – a far cry from the Paris Agreement pledge of 26 %, and effectively ceding climate leadership to the European Union and China. The Sierra Club USA provides a thorough discussion of the environmental impacts in [Donald Trump Orders EPA to Unwind Clean Power Plan in Setback for "Vitaly Important" Clean Air](#) (March 28). The reaction of major environmental groups such as Environmental Defence Fund, Earthjustice, and Natural Resources Defence Council is summarized in "[Environmental groups vowing to fight Trump's Climate Actions](#)" in the *National Observer* (March 29).

Is there any cause for hope? Yes, according to analysis by *Inside Climate News* in “[Hundreds of Clean Energy Bills Have Been Introduced in States Nationwide This Year](#)” (March 27). This provides a state-by-state summary of bipartisan clean energy legislation, stating: “At least eight states—California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont—are considering legislation to dramatically boost their reliance on clean power in the coming decades. These bills specifically call for increasing the mandate to obtain electricity from sources like wind and solar, a common form of escalating quota called a renewable portfolio standard (RPS). Currently, 29 states in the nation, along with Washington, D.C., have them and eight others have voluntary targets.”

Voices of Business are also challenging the Trump agenda. In “[Climate change is real: Companies challenge Trump](#)” in *The Guardian* (March 29), the CEO of the We Mean Business coalition calls the transition to a low-carbon economy “inevitable”, and the Executive Order “regrettable”. Further, he states: “This announcement undermines policies that stimulate economic competitiveness, job creation, infrastructure investment and public health.” Similar sentiments appear in the *Business Backs Low Carbon USA* statement signed in November 2016 by over 1000 companies and investors. The statement calls for the U.S. economy to be energy efficient and powered by low-carbon energy, and re-affirms “our deep commitment to addressing climate change through the implementation of the historic Paris Climate Agreement.” The list of over 1000 companies is [here](#).

Finally, and giving everyone a voice: the [People’s Climate March](#) on Washington D.C. on April 29, organized by the coalition which emerged from the 2014 March in New York City and around the world. The Labor Network for Sustainability will be leading a labour contingent in Washington – see [their Facebook page](#) for information, and see the [People’s Climate March website](#) for locations of sister marches.



Posted in [Energy Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Business positions on climate change, Clean Energy, Clean Power Plan, Climate change policy, Coal Industry, Donald Trump, Energy policy, United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change has consequences for mental health in the workplace

Posted on [April 2, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance is a report released at the end of March by the American Psychological Association, Climate for Health, and ecoAmerica. The goal is to raise public awareness of the issue and to provide “climate communicators, planners, policymakers, public health professionals, and other leaders the tools and tips needed to respond to these impacts and bolster public engagement on climate solutions.” Although it doesn’t directly address workplace issues, much of the discussion is relevant. For example, the report catalogues the acute mental health impacts that result from the horror and disruption of natural disasters or extreme weather events such as Hurricane Katrina – depression, disrupted social relationships, domestic violence, and heightened intergroup aggression. The report

also highlights women as being at higher risk: “because, on average, women have fewer economic resources than men, women may also be more affected, in general, by the stress and trauma of natural disasters.” (p.39).

Extreme weather and disasters focus attention, but there are also chronic impacts resulting from longer- term climate changes – the key example given is a proven increase in violence and inter-personal aggression associated with higher temperatures. Certain occupational groups are highlighted for their high risk to climate-related anxiety, including first responders to natural disasters, but also including health care-givers, and those directly employed in natural settings – conservation officers, park rangers.

The final section of the report deals with tips to build resilience at the individual and community level. It urges that training be provided for first responders so that they can identify and deal with appropriate compassion for the victims of natural disasters.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [climate change and mental health](#), [Climate Resilience](#), [Heat Stress](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean energy investment declining in Canada; and a profile of Calgary’s clean energy economy

Posted on **March 31, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Clean Energy Canada has released the 2017 edition in its Tracking the Energy Revolution series, on March 30. *The Transition Takes Hold* analyzes clean energy markets around the world, with an emphasis on investment trends. The report states that global clean energy investment in 2016 totalled C\$348 billion, with China, the U.S. and India collectively responsible for half of that amount. This C\$348 billion global clean energy investment represents a 26% decrease from 2015; in Canada, investment fell by 53%, from C\$4 billion to C\$2 billion. The decrease, for the second year in a row, sees Canada fall from 9th to 11th place in the world for clean energy investment. To provide context, the report states that Canada already derives 80% of its power from emissions-free sources, and that fact, coupled with relatively stable demand for electricity, limits the need or opportunity for new investment. The opportunities for growth clearly lie in export markets.

The Transition takes Hold provides some estimates for employment in clean energy, based mostly on the [2016 Renewable Energy and Jobs](#) publication by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Since Canada is not an IRENA member, the report states only that in 2015, Canada was home to 10,500 jobs in wind and 8,100 in solar PV – but no source for that information is provided. Based on figures from the U.S. Department of Energy, the report states that the

solar industry created one out of every 50 new jobs in the U.S. in 2016, with wind turbine technician as the country's fastest-growing occupation.

At the local level, and providing a window into the growing green culture of Alberta, is *Calgary Region's Green Energy Economy: Summary Report*, published by the Calgary Economic Development department. It states that the city's green energy economy was responsible for generating \$1.78 billion in gross domestic product, and employed approximately 15,470 jobs in 2015, equal to 1.8% of all workers in the Calgary Economic Region. The report points out that "Calgary is a well-established 'talent hub' of high-value added, service-oriented workers that are experienced in the energy industry", with the suggestion that the traditional energy sector provides a talent pool for the growing green sector. For this report, the green energy economy is categorized into four sub-sectors: renewable power supply and alternative energy; energy storage and grid infrastructure; green building and energy efficiency; and green transportation, and for each sub-sector, the report provides statistics as well as "on the ground" information about existing companies, supply chains, policies and programs. Green building and energy efficiency account for the largest GDP and number of jobs. Interesting Appendices include a SWOT analysis, and a brief comparative look at policies of other cities around the world. Research and analysis was conducted by The Delphi Group.



— Calgary Skyline by Kevin Cappis. Creative Commons 4.0 license.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Calgary](#), [Clean energy industry](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Green Building](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Canada's Budget 2017: A closer look at what matters for a green economy

Posted on **March 31, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Canada's federal budget statement, titled *Skills, Innovation and Middle Class Jobs*, was released on March 22, with a stated commitment to the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, and support for already-announced climate initiatives . Some specific allocations: \$11.4 million over four years for a national coal phase-out, beginning in 2018; \$17.2 million over five years for a national clean fuels standard, starting in 2017; \$5 billion to green infrastructure and an additional \$5 billion for public transit infrastructure over 11 years. Disappointingly, the Budget extends the Mineral Exploration Tax Credit for another year, thus failing to end fossil fuel subsidies.

Reflecting their own particular interests, most unions issued immediate reactions: see the [Canadian Labour Congress](#) ; [Canadian Union of Public Employees](#) ; [United Steelworkers](#) ; [Unifor](#) . In the *Toronto Star*, [Paul Wells](#) called the Budget “a list of decisions to be made later”, and most commentators remarked on the many deferred deadlines. A March 22 blog by [Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood](#) of the CCPA provides [a thorough summary of the provisions relating to climate change policy](#), noting that the phrase “climate change” is used 50 times, but “when it comes to putting Canada on a pathway to deep decarbonization, Budget 2017 comes up short. Significant investments in key areas, such as public transit and clean technology, should not be dismissed out of hand, but the funds are heavily backloaded and too small given the scale and urgency of the climate challenge.” Mertins-Kirkwood also notes that there are no direct measures to support Just Transition programs, although provisions to improve skills training , workforce development, and small changes to the Employment Insurance program may indirectly contribute to that goal.

Two thoughtful analyses of the Budget have since been released: on March 24, the Canadian Labour Congress released its *Detailed Analysis of Budget 2017*, providing an overall assessment, but including a substantial consideration of provisions relating to a green economy. CLC Highlights: “The Canada Infrastructure Bank will be resourced with \$2.8 billion over five years; legislation creating the Bank is anticipated in spring 2017. In the weeks and months following the budget, the Government of Canada will work on a framework to apply a green lens and an employment-based community benefit lens to infrastructure projects, which may become part of the bilateral infrastructure agreements.” Regarding “Transition to a Green Economy”: “In Budget 2017, investments in 2017-18 and 2018-19 under the \$2 billion Low-Carbon Economy Fund ...are scaled back and re-allocated for future years. Budget 2017 offers \$2 billion for a Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, administered through Infrastructure Canada. The budget allocates \$220 million to reduce the reliance of rural and remote communities on diesel fuel, and to support the use of more sustainable, renewable power solutions. An array of investments are made in order to support the development of the clean tech industry in Canada. In 2016, Canada joined other G-20 countries in re-committing to phase out fossil-fuel subsidies by 2025. The budget contains two modest proposals to scale back fossil fuel subsidies, but no specific concrete commitments are made to comply with the 2025 deadline. Budget 2017 provides funds to accelerate the coal phase-out in Alberta, but it is unclear whether there

will be funding to deal with the impacts on workers and communities. There is no explicit mention in Budget 2017 of just transition measures, or the government's proposed just transition task force.”

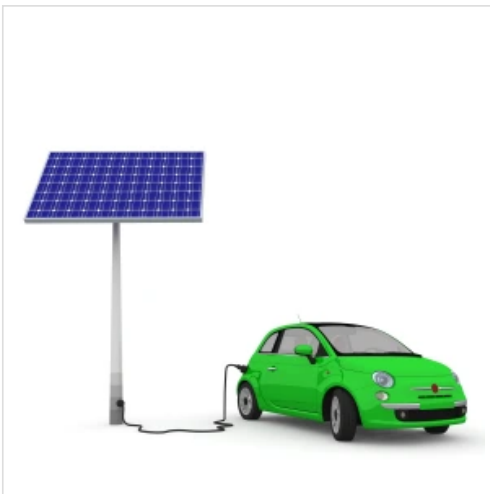
On March 27, the Pembina Institute released *Budget 2017: Ready, set implement* which offers its reaction and further suggestions on three issues. Acknowledging the scale of investment and the importance of consultation, particularly with First Nations, Pembina declares, “in our view, it’s not unreasonable that the \$2 billion Low Carbon Economy Fund has been altered to extend over five years.” Regarding “Next steps on the National Carbon Price”, Pembina applauds the details provided re the national carbon price backstop — “set to begin at \$10 per tonne of carbon pollution in 2018, and to escalate by \$10 per year until 2022.” Pembina also highlights the announcement of a federal government consultation paper with technical details of the national carbon price, promised in 2017. It urges that the national carbon benchmark price be linked to inflation, be subject to a review in 2020, and that the government design a fair and transparent framework for that review well in advance.

Finally, in “Accelerating decarbonization of goods movement”, Pembina notes the Budget’s commitments to new clean fuel standards and heavy-duty truck retrofit regulations, as well as the allocation of \$2 billion over 11 years in a new [National Trade Corridors Fund](#) to address congestion and inefficiencies in rail and highway corridors, especially around the Greater Toronto Area . They re-state their proposal for [North America's first low-carbon highway](#) between Windsor and Quebec City, based on building out an “alternative fuelling infrastructure — like electric vehicle fast-charging, compressed natural gas or hydrogen stations — for personal and commercial transportation along the route.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Infrastructure Investment](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Transportation Infrastructure](#), [Vehicle emission standards](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Reaction from Canada, California as Trump attacks Obama fuel emissions standards

Posted on **March 19, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The rest of the world is driving towards new technologies, but [U.S. state governments are rolling back EV incentives](#) and on March 15, Donald Trump took the U.S. a further step away from reducing transportation emissions. Following pressure from U.S. auto companies, and in the name of creating American jobs and reviving American manufacturing, the White House [announced](#) that the EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will re-open the evaluation of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) standards for light-duty vehicles manufactured in 2022- 2025 . Never mind that the EPA, in the waning days of the Obama presidency in January 2017, had already issued its official [Determination](#) to leave the standards in place, stating that they “are projected to reduce oil consumption by 50 billion gallons and to save U.S. consumers nearly \$92 billion in fuel cost over the lifetime of MY2022-2025 vehicles”, with minimal employment impacts. The *New York Times* compiles some of the U.S. reaction to the announcement, quoting Harvard’s Robert Stavins, who states that rolling back the Obama-level regulations would make it impossible for the United States to meet its obligations under the Paris Agreement. A sample of U.S. concerns appear in: “[Trump Fuel economy rollback would kill jobs and cost each car-buyer \\$1650 per year](#)” by Joe Romm in *Think Progress* ; *DeSmog Blog* “[Trump Takes Aim at Fuel Efficiency Requirements, Prompting Concern US Automakers Will Lag on Innovation](#)” ; and the *Detroit Free Press*, reporting on a lead-up Trump speech in Ypsilanti, Michigan , “[Trump visit puts UAW politics in crosshairs](#)” <http://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2017/03/14/trump-visit-puts-uaw-politics-crosshairs/99165906/> (March 14). The *Detroit Free Press* states that autoworkers were bused in to the Trump event by their employers, with Fiat Chrysler and General Motors offering their workers a day’s pay as well. No immediate reaction to the announcement came from the United Autoworkers union, although the *DFP* article states: “UAW President Dennis Williams has repeatedly said he disagrees with Trump on health care, immigration, the environment and most other major issues. But Williams supports Trump’s desire to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) …..”

In Canada, where Unifor represents autoworkers, president Jerry Dias spoke out in “[Auto workers union takes aim at Trump’s examination of fuel standards](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (March 16), and in a *CTV News* report . He states that “he would fight any attempt to roll back environmentally friendly regulations in the auto industry following Trump’s announcement”. Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change was in Washington on March 15th, meeting with EPA head Scott Pruitt, but her reaction was guarded and diplomatic, as reported in “[As Trump eyes reprieve for gas guzzlers, Canada looks to China](#)” in the *National Observer* and in “[Trump targets fuel-efficiency standards](#)” in the *Globe and Mail* (March 16). Traditionally, Canadian fuel emissions standards have been harmonized with the U.S. , as a result of the strongly integrated auto industry. For example, at the end of February, Canada released its proposed regulations for heavy-duty vehicles, and [according to the International Council on Clean Transportation](#), Canada continued to follow the U.S. model. Similarly, Ontario announced a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) on auto manufacturing with the state of Michigan on March 13, pledging cooperation on regulatory standards as well as technology and supply chain management.

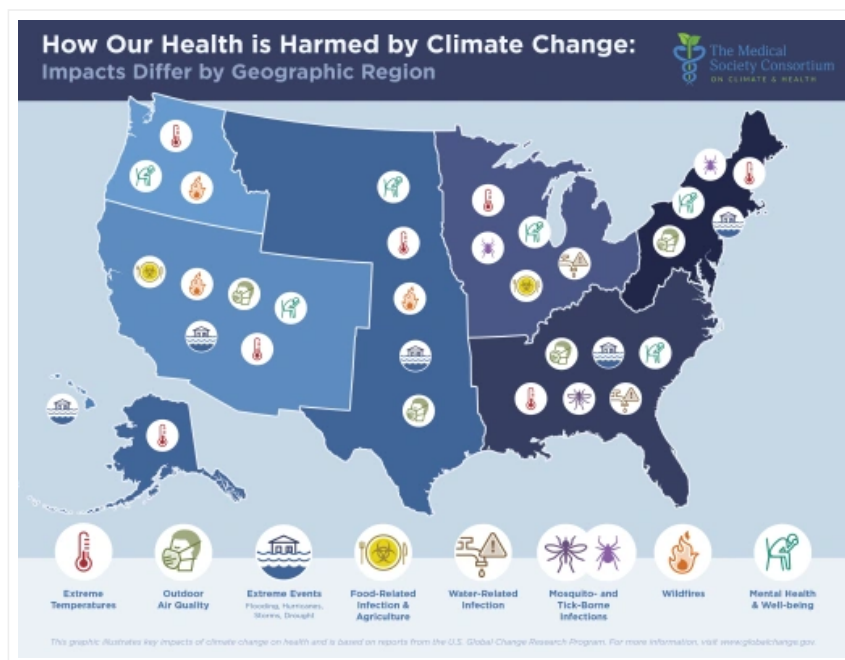
Harmonization will be more difficult after Trump’s announcement on March 15, just as [Canada and Ontario are reviewing their own revisions to fuel emissions regulation](#) . Ontario reacted to the Trump announcement with a pledge to continue to cooperate with California and Quebec in the Western Climate Initiative – read “[Ontario plans to team up with California against Trump on climate change](#)” in the *National Observer* (March 16). California won the right to set its own fuel emission standards in the 1970’s, and today, fifteen other states voluntarily follow California’s tougher standards, including Georgia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and the New York metropolitan area – translating into more than 40% of the U.S. population. “[The Coming Clean-Air war between Trump and California](#)” in *The Atlantic* surveys this latest conflict between California and the Trump administration . A [press release](#) from Governor Jerry Brown called the fuel standards announcement “a cynical ploy” that puts politics ahead of science, and pledged that California will fight it in court.

Posted in [Environmental Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Automobiles, CAFE, California, Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction, Infrastructure, Ontario, UAW, Unifor, Vehicle emission standards](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New U.S. medical consortium forms to bring the message mainstream: climate change is harming our health

Posted on **March 17, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Eleven medical societies in the United States, representing over 400,000 medical practitioners, have joined together to form [The Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health](#). Their launch document on March 15 was [Medical Alert! Climate Change is harming our health](#), directed at the general public to sound the alarm that climate change health impacts are here and now.



— From the [Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health website](#)

The report gives only a nod to the threats in the workplace, given its goal to reach a general audience. It warns that “anyone can be harmed by extreme heat, but some people face greater risk. For example, outdoor workers, student athletes, city dwellers, and people who lack air conditioning (or who lose it during an extended power outage) face greater risk because they are more exposed to extreme heat. People with chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and those who work or play outside, are especially vulnerable to extreme heat. . . .” The report also touches on the other major health-related impacts, such as spread of infectious diseases borne by ticks and mosquitos, air pollution, effects of forest fires, polluted air and food, mental health burden, etc.

The Consortium states that “most physicians are aware of the adverse health effects of climate change and feel a responsibility to inform the public, patients and policymakers about them. A majority of survey respondents report they are already seeing health harms from climate change among their own patients – most commonly in the form of increased cardiorespiratory disease (related to air quality and heat), more severe and longer lasting allergy symptoms, and injuries attributed to extreme weather.”

The goal of the consortium is to educate, and to advocate for reduced fossil fuel consumption and increased clean energy. Their website offers a [library of publications](#) related to the growing literature on climate change and health. The website also compiles resources from their member societies, such as the American College of Physicians and the American Academy of Pediatrics, about [how to green medical workplaces](#). In this, they join a number of existing associations such as [Practice Greenhealth](#) and [Healthcare without Harm](#), an international organization with Canadian membership.

In Canada, the [Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment](#), which was established in 1994, shares a similar mission for policy advocacy, and maintains an [active blog](#) and Facebook presence. The [Canadian Medical Association](#) has a number of policy and position documents on environmental impacts on health; their most recent policy statement on [Climate change and Health](#) was issued in 2010, yet still seems remarkably relevant.

B.C. Cleantech start-up companies show dramatic growth and a confident future

Posted on **March 17, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In mid-March, the B.C. Cleantech CEO Alliance released *British Columbia Cleantech: Status Report 2016*, the result of a survey conducted by consultants KPMG in Fall 2016. The new Status Report shows “dramatic growth” since the previous report in 2011, supporting the Alliance branding of B.C. cleantech as “the next pillar of the Canadian economy”.

Between 2011 and 2016, “the number of Cleantech companies is up 35% to 273, the number of BC-based employees is up 20% to 8,560, average wages have increased by 24% to \$84,000 and the amount of equity raised is also up 25% to \$6 billion.” The sector employs highly trained workers, such as engineers, designers, and sales and marketing professionals, resulting in that high average salary. 91% of companies are located in the Greater Vancouver area.

The survey respondents were only those early-stage companies whose primary purpose is developing new technologies – respondents were distributed as follows: 20% energy generation; 16% transportation; 12% Building efficiency; 12% Resource recovery and waste management; 11% industrial efficiency; 11% water and waste water; 7% transmission and storage; 4% sustainable agriculture, and a miscellaneous 7% remainder. Given the early stage of these companies, the key focus in the survey was on the sources of finance and the business climate for entrepreneurs. Results show that there is a heavy reliance on federal and provincial government incentive programs – for example, 75% of respondent companies had applied to the Scientific research and experimental development (SR&ED) program and over half had applied to the federal Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Clean energy industry](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Communications Technology](#), [Green Finance](#), [Tax Incentives](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How will Canada’s 2017 Budget support the environment and green job creation?

Posted on **March 16, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [shocking budget cuts](#) proposed by the Trump administration on March 16 will make it easier for Canada’s Finance Minister to shine when the Canadian Budget for 2017 is unveiled on March 22. Once made public, the Budget document will be available [here](#). Amongst the “10 Things Unions are looking for in Budget 2017”, released by the Canadian Labour

Congress on March 15, #6 is “Green Job Creation”. Mirroring the language of the [Clean Growth Century initiative](#), the CLC states: “Canada needs to envision the next hundred years as a Clean Growth Century, and we know it can be done in a way that is economically and socially responsible, without leaving behind workers and their communities. Budget 2017 should kick off ambitious programs to expand renewable energy generation, support home and building retrofits and dramatically increase the scale and quality of public transit in Canada.” Many other proposals were outlined in the [CLC’s Submission to the House of Commons Finance Committee](#) in the pre-Budget consultations, including: green bonds; expanded access to Labour Market Development Assistance programs and skills development for workers in the oil and gas, mining, steel production, and manufacturing industries; and renewable energy policies to improve access to renewable energy and facilitate local, renewable energy projects and reduce dependency on diesel in remote and First Nations communities.



The [Green Budget Coalition](#) represents sixteen of Canada’s largest environmental and conservation organizations. Their [Submission regarding the 2017 Budget](#) (November 2016) includes economic proposals – including an end to fossil fuel subsidies, and a carbon tax set at a realistic level based on the Social Cost of Carbon. With their strong, green focus, the Green Budget Coalition also includes specific proposals regarding conservation issues – freshwater resources, oceans and fisheries, habitat protection, and air quality. One specific, unique proposal relating to air quality – because of the link between radon and lung cancer, a federal income tax credit for individuals and small-scale landlords of 15 percent of the cost of radon mitigation work. Each recommendation is written by an expert member of the coalition, with specific, costed proposals and an indication of the federal government department needed to take the lead on action.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is well-known for its [Alternative Budget](#),



which takes a broader approach to the inequalities of the economy. Some of its main recommendations in the 2017 edition: a federal minimum wage of \$15 an hour, indexed to inflation; a national pharmacare program; improved access to child care; elimination of post-secondary education tuition; and investment in First Nations housing, water, infrastructure and education. The full report is titled [High Stakes, Clear Choices](#). Proposals relating to Just Transition are mainly outlined in the section on Employment Insurance (page 60), which frames it as “a major opportunity to move unemployed, underemployed, and low-paid workers into better jobs as a part of a strategic response to meeting our climate change targets. We can expand access to EI training programs with a focus on labour adjustment and transition. That way, Canadian workers could benefit from the transition to a green economy by accessing new, green jobs created by public

investment programs and sector strategies.” Other (costed) proposals regarding the environment and climate change (page 63) : an end to federal fossil fuel subsidies; reinstatement of energy efficiency incentive programs; assessment of the environmental impact of energy, tar sands, mining developments; and reinstatement of water programs at Environment and Climate Change Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Despite strong Strategy, Vancouver needs fuel-switching policies to meet its ambitious renewable energy goals for 2050

Posted on **March 16, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— English Bay, Vancouver B.C. Creative Commons License, originally posted to Flickr by JamesZ_Flickr

Vancouver is a green policy leader amongst Canadian municipalities, but on March 14, a new report from researchers at Simon Fraser University Energy and Materials Research Group asks [Can Cities Really Make a Difference? Case Study of Vancouver's Renewable City Strategy](#) . The report focuses on the building and transportation policies of the [Renewable City Strategy](#) , using CIMS, a hybrid energy-economy model which incorporates elements of consumer choice. Applauding Vancouver for its leadership to date, the authors conclude that current policies are likely to achieve only a 30 percent reduction on projected 2050 emissions, and fail to meet the Strategy's target of 100 percent renewable energy by 2050, an 80 percent reduction in GHG emissions on 2007 levels.

The report calls for stronger, politically-challenging “fuel-switching” for buildings and vehicles as the necessary next stage in emissions reduction. Amongst the specific actions suggested: No fossil fuel heating installations after 2030 for all new build residential buildings – instead, electric-powered heat pumps, solar hot water, electric thermal heat, or other zero emissions equipment. For vehicles, a gradual reduction of parking allocations for gasoline or diesel, starting in 2025, with no spaces remaining on city land for conventional cars by 2040 . Businesses would have to demonstrate exclusive use of renewably-powered fleet vehicles to qualify for a business license after 2030. Read the [press release from Simon Fraser](#) for an excellent summary; also the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, one of the sponsors of the research [here](#) . As for the [Globe and Mail summary](#) , report co-author Marc Jaccard has tweeted that it “misses my main point”, that municipal government needs the support of other government levels.

Ontario Teachers Pension Plan invests in clean technology

Posted on **March 14, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan acknowledges that “Climate change risks have global impacts that affect multiple sectors and companies. On the other hand, climate change will also present new investment opportunities, such as innovative technologies.” The embodiment of that approach came with the [OTPP announcement](#) on March 9 that it has partnered with Anbaric, a developer of clean energy transmission and microgrid projects from Wakefield Massachusetts. According to the [Boston Globe newspaper](#), Ontario Teachers will invest \$75 million initially to gain a 40 percent stake in Anbaric, creating a new management company, called [Anbaric Development Partners](#). Potential exists to invest a further \$2 billion in clean energy projects. The [OTPP press release](#) states, “Ontario Teachers’ investment in Anbaric creates an attractive launching pad for generating innovative energy jobs and boosting local economies while replacing our deteriorating and outdated fossil fuel-oriented grid with new and sustainable energy alternatives. This includes sophisticated high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission technology and microgrid projects that will bring renewables online with greater efficiency.” The Ontario Teachers Pension Plan controlled \$171.4 billion in net assets at December 31, 2015 on behalf of the province’s 316,000 current and retired teachers.

As a sophisticated, global investor, it has examined the risks of climate change, and in Fall of 2016, published [Climate Change: Separating the real risks for investors from the noise](#), which, like the [Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board](#), seems to acknowledge the reality and complexity of climate risk, while rejecting divestment of fossil fuel assets. The report states that “Investors need a toolbox of solutions to help manage physical and regulatory risks across their portfolios, both in the short and longer term. Portfolio carbon footprints are only one tool, and they have limitations. Divestment should be the outcome of a well informed and thoughtful investment process, rather than a wholesale approach to a single sector. “ And further – “Engagement with policy makers and companies provides investors with key pieces of information and could be the impetus for governments and companies to be more proactive in climate change mitigation or adaptation. “

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Divestment](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Ontario Teachers Pension Plan](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition proposals for Australia’s Coal Industry workers

Posted on **March 14, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Outside of the United States, it seems that there is general recognition that the coal industry is in decline, and that this demands a planned response to transition both the energy mix and the communities and workers. The [Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations \(IDDRI\)](#) in Paris, for example, is coordinating a [Coal Transitions Project](#), bringing together researchers from Australia, South Africa, Germany, Poland, India and China, to publish reports

examining past experiences in the six countries in March 2017, culminating with a global report and a consideration of the future of coal by 2018.

Australia's coal production has a long and highly-political history – summarized in “The long-term future of Australian coal is drying up” in *The Conversation* (October 2015), or “Australia's Addiction to Coal” in the *New York Times* (November 14, 2016) . Amidst this highly political climate, the current government established a [Senate Inquiry into the Retirement of Coal Fired Power Stations](#) in October 2016, to examine “the transition from ageing, high-carbon coal generation to clean energy” in light of the Paris Agreement commitments on emissions reductions , and the Agreement's provisions re just transitions. The deadline for the Inquiry's Final Report has been extended to the end of March; an *Interim Report* was released at the end of November 2016, with [Chapter 4](#) devoted to options for managing the transition for workers and communities. Submissions to the Senate committee are [here](#), listed by author. Three noteworthy examples: the Australian Psychology Association reviews the “flow-on psychosocial impacts on individuals, families and whole communities” of mass closures, but argues for the possibility of building “vibrant, diversified, energy sustainable communities with good local jobs, and capable of lifting the prospects of all citizens”. The submission states: “Community-led transitions that identify the community's needs and resources, involve the community in the formulation and control of change, and strengthen the local people's capacity for action, are critically important components of planned transitions. “” The [Appalachian Transition](#) and Renew Appalachia are cited as models of community building.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) submitted a thorough, 30-page proposal: *Sharing the challenges and opportunities of a clean energy economy: Policy discussion paper. A Just Transition for coal-fired electricity sector workers and communities*. Amongst the recommendations: establish a “national independent statutory authority”, named Energy Transition Australia (ETA), within the environment and energy portfolio, and reporting to the Minister and parliament. The ETA would be overseen by a tripartite advisory board comprised of industry, unions and government, with a mandate to oversee a planned and orderly closure of Australia's coal fired power stations; “manage an industry-wide multi-employer pooling and redeployment scheme, where existing workers would have an opportunity to be redeployed to remaining power stations or low-emissions generators; and develop a labour adjustment package to support workers obtain new decent and secure jobs, including by providing funding for workers to access job assistance support, retraining, early retirement and travel and relocation assistance.”

Finally, a submission by Professor [John Wiseman](#) of the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute lists and synthesizes many of the recommendations from recent Just Transition publications, including *Life After Coal: Pathways to a Just and Sustainable Transition for the Latrobe Valley* (October 2016). This report by the Environment department of the province of Victoria focuses on the four Hazelwood coal-fired power plants, scheduled to close as early as April 2017.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Coal Industry](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [community action](#), [Job displacement](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Union Proposals for a Just Transition for Alberta's coal workers

Posted on [March 14, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The phase-out of the Alberta's coal -fired electricity generation is in the works, with regulations begun by the Harper government and continued by the current provincial government in its [Climate Leadership Plan](#) . Approximately 3,000 workers at 18 coal-fired electricity plants and their associated mines will be affected by the end of the phase-out in 2030. In September 2016, consultant Terry Boston submitted [recommendations](#) to the government on how to transition the electricity supply; for public consultation about transition issues for workers and communities, an [Advisory Panel on Coal Communities](#) was established, and is scheduled to release its report “in early Spring 2017”.

On March 3, the union-based [Coal Transition Coalition](#) unveiled its detailed policy recommendations for the Advisory Panel. *Getting it Right: A Just Transition Strategy for Alberta's Coal Workers* , aims to influence discussion early on in the planning process, to ensure that issues such as pensions, severance, labour-retention strategies and



— Coal Transition Coalition logo

economic diversification are built in from the start. *Getting it Right* chronicles government policies and the coal mines to be affected, then describes in detail four case study examples of coal transitions in the U.S. and the Ruhr Valley in Germany . These case studies form the basis of the “Lessons learned” section, which in turn form the basis of the recommendations.

The Coalition's recommendations emphasize the advantage of a long-lead time available, the importance of unique, community-led plans, and the importance of public and political acceptance of the Transition programs. Income replacement and severance benefits are a central concern – calling for enhanced federal Employment Insurance program benefits, and a provincial pension bridging trust fund with adequate reserves to help workers just shy of retirement in 2030. The Coalition also recommends that the province conduct an audit of existing pensions and their coverage and gaps, and prepare a plan to ensure pensions are fully funded and mandated to meet their obligations. The report cites a separate report commissioned by the Alberta Federation of Labour, *Pension And Benefit Plans In A Just Transitions Strategy For The Alberta Coal-Fired Electricity Industry* (November 2016)), which is not available online.

The core recommendation is to establish an Alberta Economic Adjustment Agency , free of political interference, to develop “a just transition plan that places the interests of affected workers, their families and communities as its highest priority”. Programs would be funded through an Alberta Economic Adjustment Trust Fund, governed by an independent board of trustees to guard against any political or industry interference, and financed through contributions “on the order of \$10 million to \$20 million per year” leading up to 2030. The report is silent on who will provide the funding.

The [Coal Transition Coalition](#) is led by the Alberta Federation of Labour and includes the following unions: Canadian Energy Workers Association, CSU 52, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Ironworkers Local 720 , Unifor, United Steelworkers, and United Utility Workers Association.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Alberta Federation of Labour](#), [Coal Industry](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition policies lacking in federal and provincial climate policies in Canada

Posted on **March 7, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In February, the Adapting Work and Workplaces (ACW) project released three preliminary working papers in a series called *Evaluating government plans and actions to reduce GHG emissions in Canada* . The first report, *Federal progress through June 2016* (July 2016) and the second, *Provincial and territorial progress through October 2016* (November 2016) provide specific summaries of climate policies in their respective jurisdictions since November 2015, and in general, they conclude that “Despite missteps, oversights and political backtracking, Canada’s climate policy has evolved to be relatively comprehensive and broadly supported”. Significantly, the papers point out that “a large ambition gap remains between governments’ GHG targets and their actual emission reduction policies. the emissions-intensive production of oil and gas resources has largely escaped stringent, targeted GHG mitigation measures. Indeed, through direct and indirect subsidies, Canadian governments continue to promote oil and gas expansion despite its incompatibility with those same governments’ climate objectives.”

[Just Transition policies](#) is the focus of the third preliminary working paper in the ACW series. It springs from the idea that just transition policy is a crucial and urgent, but under-developed, aspect of Canadian governments' climate plans. It characterizes "just transition" as a concept developed by the labour movement. "It is a social justice framework for facilitating the low-carbon transition in a way that minimizes negative employment impacts and ensures equitable outcomes for worker." In defining "just transition", the paper differentiates it from "climate justice", stating, "A just transition is one of the goals of climate justice advocates, but the two concepts are distinct. Climate justice goes beyond workers, for example, to demand the poor are not disproportionately hurt by policies such as carbon pricing."

The report reviews the latest climate plans published by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, discovering and describing: 1. Policies that provide income supports to laid-off workers; 2. Policies that provide skills training and re-training for the low-carbon economy, and 3. Policies that directly create new jobs, especially in the communities and regions adversely affected by climate policies. The conclusion: all Canadian jurisdictions "get a failing grade" on all three subjects. The paper calls for improved income support programs, since policy seems to favour training and retraining over income support in the existing federal unemployment insurance program, as well as in provincial climate policies which allow for reinvestment of carbon revenue, such as Alberta and Ontario. Workforce development policies seem to receive the most attention – while still lacking in most provinces. Finally, job creation policy is judged to be "hands-off", with governments assuming that new investment in clean energy industries will be sufficient.

All three preliminary reports were authored by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, in association with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. A final, consolidated report is anticipated by Spring 2017.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Job Creation](#), [Just Transition](#), [provincial climate policies](#), [Retraining](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Renewable Energy legislation in Massachusetts earmarks funds for Just Transition, Environmental Justice

Posted on **March 6, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

We are used to looking to California for leadership in climate change policy – and the Senate bill SB58, [California Renewables Portfolio Standard Program](#) continues that reputation. Although only in rough draft form as it was introduced in February, it proposes to accelerate the target for sourcing electricity from renewable energy to 50 per cent by 2025, and 100% by 2045. Inside Climate News has [a summary](#) of the renewable energy legislation; for a detailed view of the importance of California as a standard-bearer for climate change action, read "[In the Face of a Trump Environmental Rollback, California Stands in Defiance](#)" (Feb. 21) in *Yale Environment* 360.

Massachusetts is less often recognized for its leadership, despite its commitment in the Global Warming Solutions Act, 2008 to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions 80 per cent from 1990 levels by 2050 . In addition, [An Act to transition Massachusetts to 100 per cent renewable energy](#) (S.1849) was introduced into the legislature in January 2017, requiring the state to achieve 100 percent renewable electricity generation by 2035, and phase out the use of fossil fuels across all sectors, including heating and transportation, by 2050. Advocacy group Environment Massachusetts provides a summary [here](#) . The [text of the Act](#) calls for a Council for Clean Energy Workforce Development, specifying that it include representatives from organized labour, as well as universities and community colleges, renewable energy businesses, occupational training organizations, economic development organizations, community development organizations, and "organizations serving Environmental Justice Populations". A Workforce Development Fund would also be authorized, with "At least half of the funds spent from the clean energy workforce development account on an annual basis shall be spent on programs and initiatives that primarily benefit (1) fossil fuel workers displaced in the transition to renewable

energy, (2) residents of gateway municipalities, or (3) residents of areas identified as Environmental Justice Populations under the Environmental Justice Policy of the executive office of energy and environmental affairs. “

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [California](#), [Energy policy](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Just Transition](#), [Massachusetts](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Bank of Canada sees risks of climate change; Insurers urge end to fossil fuel subsidies

Posted on **March 5, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 2, in a speech in Montreal, the Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada weighed in on the economic and financial risks of climate change, and the role of the Bank (BoC) . In *Thermometer Rising—Climate Change and Canada’s Economic Future* , the Deputy Governor drew on 2011 estimates from the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) when he acknowledged that in Canada alone, “ in the absence of action to address global warming, we would face annual costs of between \$21 billion and \$43 billion by the 2050s”. Touching on the role of carbon pricing and green finance such as green bonds, he also states: “enhanced transparency and analytical tools are also needed” to enable investors to exploit green investment opportunities. However, “In contrast to some other central banks, the Bank of Canada is not directly responsible for regulating banks, insurance companies and similar financial institutions. . . . We do not regulate financial markets and thus do not have the mandate to establish standards of transparency and disclosure in support of green finance. . . . We do, however, have a broader set of responsibilities to support financial stability, including identifying, analyzing and assessing both imminent and emerging systemic risks. We bring this risk assessment into our discussions with other agencies that control the relevant policy levers.”

Private financial institutions and companies are trying to influence those policy levers – specifically, about fossil fuel subsidies. In a [Public Statement addressed to the governments of G20 countries](#), a group of 16 investment and insurance companies managing more than USD \$2.8 trillion in assets states: “Subsidies and public finance supporting the production and consumption of fossil fuels are a key concern to the finance sector. They increase the risk of stranded fossil fuel assets, decrease the competitiveness of key industries, including low-carbon businesses, and negate the carbon price signals many of us have been calling for. They are also notoriously inefficient from an economics standpoint. They create a significant burden on government budgets, perpetuate income inequality by benefiting the richest consumers while failing to meet the energy needs of those lacking energy access, and damage public health by increasing air pollution.” The Statement then calls on the G20 governments to commit to “a clear timeline for the full and equitable phase-out by all G20 members of all fossil fuel subsidies by 2020, starting with the elimination of all subsidies for fossil fuel exploration and coal production.”

What would be the impact of removing fossil fuel subsidies? The most recent estimate comes from the Overseas Development Institute and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) [Global Subsidies Initiative](#) in *Zombie Energy: Climate Benefits of Ending Subsidies to Fossil Fuel Production*. It concludes that if subsidies to fossil fuel production were removed across the globe, the world’s GhG emissions would be reduced by 37 Gt of carbon dioxide by 2050. The authors call this “ likely a low-end estimate”, partly because it relies on what they say is a “conservative estimate of global production subsidies in G20 countries” : \$70 billion U.S. annually. For more on this longstanding issue, see the Global Subsidies Initiative [webpage on fossil fuel subsidies](#).

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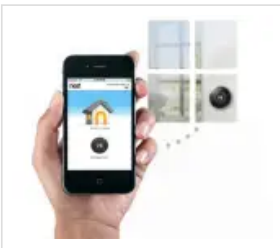
Alberta reinvesting carbon levy revenues in clean energy programs

Posted on **March 5, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Alberta announced a new

Residential and Commercial Solar rebate program on February 27, funded with \$36 million from revenues from the province's carbon levy. The government estimates that the program will stimulate up to 900 jobs in the solar sector, while reducing GHG emissions and cutting installation costs for residences by 30 per cent and for businesses and non-profits by 25 per cent. In combination with a December 2016 change to the [Micro-generation Regulation](#), which increased the allowable capacity of micro-generation systems to five megawatts, the rebate program is meant especially to encourage solar commercial and community operations. The [Pembina Institute reaction](#) highlights the aspect of microgeneration and distributed energy; [DeSmog Blog](#) gives more details and context about the overall growth of solar in Alberta. Iron and Earth, the workers' organization promoting the transition from oil and gas to renewables, calls the announcement a "great first step" on their [Facebook page](#), and notes their previous call to the Alberta government for increased access to solar skills training programs.



On February 28, the government issued an invitation for Albertans to register for a [Residential No-Charge Energy Savings Program](#), encouraging all households, regardless of income, to upgrade to more energy-efficient products, including LED lights, high efficiency shower heads, and smart thermostats. Installation and product costs will be borne by the province and financed, again, through carbon levy revenues.

Finally, on March 3, Alberta announced matched funding of \$10 million from the province and the federal government for a Calgary-based Alberta Carbon Conversion Technology Centre (ACCTC). The facility will "test breakthrough technologies that convert CO2 from harmful emissions into applications for everyday use." It will be owned and operated by [InnoTech Alberta](#), a subsidiary of Alberta Innovates; the goal is to support "Alberta-based technology developers, as well as attracting global companies and world-class researchers to the province". The [Pembina Institute](#) calls it "a plug and play technology sandbox" and "an excellent way to create partnerships and accelerate our learning with respect to new technologies, in order to develop emissions solutions and create economic opportunities." The [Alberta Clean Technology Industry Alliance](#) also approves. The investment follows a February 13 meeting to expand and renew the Alberta – Canada Collaboratory on Clean Energy Research and Technology [Memorandum of Understanding](#).

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Fossil fuel approvals, job creation, and the gap in Canada's emissions goals

Posted on [March 3, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Assessing the Federal Government's Actions on Climate Change was released by the Green Economy Network in February (with a 4-page Executive Summary [here](#)). It estimates the job creation value of four fossil fuel projects under active consideration – Petronas LNG in B.C., Kinder Morgan TransMountain Pipeline, Enbridge Line 3, and Keystone XL Pipeline – using figures from the proponents of those projects, and concludes that the estimated total investment of \$60.3 billion would result in 380,900 direct, indirect, and induced person job years of employment over 5 years, many of which would be in the U.S. The investment would also increase Canada's annual GHG emissions by 89.9 megatonnes. In comparison, GEN estimates the job creation and emissions impacts of that same \$60.3 billion investment if it were directed to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and transit, as recommended in its *One Million Climate Jobs Plan* . GEN concludes that the green investments would create 784,570 person job years of employment over five years while reducing annual GHG emissions by up to 190 Mt after ten years.

In its discussion of the government's *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* , the Green Economy Network notes that “it is unclear how the emissions from federally approved fossil fuel infrastructure projects are factored into the PCF”. Regarding the Pan-Canadian Framework considerations of employment and Just Transition issues , the report further states: “Calculations for job creation from each of the proposed measures are completely absent”. Though the term “Just Transition” gets a mention, “there are no specific measures outlined to ensure that workers and their families are supported in the transition to a low-carbon economy.” ... “The Framework also misses a significant opportunity to demonstrate how major public infrastructure projects can be designed to include Just Transition measures, including skills training and integrating mandatory requirements for contractors to sponsor apprenticeships, which will aid in increasing apprenticeship completion rates and ensure that our workers have the skills that they need.” GEN makes recommendations to improve these deficiencies.

The [Green Economy Network](#) represents the concerns and solutions of an alliance of approximately 25 labour unions, environment and social justice organizations in Canada. Their signature [One Million Jobs campaign](#) is part of an international campaign which includes the U.K. and South Africa.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [employment impacts](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Job Creation](#), [Just Transition](#), [Keystone XL](#), [Kinder Morgan pipeline](#), [One Million Jobs Campaign](#), [Pan Canadian Framework](#), [Petronas LNG](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario releases its strategy for a Circular Economy

Posted on [March 2, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 1, the government of Ontario [announced](#) the final version of its *Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario: Building the Circular Economy* , arguing for the importance of a circular economy, given that the waste sector is responsible for 6% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario, yet the current recycling rate is only 25%. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change states: “Ontario has an opportunity to reduce emissions coming from waste, decrease our reliance on virgin materials, enhance environmental protection and bring new economic growth, job opportunities and savings to consumers and taxpayers.”

What is a circular economy? The Strategy states that it aims “to eliminate waste, not just from recycling processes, but throughout the lifecycles of products and packaging. A circular economy aims to maximize value and eliminate waste by

improving the design of materials, products and business models. A circular economy goes beyond recycling. The goal is not just to design for better end-of-life recovery, but to minimize the use of raw materials and energy through a restorative system.” Recognizing that a circular economy involves fundamental changes for producers and consumers, the Strategy document lays out a visionary goal of a 100% waste-free economy, with an interim goal for diversion of 30 per cent by 2020, 50 per cent by 2030, and 80% by 2050.

The Strategy document includes specific steps to be taken in the next 10 years, under the [Waste Free Ontario Act, 2016](#) and its two parts, the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016, and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016.

The [Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016](#), established an “outcomes-based producer responsibility regime”, which makes producers environmentally accountable and financially responsible for recovering resources and reducing waste associated with their products and packaging. It also established the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority to operate a data Registry and oversee producer performance by conducting compliance and enforcement activities. The [Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016](#) will authorize the gradual replacement of the existing recycling programs, with changes to the Used Tired Program already underway, and consultations for a Food and Organic Waste Action Plan scheduled for 2017.

For further reading: Canadian readers will be familiar with a report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2013, [Closing the Loop: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Zero Waste in BC](#), and can keep up to date with the [blog from Canada’s National Zero Waste Council](#). International news reports are monitored at [The Guardian](#) newspaper in its [Circular Economy](#) section. An overview of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan is available from the European Commission website [here](#), and see “[First year verdict: how much progress has the EU’s Circular Economy Action Plan made?](#)”. The [Alliance for Circular Economy Solutions \(ACES\)](#) has a European focus, and in December 2015 published [Unemployment and the circular economy](#), which shows how the development of the circular economy in Europe could impact the jobs market in Italy, Poland and Germany. The [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) has a global focus with a broad range, and normally releases reports at the Davos meetings of the World Economic Forum. At the January 2017 meetings, it released the latest in a series of reports on the plastics industry: [The New Plastics Economy: Catalysing Action](#)

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Brexit is seen as a turning point for UK Climate Change Policy

Posted on **March 2, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On February 22, the new Greener UK coalition [released](#) a manifesto, calling on the UK government to use the Brexit process as an opportunity to restore and enhance environmental protections in the UK. The [Manifesto for a Greener UK](#) follows the release on February 14 of a House of Lords report, [Brexit: Environment and climate change](#). For a discussion of the basic issues of concern, read “[Brexit will be a pivotal moment for the UK’s environment](#)” (December 2016), and read also Greener UK’s [Pledge for the Environment](#), which has been signed by over 145 Members of Parliament from all parties. Greener UK has also prepared a Briefing Note for Members of Parliament: [The repeal bill and a greener UK: Maintaining a greener UK as the UK exits the EU](#). Follow developments on the [Inside Track](#) blog, published by Green Alliance.

One of the key proposals of the February [Manifesto](#) is that Britain should continue to show climate leadership, to co-operate with the EU on energy and climate change, and to affirm ongoing investment and deployment of clean energy infrastructure. It also calls for a new Environment Act for England, “building on the upcoming 25 year plan with measurable milestones for environmental restoration and high standards for pollution and resource efficiency”. Greener UK has published policy documents supporting each of the four priorities of the Manifesto: [Food and Farming](#); [Fisheries and Marine](#); [Climate and Energy](#); and [Environment and Wildlife Laws](#).

Greener UK was launched in December 2016, coordinated by [Green Alliance](#). Greener UK consists of 13 major environmental organizations with a combined membership of 7.9 million, and includes: Campaign for Better Transport, ClientEarth, Campaign to Protect Rural England, E3G, Friends of the Earth, Green Alliance, Greenpeace, National Trust, RSPB, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, The Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust and WWF.

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B.C. Municipalities urged to take fossil fuel giants to court

Posted on **March 1, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In January, West Coast Environmental Law and over 50 other environmental, health, human rights, women's rights, and faith-based organizations sent an [Open Letter](#) to local municipalities in British Columbia, urging them 1.) to write to fossil fuel companies, demanding accountability for the climate change costs being borne by citizens, and 2.) To consider participating in a class action lawsuit against the big polluters. As part of their new initiative, called [Climate Law in Our Own Hands](#), West Coast Environmental Law is offering legal research and support to interested local governments, as well as template letters and fossil fuel company addresses to facilitate the letter-writing campaign. WCEL argues that fossil fuel companies will only start working towards climate change solutions when they are held to account to pay their fair share for the damage being caused. According to one of the Open Letter signatories, [Sierra Club B.C.](#), "The Province of BC has estimated that Metro Vancouver Municipalities will need to spend \$9.5 billion between now and 2100 to address rising sea-levels (about \$100 million per year on average)." The list could continue to add wildfires, the destruction of forests by the mountain pine beetle, drought, and extreme weather.

WCEL is not new to this issue, but rather have been active since the 2015 landmark [Urgenda case](#) in the Netherlands, when they released their report [Taking climate justice into our own hands](#), which included a draft [Climate Compensation Act](#). The new website, [Climate Law in Our Own Hands](#) maintains a blog about legal actions around the world, including a November 2016 report about 420 "grannies" in Switzerland who are working with Greenpeace Switzerland to [launch a legal challenge](#) against the Swiss government for inadequately addressing threats to their health and future generations from climate change. Other high profile court cases underway include the challenge to stop Arctic drilling by [Norwegian youth and Greenpeace in Norway](#), and the ongoing cases led by [Our Children's Trust](#) against the U.S. federal and state governments. The federal case, [Juliana v. United States](#) first launched in 2015, and most recently (November 10, 2016) has been permitted to proceed to trial, after Judge Ann Aiken issued an [opinion and order](#) denying the U.S. government and fossil fuel industry's motions to dismiss. The 21 plaintiffs, mostly teenagers, are suing for the constitutional right of future generations to live in a healthy and safe environment.

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [climate change damages](#), [Climate Justice](#), [Climate Legislation](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Our Children's Trust](#), [Urgenda Climate Case](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A fair economy and a fair transition need input from Labour, business and civil society

Posted on **February 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Clean Growth Century Initiative has launched a series of OpEd's with a February 20 post, [A New Economy and a Fair Transition for Workers](#) authored by Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress; Robert Walker, Vice President, ESG Services and NEI Investments; and Steven Fish, Executive Director, Canadian Business for Social Responsibility. They write: "Canadian workers — and not only those in the fossil fuel sector — have seen a rise in job

insecurity and a decline in good-quality employment in recent years. By implementing a clean growth shift, Canada can and must improve prosperity in a broad-based way. Anything less risks a breakdown of the political conditions that lead to climate action.” The authors call for policy development that will address both climate change and economic inequality, and that involves communities, labour organizations, businesses and civil society. This statement also appears as part of the IRPP *Policy Options* Special Issue for February “Public Policy towards 2067”.

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Low Carbon Fuel Standards vs. Renewable Fuel Standards

Posted on **February 20, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report from Smart Prosperity (formerly Sustainable Prosperity) contrasts the advantages and features of a Renewable Fuel Standard – in force federally and in five provinces – with a Low Carbon Fuel Standard, in force in Canada only in [British Columbia](#). The discussion is timely, given that the federal government and the province of Ontario are both considering Low Carbon Fuel Standard policies. In “[How a Low Carbon Fuel Standard could reduce your GHG footprint without you even noticing](#)”, Smart Prosperity answers “what it is” and “what it does” questions; its [Policy Brief](#) discusses the complex questions of policy design, “particularly around regional impacts, equity concerns, cost effectiveness, and innovation impacts”. Read also the Ontario Discussion paper: [Developing a modern renewal fuel standard for gasoline in Ontario](#). The federal government posted a clean fuel standard [Backgrounder](#) about its goals (November 2016), which include using life cycle analysis of fuel production, and extending coverage beyond transportation fuels. [Other jurisdictions](#) which use a LCFS include California, Oregon, and the state of Washington.

UPDATE: On February 23, Friends of the Earth released a discussion paper, [Working Towards A Clean Fuel Strategy for Canada:Key Questions](#). The subtitle says a lot: *How to make a Canadian Clean Fuel Strategy more than a cosmetic exercise to sanitize the image of the oil industry*. Noting that Environment and Climate Change Canada has provided only vague information so far in its consideration of the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, Friends of the Earth states its concern that an inadequate policy could greenwash the use of fossil fuels and thus prolong their use, rather than supporting a just transition off fossil fuels and stimulating the development of alternative fuels. The discussion paper is a thorough review of past experience with biofuel and ethanol policies.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [alternative fuels](#), [Biofuels](#), [British Columbia](#), [Low Carbon Fuel Standard](#), [Ontario](#), [renewable fuel standard](#), [Vehicle emission standards](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

European Union votes on reforms to Emissions Trading System

Posted on **February 20, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On February 15, the European Parliament adopted draft reforms of the EU’s emission trading system (ETS), the centrepiece of European emissions reduction policy – choosing the less ambitious proposal of a reduction on the cap on emissions of only 2.2% per year until at least 2024. Climate Action Network Europe’s [Letter to Policymakers](#) ahead of the vote outlined the arguments and proposals for environmentally-ambitious change, including a higher price on carbon and inclusion of the cement, aviation and shipping industries. Its [reaction after the vote](#) stated: “It is shocking that the Parliament chose to bow to the interests of polluting industries instead of protecting citizens from a catastrophic climate breakdown. The Parliament has completely failed the first test of its commitment to the Paris Agreement. The proposed reforms will keep the carbon market ineffective for a decade or more. We urge progressive EU governments to finally turn the ETS into a functioning tool and create a stimulus to ditch old models and move to green economy.” One of the three reforms urged by 31 environmental organizations in an [Open Letter to the MEP’s in November 2016](#) had been the

establishment of the Just Transition Fund for communities and regions which need support to transition away from coal. The reforms will be debated next at the Council of Environment Ministers on 28 February; the EU's 28 governments must negotiate further to finalize the legislation.

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Energy Efficiency and Community Energy: Incentives in Alberta, a Success Story in B.C.

Posted on **February 20, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Getting it Right: A More Energy Efficient Alberta is the final report of the government's [Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel](#), and "a road map for creating jobs, diversifying the economy and saving Albertans money" according to the government [press release](#) on January 23. All programs will be coordinated through the newly-created agency, [Energy Efficiency Alberta](#); three programs are already underway, using revenue from the Alberta carbon levy to provide incentives or rebates for energy-saving appliances and equipment, solar panels, and retrofitting. The Energy Efficiency Alberta mandate also extends to community-owned renewable energy systems and non-utility scale community energy systems; the Panel report proposes short-term and long-term financial incentives to support community wind and other renewable energy installations, along with complementary technologies such as storage and smart grid applications.

The *Getting it Right report* also includes a goal of increased "capacity development", which "can take the form of post-secondary education and training, professional development and training activities, conferences and other events" to improve energy-related skills. The report includes an appendix of the energy-related research programs in Alberta universities. Summaries of the public discussions are [here](#); a submissions library [here](#) constitutes an impressive collection of information about energy efficiency.

In British Columbia: a success story of a community-owned solar farm in the city of Kimberly, [highlighted in Clean Energy Review](#). [Sunmine](#) is "BC's largest solar project, Canada's largest solar tracking facility, and the first solar project in B.C. to sell power to the BC Hydro grid." Citizens of the city approved the project in a referendum in 2011; city administrators managed the planning and financing; and the mining company Teck provided the land and infrastructure of its reclaimed Sullivan Mine Concentrator site, plus \$2 million. Since it began operation in 2015, Sunmine has won numerous awards, including Community of the Year Award by Clean Energy BC in 2015, and in 2017, the [Clean 50 award](#) for outstanding contributions to clean capitalism. A short video about the Sunmine project by Green Energy Futures is [here](#).

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National Energy Board Modernization – Hearings are underway

Posted on **February 19, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Public hearings by the [Expert Panel on the Modernization of the National Energy Board](#) began in Saskatoon in January and will conclude in Montreal at the end of March (the [schedule is here](#)). With transparency and accountability a key concern about the NEB, it is surprising that no transcripts or submissions will be made available online, only government-prepared [summaries](#). Fortunately, press reports are providing the public with some information: an important example, a report by Andrew Nikofofuk from the Vancouver hearings appeared in *The Tyee* on February 9, summarizing the testimony

of Marc Eliesen, a former chair of Ontario and BC Hydro and a critic of the NEB [since the 2014 Trans Mountain Pipeline hearings](#). As quoted in [“Time to Reform Our ‘Captured’ National Energy Board, Says Expert”](#), Mr. Eliesen reiterated his earlier criticism that the NEB a “captured regulator” that no longer operates in the public interest. “The attitudinal bias that stems from a close interaction between NEB board members, NEB staff and the energy industry, means the goals and aspirations of the Alberta energy sector have become those of the board.” Eliesen recommended that all current NEB board members should be replaced by people from a broader range of expertise, not just the oil and gas industry. He also recommended that the NEB’s head office be moved from Calgary back to Ottawa. In [“How to Fix the National Energy Board, Canada’s ‘Captured Regulator’”](#), *DeSmog Blog* (Feb 8) also summarized Eliesen’s testimony, as well as that of Eugene Kung, staff counsel at West Coast Environmental Law.

Proposals for improving the discredited NEB have come from a Pembina Institute report: [Good Governance in the era of low carbon: a Vision for a modernized National Energy Board](#). From Pembina: “significant reforms to the NEB Act, and to the operating culture and practices at the Board, are required.” The report lays out 9 essential conditions to transform energy regulation, including: “Energy regulators must be independent of bias and interferences from government and non-government stakeholders. ...Energy regulators should proactively and predictably support involvement of all interested parties and the public as a fundamental component of evidence gathering, decision-making and monitoring.” Environmental Defence has also weighed in with [“Six key ways to modernize energy regulation in Canada”](#), and has also called for the restart of the Energy East Pipeline review process to wait until new rules for the NEB are in place. (the previous Energy East Review was declared void in January 2017). The report and recommendations of the Expert Panel on Modernization of the National Energy Board is scheduled for submission to the Minister of Natural Resources by mid-May 2017.

A whiff of the bias that so many have noted at the NEB continues, in one of the “related documents” provided at the Expert Panel website: the Interim Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, titled [Pipelines for Oil: Protecting our Economy, Respecting our Environment](#) (Dec. 2016). It begins: “Petroleum pipelines, like highways, railways and power line corridors, are long established in Canada. They are instrumental to the quality of life and the standard of living we enjoy in Canada today. Pipelines have no equal when it comes to the safe, reliable and cost-efficient movement of petroleum over long distances. They are critically important to the creation of wealth in Canada and their use and development are in the public interest and the greater good of all Canadians.” It pronounces on the concepts of social license, the public good, confidence in the regulatory process, then proposes an oil transportation strategy which includes pipelines and tankers. From the conclusion: “The Committee believes that new pipelines will act as a lifeline to the Canadian economy, which has been hard hit in the oil and gas sector. Pipelines to the east and west coasts will ensure that Canadian oil producers get the full value of this resource on world markets, reduce refineries’ dependence on oil imports and improve public safety. The Committee has made recommendations to Natural Resources Canada, Transport Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The Committee believes that these recommendations will help form a strategy to improve public confidence and break the paralysis preventing the construction of pipelines in Canada.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [National Energy Board \(NEB\)](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Trade Unionists consider their response to Climate Refugees

Posted on [February 19, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Fort McMurray Alberta 2016

A sold-out conference on February 11 in the U.K. brought trade unionists and environmental and human rights groups together to consider the plight of climate refugees. “Climate Refugees – The Climate Crisis and Population Displacement: Building a Trade Union and Civil Society Response” was led by the UK’s [Campaign Against Climate Change](#) and [Friends of the Earth UK](#), and supported by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Fire Brigades Union, Unite, Unison, National Union of Teachers, and others. The existential threat of natural disasters (including the [fires at Fort McMurray](#) in Alberta) was cited, and delegates were told that in the past six years over 140 million people have been displaced through climate-related disasters – one person every second.



The goal of the conference was “to dispel myths about refugees, debate the need for the need for a global response based on justice and solidarity including the need for legal protection for those being displaced by the climate crisis, and discuss how we can build a powerful movement that can demand stronger government leadership on this fundamental issue.” The Conference agenda is [here](#), and includes a sign-up opportunity for those who want to be updated on related news; a summary of some presentations is [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate refugees](#), [Fort McMurray wildfires](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

LiUNA’s Canadian Pension Fund invests in clean energy

Posted on [February 19, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Labourers International Union of North America (LiUNA), under the leadership of Terry Sullivan in the U.S., is known for its support of the recent Trump-government decisions to proceed with [the Dakota Access Pipeline](#) and the [Keystone Pipeline](#). Taking a greener position, on February 6, the pension fund of LiUNA in Canada committed to provide \$200-million in investment funding for NRSor, a Canadian energy storage company, which among other projects, plans to market the Tesla Powerwall in Canada. See the [NStor press release](#) or a [Globe and Mail article](#) (Feb. 6) which quotes LiUNA international vice-president Joe Mancinelli: “We believe energy storage is a key enabler of our future energy

system, and welcome the opportunity to invest capital into low-carbon assets on behalf of our pension fund.” The [LiUNA Pension Fund of Central and Eastern Canada](#) is a multi-employer fund with \$5.7-billion in assets under management.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [energy storage](#), [labour union policies](#), [Labourers' International Union \(LIUNA\)](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Wind and Solar industry groups report healthy growth

Posted on **February 17, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



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Wind installations in Canada have grown by 18% in the last 4 years, according to the [latest statistics](#) released in February by the [Canadian Wind Energy Association \(CanWEA\)](#). There are now 285 wind farms, made up of 6,288 wind turbines in Canada, representing about \$1.5 billion in investment. Most wind projects are in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and Nova Scotia. The greatest growth occurred in Nova Scotia in 2016, mostly driven by the province’s community feed-in tariff program. An article by the UBC Sauder School of Business summarizes the results with emphasis on British Columbia: [“B.C. Lags during banner year for wind power”](#) .

The [American Wind Energy Association \(AWEA\)](#) also released [new statistics](#), on Feb. 9, showing that wind has surpassed hydropower dams to become the largest source of renewable electric capacity in the U.S., and the fourth largest overall. Texas is the undisputed leader in wind energy, with 25% of the national capacity and nearly 25% of the jobs – including at 40 wind manufacturing facilities in the state. The industry report points out that “Of the \$13.8 billion invested by the U.S. wind industry last year, \$10.5 billion was invested in low-income counties”, making rural and Rust Belt America among the greatest beneficiaries of wind power development.

The European industry body, WindEurope, released its [latest statistical report](#) on February 9th, showing “The cost of wind power continues to plummet, and this is particularly the case for the European offshore sector, which has met and exceeded its 2020 price targets by a substantial margin, and five years early.” In [“Off-shore wind moves in to energy’s mainstream”](#), the *New York Times* provides an overview, mostly of Europe, and observes, “Offshore wind still represents only a tenth of new generation in the sector, ...but investment in the industry nearly tripled in the five years to 2015.”

Finally, the [Global Wind Energy Council \(GWEC\)](#) published its [annual statistics report](#) in the first week of February; the 4-page statistical overview is [here](#) . It reveals that China is leading the way in installed wind power (34.7% of global installed power) , followed well behind by the United States (16.9%) , Germany (10.3%), and India (5.9%) . Canada ranks 7th with 2.4% of global installed capacity.

SOLAR INDUSTRY: According to the 2017 edition of the [Solar Jobs Census](#) released by the Solar Foundation on February 7, more than 51,000 solar industry jobs were added in the U.S. in 2016 – bringing the total number of Americans working in the industry to 260,000. A Bloomberg News summary of the report, [“U.S. Solar Industry clamors for workers as employment climbs by 25%”](#), quotes the Executive Director of the Solar Foundation: “Solar manufacturing, installation, and operation now “employ more [Americans] than Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Apple combined...These are well-paying, family-sustaining jobs with low barriers to entry, with average wages at US\$26 per hour for solar installation.”

The U.S. Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) is also bullish on the industry in its 4th Quarter “US Solar Market Insight” [report](#), conducted by GTM Research and the SEIA. It shows a record-breaking number of solar installations in 2015, so that the U.S. now hosts more than 1.3 million solar photovoltaic installations with enough capacity to power 8.3 million households. The report states: “While U.S. solar grew across all segments, what stands out is the double digit gigawatt boom in utility-scale solar, primarily due to solar’s cost competitiveness with natural gas alternatives.”

For a comprehensive overview of employment statistics for all sectors of the renewable energy industry, see the [Jobs in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fact Sheet](#), released by the Environmental and Energy Institute (Washington, D.C.) in February. The Fact Sheet compiles statistics from many sources, though it relies heavily on the U.S. Department of Energy report, [U.S. Energy and Employment Report \(USEER\)](#) (January 2017), and the [Renewable Energy and Jobs Annual Review](#) (2016) from International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Are we deceiving ourselves about clean energy progress?

Posted on [February 17, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a new discussion paper released in January by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), authors Sean Sweeney and John Treat argue that momentum has not really shifted away from fossil fuels, and the optimistic, “green growth” narrative is overstated. Analysing a wide range of major data sources about the global energy system, the authors conclude that optimism in a clean energy revolution is “misplaced, misleading, and disarming. It must therefore be rejected, and replaced with a more sober perspective that draws hope and confidence not from a selective and self-deceiving interpretation of the data, but from the rising global movement for climate justice and energy democracy, armed with clear programmatic goals and a firm commitment to achieve them.”

The authors of [Energy Transition: Are we winning?](#) give credit to unions and activists for their demands to extend public control and social ownership to power generation, and for opening up a global debate about the need for just transition measures. However, they call for the union movement to address its “ambition deficit” towards the deep restructuring of the global economy required for ambitious deployment of renewable energy. Energy systems controlled by ordinary people in partnership with well-run and accountable public agencies are needed to truly move the world away from fossil fuels.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [energy democracy](#), [labour union policies](#), [renewable energy](#), [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy \(TUED\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Provincial updates: Climate Plan for B.C.;

Ontario issues Green Bonds

Posted on **February 5, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In British Columbia: On February 2, with a provincial election approaching in the Spring, the Leader of the B.C. New Democratic Party [announced](#) a new [Clean Growth Climate Action plan](#), based on “The core principle that we must mitigate financial impacts of the federal government’s carbon pricing increases on low and middle income families, which the Plan proposes to provide relief for 80% of B.C. families.” ... After family rebates are paid, the plan proposes to “invest the remaining carbon tax revenues in good jobs building public transit, expanding clean and green technology industries, and building energy efficient construction in every B.C. community.” A complete summary, along with reaction from environmental experts, appears in “[BC NDP climate plan ‘shows real action,’ say environmentalists](#)” in the *National Observer* (Feb. 3). [Reaction from the Pembina Institute](#): “We are pleased to see the commitment to implementing the [recommendations of the Premier’s Climate Leadership Team](#)... — in particular, the pledge to adopt the proposed 2030 target and sector-by-sector targets for emissions.”

In Ontario: On February 3, Ontario [announced](#) the success of an \$800 million green bond issue with a maturity date of January 27, 2023. This is the third issue of Green Bonds by the province- the first, in 2014, financed the [Eglinton Crosstown LRT](#); proceeds from the third issue will go “to help build clean transportation and environmentally friendly infrastructure projects in communities across the province.” For an [overview of the province’s Green Bond program](#), see the Ministry of Finance website. Annual newsletters summarize progress and provide details of the first two issues: [2015 edition](#) and the [2016 newsletter](#) released in December 2016.

Ontario also [announced](#) tweaks to the payment caps of its [Electric Vehicle Incentive program](#) on February 1, and pledged to continue annual reviews of the program (next in Fall 2017). The EVIP provides incentives of \$6,000 to \$14,000 to support the purchase or lease of eligible battery-electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. The [Electric Vehicle Charging Incentive Program](#) provides up to an additional \$1,000 to EVIP recipients toward the purchase and installation of fast-charging equipment for the home or workplace.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Green Bonds](#), [New Democratic Party](#), [Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Workplace resistance to the Trump agenda, and tracking the changes

Posted on **February 5, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The deliberately-executed distraction and turmoil of President Trump’s policies in the U.S. threaten and weary us all, at the same time that well-planned resistance is most necessary. Long-time activist Frances Fox-Piven wrote in *The Nation* in January, before the Inauguration, “[Throw sand in the gears of everything](#)”, reflecting on past resistance movements in U.S. history, including civil rights and the Vietnam War. She asks, “So how do resistance movements win—if they win—in the face of an unrelentingly hostile regime? The answer, I think, is that by blocking or sabotaging the policy initiatives of the regime, resistance movements can create or deepen elite and electoral cleavages”. Fox Piven puts strong hope in the actions of state and local governments, as well as citizen action. She also points to the defining protest which finally turned government policy on the Vietnam War: soldiers refused to follow orders.

In “[Where’s the best place to resist Trump? At Work](#)” (*Washington Post*, Jan. 31; re-posted to Portside) the authors argue that “From solidarity strikes to slowdowns and sit-ins, workplace revolt is a key strategy in opposing the new administration”. Describing some of the early anti-Trump protests, they state: “These actions are indispensable, and may form the seeds of a new movement, but people should not ignore one of the most powerful means of resistance and protest that they have: their roles as workers.” Federal workers are not the only ones with the power to resist and disrupt,

though federal workers are leading the way with courageous initiatives such as information leaks and alternative Twitter accounts. The longshoremen in Oakland, California for example, declined to report for work on Inauguration Day : see “Want to Stop Trump? Take a Page From These Dockworkers, and Stop Work” in *In These Times* (Jan. 23). Or read “Some New York Taxi Drivers Are Striking In Protest Of Trump’s Refugee Ban” in BuzzFeed (Jan. 29).



Resistance by federal workers is described in “In Show of Internal Dissent, Federal Workers Rising Up Against Trump” a February 1 article from *Common Dreams*. Another ongoing, public form are the many “rogue” Twitter accounts, started by the National Parks Service ,and now including very active accounts at [alt_EPA](#) (with over 300,000 followers), [alt_Interior](#) , [alt_NOAA](#) , [alt_DOL](#) , and more. Ironically, they form a goldmine of activist information. But beware of trolling accounts and imposter accounts.

Other web sources to follow U.S. developments, especially those related to climate change and environmental regulations, are: [Climate Central](#) ; [Common Dreams](#) ; [Democracy Now: Donald Trump Coverage](#) ; [Inside Climate News](#); [Think Progress](#) ; and [350.org](#) . Also notable, [Deregulation Tracker](#) , where the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law (Columbia Law School) is monitoring changes to legislation and regulations, and the [Environmental Data and Governance Initiative](#) , which is monitoring, documenting, and analyzing changes to approximately 25,000 federal websites using proprietary software that allows them to track changes to the language and code. *Climate Central* published “The EPA Has Started to Remove Obama-era Information” (Feb. 2) based on the EDGI monitoring.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Donald Trump](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [government workers](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [strikes](#), [whistleblowing](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Low-carbon technologies to the rescue: Solar PV, Electric Vehicles, CCS, and a replacement for cement

Posted on **February 5, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Expect the Unexpected: The Disruptive Power of Low-carbon Technology is a new report by the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London and the Carbon Tracker Initiative. The report models energy demand by combining up-to-date solar PV and electric vehicle cost projections with climate policies based on the UNFCCC Nationally Determined Contributions statements. The results are contrasted with the current “Business as Usual” scenarios of the major fossil fuel companies, and demonstrate how Big Oil underestimates the impact of solar and EV technologies. *Expect the Unexpected* forecasts peak oil and gas by 2020, with electric vehicles accounting for over two-thirds of the road transport market by 2050, and states that Solar PV “could supply 23% of global power generation in 2040 and 29% by 2050, entirely phasing out coal and leaving natural gas with just a 1% market share.”

The report and addresses the question, “What contribution can accelerated solar PV and EV penetration make to achieving a 2°C target?” It provides various scenarios, but concludes that decarbonisation of heavy industry (specifically iron and steel, cement, chemicals) will also be required and essential. On this front, the report states that Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is unlikely to be financially viable in power generation, but “ In non-power sectors such as heavy industry, however, CCS is likely to have a much more important role because there are currently few viable low-carbon alternatives for achieving deep decarbonisation. Furthermore, if CO2 can be utilised in other industrial processes, this added value will serve to improve the viability of CCS.”

One such low-carbon alternative for cement production – albeit one which is still in development – is reported in a recent article by University of Victoria’s Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions . Based on the premise that most of the CO2 produced in cement manufacture is not in the kiln-heating process, but rather by the chemical reaction of turning limestone into quicklime, researchers at McGill University in Montreal have developed a building product called Carbicrete, which replaces Portland cement with steel slag (a waste product) as its main binding agent. Read details in “[Solving the Thorny problem of Cement Emissions](#)” (Feb. 1).

Use this [link](#) to view The *Expect the Unexpected* main report, a technical report, and an interactive dashboard allowing readers to manipulate elements of climate policy, technology price, and energy demand are available here.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Budget](#), [cement industry](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Clean Technology](#), [economic modelling](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Low-Carbon Investment](#), [Solar PV Manufacturing](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Trudeau welcomes Trump’s Keystone pipeline decision – can we really have it both ways?

Posted on **February 4, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources delivered its report on *The Future of Canada’s Oil and Gas Industry* in September 2016; see the WCR coverage from September [here](#). On January 19, the Government released its [Official Response to the Committee Report](#), with this introductory statement: “It is clear to our Government that in order for the energy sector to continue to be a driver of prosperity and play a part in meeting global demand for energy, resource development must go hand in hand with the environmental and social demands of Canadians.” Not surprising then, that when [Donald Trump opened the door](#) for construction of the Keystone Pipeline on January 24, Justin Trudeau and his cabinet members [welcomed the news](#) .



Yet author Marc Lee reinforces what others have stated in his January 25 article in *CCPA Policy Notes*. “Canada can’t have it both ways on environment” demonstrates that “the amount of fossil fuel removed from Canadian soil that ends up in the atmosphere as carbon dioxide—has grown dramatically.” Although not technically “counted” in our own emissions reporting under the Paris Agreement, the emissions from Canada’s fossil fuel exports, counted in the countries where they are burned, is greater than Canada’s total GHG emissions within the country. Lee goes on: “Based on our share of global fossil fuel reserves, Canada could continue to extract carbon at current levels for between 11 and 24 years at most (the smaller the carbon budget, the less the damages from climate change). This means a planned, gradual wind-down of these industries needs to begin immediately.”

Marc Lee’s article summarizes a more complete report he authored for the Corporate Mapping Project, jointly led by the University of Victoria, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Parkland Institute. *Extracted Carbon: Re-examining Canada’s contribution to climate change through fossil fuel exports* updates a 2011 CCPA report, *Peddling GHGs: What is the Carbon Footprint of Canada’s Fossil Fuel Exports?* in the context of the Paris Agreement and Canada’s contribution to the global carbon budget. It concludes that “Plans to further grow Canada’s exports of fossil fuels are thus contradictory to the spirit and intentions of the Paris Agreement. Growing our exports could only happen if some other producing countries agreed to keep their fossil fuel reserves in the ground. The problem with new fossil fuel infrastructure projects, like Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plants and bitumen pipelines, is that they lock us in to a high-emissions trajectory for several decades to come, giving up on the 1.5 to 2°C limits of Paris.” It follows that “Canadian climate policy must consider supply-side measures such as rejecting new fossil fuel infrastructure and new leases for exploration and drilling, increasing royalties, and eliminating fossil fuel subsidies.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Carbon Budget](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [GHG emissions](#), [Keystone XL](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Health Impacts of Cap and Trade policies on California’s disadvantaged communities

Posted on **February 4, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Acting on a December 2016 Executive Order of Governor Gerry Brown, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment [released](#) the first in a series of reports which will examine the impact of the state’s climate change programs on communities designated as “disadvantaged”. The February report, [Tracking and Evaluation of Benefits and Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Limits in Disadvantaged Communities: Initial Report](#) measuring the effects of the Air Resources Board’s Cap-and-Trade Program, which regulates greenhouse gas emissions from industrial facilities and other sources. The report is largely based on 2014 emissions data, and warns that “limited data does not yet allow for comprehensive analysis of the impacts of Cap-and-Trade on disadvantaged communities”. Initial findings however, are that major industrial facilities are disproportionately located in disadvantaged communities; there is a moderate correlation between GHG and other air pollutants, with refineries showing the strongest correlation. California maintains a planning and enforcement tool, [CalEnviroScreen](#), the “first comprehensive, statewide environmental health screening tool” in the U.S. In late January, California Air Resources Board [announced the appointment](#) of its first Assistant Executive Officer for

Environmental Justice, with a mandate to ensure that environmental justice and tribal concerns are considered in air pollution policy-making and decision-making.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [California](#), [Cap and Trade](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [oil and gas refineries](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Public sector pension administrators are recognizing climate risk, protecting pensions of public employees in Ontario and New York City

Posted on **February 4, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

OPTrust administers the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Pension Plan, with almost 87,000 members and retirees. On January 31, it became a leader in Canadian pension plan administration by releasing two documents: *Climate Change: Delivering on Disclosure*, a position paper, and *OPTrust: Portfolio Climate Risk Assessment*, a report by Mercer consultants, which provides an assessment and analysis of the fund's climate risk exposure. The OPTrust [press release](#) states: "For pension funds, climate change presents a number of complex and long-term risks. In Canada alone, pension funds manage well over \$1.5 trillion in assets, which brings a real responsibility to collectively seek innovative approaches to modeling carbon exposure and its impact across portfolios." The position paper, *Delivering on Disclosure*, includes a call for collaboration amongst other financial actors to develop standardized measures for carbon disclosure. It is noteworthy that OPTrust is governed by a 10-member Board of Trustees, five of whom are appointed by the union, OPSEU, and five by the employer, the Government of Ontario.

In a February 2 [press release](#) affecting the pension plans of New York's public employees, teachers, firefighters and police, the Office of the Controller of New York City announced: "the Trustees of the New York City Pension Funds ... will conduct the first-ever carbon footprint analysis of their portfolios and determine how to best manage their investments with an eye toward climate change. In the 21st century, companies must transition to a low-carbon economy, and a failure to adapt to the realities of global warming could present potential investment risks." The New York City pension system has been a leader in addressing climate change risks, including an initiative called the [Boardroom Accountability Project](#), which began in 2014 to give investors the ability to ensure boards are diverse and "climate-competent".

On this point, a January 2017 report from Vancouver-based Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE) [found that](#) "... companies in Canada's most carbon-intensive sectors are not demonstrating 'climate competency' in the boardroom." The report, *Taking Climate on Board: Are Canadian energy and utilities company boards equipped to address climate change?* urges greater transparency from boards at publicly-traded corporations, stating "Investors need boards to demonstrate that they are 'climate-competent' – that they understand and prioritize climate change risks to long-term value, including the physical, legal, reputational, stranded asset and regulatory risks related to climate change." The report is based on a review of the public disclosures from 52 companies across Canada's energy and utilities sectors, using 3 measures: board skills and experience, oversight, and risk disclosure. It concludes that "more companies are starting to talk about climate change in their reporting, but only three boards disclosed any expertise amongst their members on the issue, and no board included climate change knowledge in its board competency matrix." The full report is [here](#). (On another note, SHARE has walked the walk by filing shareholder resolutions with Enbridge Inc., and met with TD Bank regarding their environmental and social aspects of their investments in the Dakota Access Pipeline. See "[The Dakota Access Pipeline and Indigenous Rights](#).")

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate Risk](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [Dakota Access Pipeline](#), [government workers](#), [Municipal Government](#), [New York City](#), [Ontario](#), [Ontario Public Service Employees Union \(OPSEU\)](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Shareholder Activism](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Energy creates more jobs than fossil fuels, with a wage premium

Posted on **February 3, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Following on the January 2017 report *US Energy and Employment* from the U.S. Department of Energy, more evidence of the healthy growth of the clean energy industry comes in a report by the [Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps](#) and Meister consultants. *Now Hiring: The Growth of America's Clean Energy and Sustainability Jobs* compiles the latest statistics from diverse sources, and concludes that "sustainability" accounts for an estimated 4.5 million jobs (up from 3.4 million in 2011) in the U.S. in 2015. Sustainability jobs are defined as those in energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as waste reduction, natural resources conservation and environmental education, vehicle manufacturing, public sector, and corporate sustainability jobs. Statistics drill down to wages and working conditions – for example, average wages for energy efficiency jobs are almost \$5,000 above the national median, and wages for solar workers are above the national median of \$17.04 per hour. Comparing clean energy with the fossil fuel industry, the report states that the 1.4 million jobs in energy efficiency construction and installation alone is more than double the number of workers in fossil fuel mining, extraction and electric power generation combined. *Now Hiring* states that for every \$1 million invested in building retrofits and industrial efficiency, 8 direct or indirect jobs are created; in comparison, 3 are created by a comparable investment in the fossil fuel industry. This final comparison of job multiplier effect is based on "Green versus brown: Comparing the employment impacts of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and fossil fuels using an input-output model" by Heidi Garrett Pelletier at PERI, and appears in the February 2017 issue of *Economic Modelling*.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [economic modelling](#), [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Job Quality](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Climate science and facts in the Trump Administration -protecting the public right to know

Posted on **January 24, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

For those who rely on U.S. climate change research and science, two recent incidents in the Trump transition are noteworthy. First, the U.S. Department of Energy released a [Directive for Scientific Integrity](#), approved January 4, 2017, which states: "The cornerstone of the scientific integrity policy at DOE is that all scientists, engineers or others supported by DOE are free and encouraged to share their scientific findings and views." Department of Energy personnel "will not suppress or alter scientific or technological findings or intimidate or coerce any covered personnel, contractors or others to alter or censor scientific or technological findings or conclusions." It also directs the DOE to appoint a "Scientific Integrity Official within the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Energy to serve as an ombudsperson for matters related to scientific integrity." Canadians, who [recall the muzzled scientists](#) of the Harper era, will applaud the policy, even as we continue to fight for scientific rigour in environmental assessments. A [recent DeSmog blog](#) explains.

Every day brings new developments in Washington: President Trump has effectively gagged staff at the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Agriculture. In response, a [Scientists March on Washington](#) is being organized, [according to](#)



Climate Central (Jan. 25). The [preliminary website](#) states: " There are certain things that we accept as facts with no alternatives. The Earth is becoming warmer due to human action. The diversity of life arose by evolution. Politicians who devalue expertise risk making decisions that do not reflect reality and must be held accountable. An American government that ignores science to pursue ideological agendas endangers the world."

A reassuring development for researchers, in light of the Trump order to dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency website: Volunteer scientists, computer programmers, librarians and citizens have been hard at work since December, gathering and archiving environmental and climate change data produced by the U.S. government, in advance of the Trump inauguration. "Guerilla archiving" events, beginning at the [University of Toronto](#) , have also taken place at University of Pennsylvania, San Francisco, and Los Angeles (on Inauguration Day!) in the coordinated task of identifying and gathering the URL's of important sources of information which will likely become vulnerable to removal in the Trump government. Read "[Climate Data Preservation Efforts Mount as Trump Takes Office](#)" in *MIT Technology Review* (Jan. 20) for an up to date summary and links to some of the many players in this complex effort. A [December blog](#) by The Project Archivists Responding to Climate Change (ProjectARCC) group explains the major players and indicates the scale of the effort.

Briefly, many of the collected web sites are being stored in the servers of the [End of Term Web Archive](#), a collaborative effort of established actors such as the [Internet Archive](#) , (which already stores 279 billion web pages!), Library of Congress, the U.S. Government Publishing Office, University of California Digital Library, and others. Over 10,000 URL's of federal climate data websites have already been nominated for archiving, according to the public list available [here](#) , though none of the "in process" web pages are available to view yet . For those concerned by the scrubbing of the White House website of all mentions of "climate change", a separate White House archive , housing the Obama version, is available [here](#) .

The University of Pennsylvania's Program in Environmental Humanities is housing a separate [DataRefuge project](#), in part to back up environmental data sets that standard Web crawling tools can't collect. The [Climate Mirror](#) is a distributed effort conducted by volunteers to mirror and back up data in locations outside the U.S. – an effort also underway at the Internet Archive. Quartz has published "[Hackers downloaded US government climate data and stored it on European servers as Trump was being inaugurated](#)" (Jan. 21) .

Most of the work is being done by volunteers, who are eager for help and donations. The [Environmental Data and Governance Initiative](#) has a clear set of requests for help, including a list of upcoming archiving events in Ann Arbor and New York City. There is a well-developed process to nominate vulnerable sites, which requires the help of knowledgeable researchers, as well as a need for programmers and IT nerds to work on scripts to help harvest data sets and web pages not easily accessed. The Free Government Information website (another volunteer group) has also published "[2016 End of Term \(EOT\) crawl and how you can help](#)" . Success will ensure that environmental data and facts survive in the public realm.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Climate Science](#), [Donald Trump](#), [freedom of information](#), [Muzzled Scientists](#), [public information](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

California reaffirms commitment to Cap-and-Trade policies, based on economic evidence

Posted on **January 24, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

California's climate leadership position in the U.S. was solidified on January 20, 2017 – coincidentally Inauguration Day in Washington- when the California Air Resources Board released its *2017 Scoping Plan Update: The Proposed Plan for Achieving California's 2030 Greenhouse Gas Target* . Proposals include a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 – the most ambitious target in North America, according to a [Reuters report](#) . The plan also extends the cap-and-trade program to 2030, based on [economic modelling](#) which concludes that cap-and-trade is the lowest cost, most efficient policy approach and provides certainty that the state will meet the 2030 emissions goals even if other measures fall short. The *Scoping Plan* also call for an 18 percent reduction in the carbon intensity of transportation fuels burned in the state, and for 4.2 million zero-emission vehicles on the road. The proposals, a hearings schedule, and technical appendices are all available at the [ARB website](#) .

Another economic analysis evaluating cap-and-trade was published in January by Next10. *The Economic Impacts of California's Major Climate Programs On The San Joaquin Valley* , analyses the costs and benefits, including job gain and loss, of three programs: Cap- and- trade, the Renewables Portfolio Standard, and energy efficiency programs, specific to the to the San Joaquin Valley economy. The authors chose to examine the San Joaquin as a “a bellwether of the state's transition to a low-carbon economy” since its geography and dependence on agriculture make it vulnerable to climate change effects , and vulnerable also to climate policies because “it faces more socioeconomic challenges than the state as a whole”. After examining the data and using advanced modeling software, they found that the three programs brought over \$13 billion in economic benefits to the Valley, mostly in renewable energy, and created over 31,000 jobs just in the renewable energy sector alone. Research and analysis was done by academics at the [Center for Law, Energy and the Environment \(CLEE\)](#) at UC Berkeley Law and UC Berkeley's [Donald Vial Center on Employment in the Green Economy](#) .

Posted in [Environmental Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [California](#), [Cap and Trade](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Kinder Morgan, Keystone pipelines move closer to reality as Canada is warned about its carbon budget

Posted on **January 23, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Prime Minister Trudeau set off an outcry in Alberta with [these comments](#) at the start of his cross-country tour in Peterborough, Ontario : “You can't make a choice between what's good for the environment and what's good for the economy. We can't shut down the oilsands tomorrow. We need to phase them out. We need to manage the transition off of our dependence on fossil fuels.” In Calgary on January 24, Trudeau defended his remarks in a town hall meeting in Calgary, summarized in “[Calgary crowd cheers and boos Trudeau in showdown with oilsands supporters](#)” in the *National Observer* (Jan. 25) .

On January 11, British Columbia's Premier Clark waived B.C.'s original five objections and [approved the Kinder Morgan pipeline project](#) (albeit with 37 provincial conditions) . Alberta's Premier Rachel Notley [responded with](#): “Working families shouldn't have to choose between good jobs and the environment. World-class environmental standards and a strong economy that benefits working people must go hand-in-hand. The Kinder Morgan pipeline offers us an historic opportunity to demonstrate that these values can – and must – go hand in hand.” Reaction to B.C.'s decision from West Coast Environmental Law is [here](#) ; or read “[Did Christy Clark just betray British Columbia?](#)” from Stand.earth, which continues to organize resistance to Kinder Morgan.

As anticipated, President Donald Trump wasted no time in approving the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines, [signing Executive Orders](#) on January 24. Negotiations and further state-level approvals are still ahead, but Canada's Trudeau government welcomed the news, according to a [CBC report](#) which quotes Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr : "it would be very positive for Canada — 4,500 construction jobs and a deepening of the relationship across the border on the energy file." In a [joint response](#) by Greenpeace USA and Greenpeace Canada, Mike Hudema of Canada stated: "The question for Canadians is: will the Prime Minister continue to align himself with a climate denying Trump administration, or will he stand with the people and with science and start living up to his own commitments to the climate and Indigenous rights?"

According to a January report by [Oil Change International](#) (OCI), "Ultimately, the carbon mathematics is such that the Canadian government simply cannot have it both ways . There is no scenario in which tar sands production increases and the world achieves the Paris goals." [Climate on the Line: Why new tar sands pipelines are incompatible with the Paris goals](#) continues with: "Cumulative emissions from producing and burning Canadian oil would use up 16% of the world's carbon budget to keep temperatures below 1.5 degrees, or 7% of the budget for 2 degrees. Canada has less than 0.5% of the world's population." " There is no future in expanding tar sands production. Instead, the government should begin serious efforts now to diversify the economy, supporting a just transition for workers and communities." [Andrew Nikoforuk](#) summarized the report in *The Tyee* (Jan. 10); CBC Calgary interviewed experts in its analysis, "[Could the oilsands really be phased out? Here are the possibilities](#)" (January 21).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil pipelines](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Finally, the National Energy Board Modernization process is underway

Posted on **January 23, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Review process for the Modernization of the National Energy Board](#) has begun. The Terms of Reference are [here](#), summarized on the website as focussing on " governance and structure; mandate and future opportunities; decision-making roles, including on major projects; compliance, enforcement, and ongoing monitoring; engagement with Indigenous peoples; and, public participation." Twelve [Discussion Papers are available](#) to guide input. Comments can be submitted [online here](#) , with a deadline of March 31, 2017; cross-country "engagement sessions" for the public will begin in Saskatoon on January 25, and end in Montreal on March 29. The [Expert Panel](#) will deliver its report to the Minister of Natural Resources, with a May 15 deadline. See an [article](#) in the *National Observer* (Jan. 16) , which notes that the process launch comes amidst legal challenges: Two First Nations of Northern Ontario have named the National Energy Board and the government of Canada as defendants in their suit against TransCanada pipeline, for failing to consult with them before allowing work on a 30-kilometre stretch of the pipeline that runs through their traditional territories (details [here](#)) . A second court challenge was filed on January 10 by community group Transition Initiative Kenora, asking that the entire Energy East consultation process be voided and re-started, because of the conflict of interest allegations of the [Charest Affair](#) in Fall 2016. (more details about the court challenge from Energy Mix [here](#) or from Ecojustice [here](#))

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The Women's March was a huge success. Next up – Sustained Resistance

Posted on **January 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Unionists were among the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who joined in the [Sister Marches](#) for the Women's March in Washington on January 21, 2017 . The Canadian Labour Congress statement of "Why we March" is [here](#) . Unifor's President Jerry Dias [endorsed](#) the March and called for a "united mobilization effort" against the Trump agenda. The March was an undeniable success, and the Washington organizers, quoted in a [Globe and Mail report](#), recognized: "This is more than a single day of action, this is the beginning of a movement – to protect, defend and advance human rights, even in the face of adversity. "

Jeremy Brecher of Labor Network for Sustainability tackles this issue for U.S. labour unions in "[How Labor and Climate united can trump Trump](#)" . After cataloguing some of the worst threats under a Trump administration , he calls for "an alliance of unions and allies willing to fight the whole Trump agenda" and states: "Such a "big tent" needs to include unions that are not part of the AFL-CIO, such as SEIU, Teamsters, and National Education Association. Some unions may choose not to join because they are unwilling to take a forthright stand against the Trump agenda; it would be both absurd and catastrophic for that to prevent the rest of the labor movement and its allies from taking on a fight that is about the very right of unions to exist."

The United Resistance, led by the NAACP, Greenpeace USA, and the Service Employees International Union, is chief among these new alliances, pledging to "stand together" on the issues of civil rights, immigrants, women's reproductive rights, social equality, action on climate change, public health and safety, public dissent, and access to information. Their inspirational video is [here](#) , as well as a list of the alliance members. The AFL-CIO is not listed as a member of the United Resistance, though their [recent blogs](#) oppose Trump's nominees, and they promoted the Women's March. For more about the United Resistance, see "[More than 50 Organizations Launch United Resistance Campaign as Trump's Cabinet Hearings Begin](#)" in *Common Dreams* (Jan.10).

In a second article , [SOCIAL SELF-DEFENSE: Protecting People and Planet against Trump and Trumpism](#) , Jeremy Brecher borrows a term from the Solidarity movement in Poland 40 years ago, and takes a larger, more global focus. He writes that "Social Self Defense includes the protection of the human rights of all people; protection of the conditions of our earth and its climate that make our life possible; the constitutional principle that government must be accountable to law; and global cooperation to provide a secure future for people." "Social Self-Defense is not an organization – it is a set of practices to be engaged in by myriad organizations, hopefully in close coordination with each other." Although the article highlights a number of examples, such as the growing Sanctuary movement in the U.S., and case studies of alliances, including [Vermont Labor Council Initiates Social Self-Defense](#) , the overriding impact is to emphasize the scale of the task: "These actions appear to be on the way to being the greatest outpouring of civil resistance in American history."

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Donald Trump](#), [environmental activism](#), [environmental rights](#), [Human Rights](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [Women's March 2017](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations to change the U.S. Social Cost of Carbon, and possible impact for Canada

Posted on **January 22, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. National Academies of Science Press released an important report in January 2017, suggesting changes to the methodology of the Social Cost of Carbon (SCC), an economic metric used to measure the net costs and benefits associated with the effects of climate change- including changes in agricultural productivity, risks to human health, and damage from extreme weather events. U.S. government agencies such as the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) are required by law to estimate SCC when proposing regulations such for vehicle emission standards or energy efficiency standards for appliances. One of the most recent, thorough, and important applications of the U.S. Social Cost of Carbon appears in the 2015 [Regulatory Impact Analysis Report for the Clean Power Plan Final Rule](#). The U.S. updated the SCC to \$37 U.S. per tonne of carbon dioxide in September 2015, a value often criticized as too low, and economists continue to differ about the methodology. A study by researchers at Stanford University, published in [Nature Climate Change](#) (2015) estimated a more accurate SCC of \$220 per tonne – six times higher.

The January report from the National Academy of Science, [Valuing Climate Damages: Updating Estimation of the Social Cost of Carbon Dioxide](#), suggests restructuring the Integrated Assessment Models framework used to ensure greater transparency, and recognizes new research which should be incorporated into the models (e.g. the effect of heat waves on mortality). It also recommends a regular 5-year updating schedule, “to ensure that the SC- CO2 estimates reflect the best available science.” For a summary of proposed changes and the political context, see “[Scientists have a new way to calculate what global warming costs. Trump’s team isn’t going to like it](#)” in the [Washington Post](#). Noting that the new report has no legal force, [The Post](#) article quotes expert reviewer Richard Revesz, Dean emeritus of the New York University School of Law: “If the metric is revised, then the incoming administration would have an obligation to explain why it’s departing from the current approach... Any changes made without adequate scientific justification would likely be struck down in court.” But see also “[How Climate Rules might Fade away](#)” in [Bloomberg Business Week](#).

What are the implications for Canada? Canada, like the U.K., Germany, France, and other countries, already uses its own Social Cost of Carbon, pegged at a \$28 per tonne in 2012, according to Canada’s [Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement](#) issued with the vehicle emissions regulations for passenger cars and light trucks. The [Leaders Statement](#) from the North American Leadership Summit in Summer 2016, ties Canada more closely to U.S. and Mexico, when it pledges to “... align analytical methods for assessing and communicating the impact of direct and indirect greenhouse gas emission of major projects. Building on existing efforts, align approaches, reflecting the best available science for accounting for the broad costs to society of greenhouse gas emissions, including using similar methodologies to estimate the social cost of carbon and other greenhouse gases for assessing the benefits of policy measures that reduce those emissions.”

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Clean Power Plan](#), [Emissions Regulations](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#), [Social Cost of Carbon](#), [Vehicle emission standards](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy Efficiency: measures of job creation and carbon reduction

Posted on **January 20, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), a long-time advocate and researcher about the value of energy efficiency, published a [blog](#) on January 10, 2017, arguing that energy efficiency creates at least 1.9 million full- and part-time jobs across the United States, almost 10 times as many as oil and gas extraction. The blog is largely spent in summarizing a December 2016 report, [Energy Efficiency Jobs in America: A comprehensive analysis of energy efficiency employment across all 50 states](#), which sees an optimistic future in 2017. Based on surveys of employers from approximately 165,000 U.S. companies, the report states that energy efficiency employers are expecting employment growth of approximately 245,000 jobs (a 13% growth rate) in 2017. [Energy Efficiency Jobs in America](#) also calls for state

and federal policies to support or enhance this growth, including: Advancing energy efficiency standards set by the U.S. Department of Energy for appliances and equipment. • Strengthening building codes at the state and local levels to capture all cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities at the time of design and construction • Accelerating energy efficiency improvements in devices and buildings that use electricity or natural gas through utility programs, state policies such as energy efficiency resource standards, or by investing in all cost-effective energy efficiency resources, and • prioritizing the role of energy efficiency in developing and/or strengthening clean energy standards at the state level. [Energy Efficiency Jobs in America](#) was released by two U.S. advocacy associations: Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2), and E4TheFuture.

The ACEEE, perhaps best known for its annual [Energy Efficiency Scorecards](#), released a White Paper in December, advocating energy efficiency initiatives to reduce carbon emissions. In [Pathway to Cutting Energy Use and Carbon Emissions in Half](#), the ACEEE analyzed 13 “packages” of energy efficiency measures which, when combined, could reduce energy use by 34% and carbon emissions by 35% by 2040. Improvement in industrial energy efficiency – factories, commercial buildings, transmission and distribution systems, and power plants – was seen to have the largest potential impact at 20.8%.

Posted in [Energy Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [Building Codes](#), [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Energy policy](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

What can Europe learn from Canadian experience with Just Transition?

Posted on [January 20, 2017](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A January 12th article by Béla Galgóczi, Senior Researcher at the European Trade Union Institute, argues that Europe is falling behind in ambition and results for its green economy, and identifies new leaders as Canada, and certain States in the United States. In [The Just green Transition: Canada's proactive approach](#), the author compares Canada's carbon tax policies with the European Emissions Trading Scheme, but focusses mainly on the discussion about Just Transition. He observes: “The rhetoric about green jobs seems to be of a more honest and realistic nature in Canada than in Europe” and “even if trade unions are in a generally weaker position in that country [i.e. Canada] or in the US than in Europe, their engagement in climate policy is more pronounced. Unions in North America are very active in mobilising for low carbon economy objectives with campaigns and workplace greening policies, and they even have collective bargaining clauses on greening.” As evidence of union engagement, the article notes the ongoing work of the [Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change \(ACW\) project](#), including the [database of green collective bargaining clauses](#).

A recent example of union initiative appears in [Green Jobs for Tomorrow: Submission by the Canadian Labour Congress to the Working Group on Clean Technology, Innovation and Jobs](#), one of four Federal-Provincial working groups mandated by the [Vancouver Declaration](#) in 2015 to investigate national climate change policy issues. In its submission, the CLC makes 10 recommendations for climate change policy, and states: “We believe the lynchpin of meaningful sustained climate action is retraining, re-employment and relocation for affected workers.” The CLC lays out the elements of a Just Transition policy, including: increased investment to create green jobs, improved access to Employment Insurance training programs, and increased Employment Insurance benefits for displaced workers, as well as improved labour market information systems. To support these goals, the CLC calls for the government to create a National Workplace Training Fund, and, using the model of the industry Sector Councils abolished by the Harper government in 2012, a national Labour Market Partners Council to facilitate ongoing dialogue and collaboration between key stakeholders: governments, unions, employers, and educators.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [Climate change policy](#), [European Trade Union Institute \(ETUI\)](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#), [Retraining](#), [sector councils](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon pricing in Canada: Recent research, and implementation in Alberta and Ontario

Posted on **January 9, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Research about carbon pricing continues in the effort to implement the Pan-Canadian Framework. In November, [Carbon Pricing and Intergovernmental Relations in Canada](#) was released by the Institute for Research on Public Policy, evaluating the federal government's national carbon pricing plan to that point (i.e. before the announcement of the Pan-Canadian Framework), with an emphasis on the flexibility required for provincial differences. It then discusses the intergovernmental coordination in other policy fields in Canada (income taxes, goods and services taxes, and environmental standards) as a possible model for carbon pricing.

As part of the Pan-Canadian Framework in December, the comprehensive [Final Report of the Working Group on Carbon Pricing Mechanisms](#) was released, providing an overview of Canadian and international practice, as well as a discussion of principles for design and implementation.

Finally, a report about British Columbia, the home of Canada's first carbon tax. A December report modelled the impact of the 2016 provincial Climate Leadership Plan and a federal carbon price on GHG emissions. It concludes that even if all provincial policies were implemented, B.C.'s emissions will exceed the targets for 2020 and for 2050. The report provides a breakdown of emissions by sector and forecasts that the largest single source of emissions in 2050 will be from shale gas operations and liquefied natural gas projects. [Modelling the Impact of the Climate Leadership Plan and Federal Carbon Price on British Columbia's Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) was commissioned by Clean Energy Canada, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions and the Pembina Institute, with analysis by Navius Research.

In the meantime, two provinces have moved ahead with previously announced policies. Alberta's carbon levy came into effect on January 1, 2017, cushioned by the government press release of December 31 titled "[Carbon levy supports diverse, green economy and jobs](#)" which summarized the details. The levy will be charged on transportation and heating fuels – diesel, gasoline, natural gas and propane – at a rate of \$20 per tonne, increasing to \$30 per tonne in 2018. As further explained on [a government website](#), farmers and First Nations are generally exempt; a 33 per cent small business tax rate cut will help offset costs for small businesses, and the direct and indirect costs to consumers are estimated. [Rebates started flowing](#) for a majority of Alberta households on January 5, with a payment of \$200 per year for a single adult earning up to \$47,500 per year, and \$300 for a couple earning up to \$95,000 per year. In addition to the [government explanation](#), see "[What you need to know about Alberta's Carbon Levy](#)" from the Pembina Institute, or a [CBC interview with Andrew Leach](#), generally considered the architect of Alberta's climate plan. "[The Cost of Carbon Pricing in Alberta and Ontario](#)", by professors Trevor Tombe and Nic Rivers, appeared in *Maclean's magazine* (Jan. 4). It explains the differences in the two approaches and explains the methodology for their estimate that "Overall, for the average Alberta and Ontario household in 2017, direct costs will likely be on the order of \$150 to \$200 annually and indirect costs will add an additional \$80 to \$100 or so." The conclusion: "heated political rhetoric that suggests carbon pricing will lead to skyrocketing price increases throughout the economy is misplaced at best and misleading at worst."

Media rhetoric seems to have been directed at Alberta, rather than Ontario, where the cap and trade system, a cornerstone of the [Climate Action Plan](#), also took effect on January 1, 2017. The government's Explainer is [here](#), and estimates that "it will cost the average Ontario household about \$13 more per month to fuel a car and heat a home in 2017". The government also estimates proceeds of \$1.9 billion per year, which must be re-invested to reduce GHG emissions, such as social housing retrofits, public transit, and electric vehicle incentives. See details of the related [Green Investment Fund](#) [here](#). The [2016 Annual Greenhouse Gas Progress Report](#) (November 2016) of Ontario's Commissioner of the Environment offers an explanation of how the system works, and discusses pitfalls, solutions, the need for transparency, and the likelihood that the system will deliver the scale of GHG reductions promised.

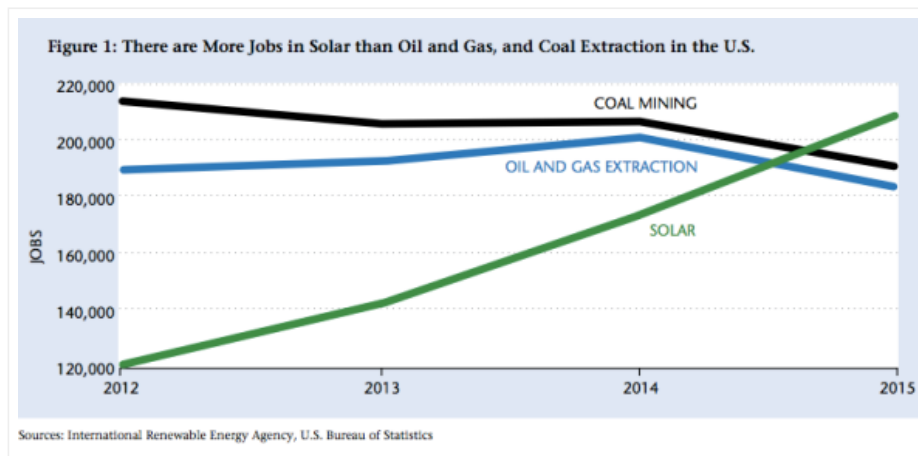
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Clean Energy is unstoppable – and China is in the lead

Posted on **January 9, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

January 2017 began with an attention-getting report from Bloomberg New Energy Finance: “[Solar Could Beat Coal to Become the Cheapest Power on Earth](#)”. Similarly, the *Renewable Infrastructure Investment Handbook* published by the World Economic Forum states: “renewable energy technology, especially solar and wind, has made exponential gains in efficiency in recent years, enough to achieve economic competitiveness and, in an increasing number of cases, grid parity.”

A January 5 post by Clean Energy Canada, “[Clean Energy is too good a deal for Trump to Pass up](#)”, documents the economic and political forces driving clean energy in the U.S., and offers this chart comparing the number of jobs in solar to the fossil fuel industries.



— from Clean Energy blog post, “[Clean Energy is too good a deal for Trump to pass up](#)” (January 5, 2017)

And in an unprecedented move for a sitting President of the United States, Barack Obama has written “[The Irreversible Momentum of Clean Energy](#)” in *Science* (Jan. 9), with an overview of his energy policy legacy, and making the case that market forces in the U.S. will carry it on.

A general consensus is that the clean energy train has left the station, and China is driving that train. A January 2017 report from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) is the latest to document the growing dominance of China in the renewable energy industry in “[China’s Global Renewable Energy Expansion: How the World’s Second-Biggest Economy Is Positioned to Lead the World in Clean-Power Investment.](#)” The report states: “The change in leadership in the U.S. is likely to widen China’s global leadership in industries of the future, building China’s dominance in these sectors in terms of technology, investment, manufacturing and employment.” According to the IEEFA, Chinese global investment in clean energy exceeds \$100 billion annually, (more than twice that of the U.S.), and is expanding beyond Asia to Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and South America. It cites the International Energy Agency’s *World Energy Outlook 2016* report (Nov. 2016) to state that China holds 3.5 million of the 8.1 million renewable energy jobs globally. Small wonder when five of the world’s six largest solar-module manufacturing firms, and five of the ten top wind-turbine manufacturing firms are owned by Chinese companies. Between 2015 – 2021, “China will install 36% of all global hydro electricity generation capacity ... 40% of all worldwide wind energy and 36% of all solar.” See a summary of the details of the IEEFA report in “[China cementing Global Dominance of Renewable Energy and Technology](#)” in *The Guardian*; the *Globe and Mail* summary “[U.S. and Canada falling behind China in race for renewable energy](#)” (Jan. 6) rather badly understates the case.

The trend seems set to continue. On January 5, the Chinese National Energy Agency announced its plans for the next phase of energy investment: see “[China Aims to Spend at Least \\$360 Billion on Renewable Energy by 2020](#)” in the *New York Times*.

In Canada, the latest major report tracking clean energy investment was published by Clean Energy Canada in June 2016. [Tracking the Energy Revolution](#) reported reduced investment in 2015 (from \$12 billion to \$10 billion), although renewable generation capacity grew by 4% in that time. Even before the announcement of the Pan-Canadian Framework, Clean Energy Canada called this a “pivotal time” for renewables, and sets an optimistic tone. That boosterism is also apparent in [“Challenge 2017: Rays of hope shine on solar industry despite ‘Trump digs coal’ mantra”](#) in the *Financial Post* (Jan. 3) – a mostly anecdotal story of Canadian solar manufacturers, and [“Canada can cash in on a cleantech boom”](#), in the *Toronto Star* (Jan. 5). *The Star* article applauds a recent clean energy-focused trade mission to China by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the [clean-tech incentives](#) announced in the December 2016 Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, and recent federal and provincial policies that set aggressive targets for renewable energy use in government buildings and operations.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [China](#), [Clean Energy](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental Rights in Alberta and in Canada: do we have the rights we need? A legal discussion and some practical examples

Posted on **January 9, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In December 2016, the [Environmental Law Centre](#) in Alberta published a series of reports to review the current state of environmental rights in the province, drawing on examples and information from other jurisdictions. These reports are intended as educational materials; [the website](#) is open for comments and input. The first report, [Do we have the rights we need?](#), identifies deficiencies: “Narrow standing tests for legal reviews and hearings; gaps and insufficiency in cost awards to support participation and informed decision making; failures to adequately recognize and manage cumulative environmental effects; insufficient review or hearing options for policies, regulation and administration of environmental decision making; and insufficient tools for engaging public participation in enforcement.”

While most Environmental Rights discussions are about procedures for establishing and enforcing rights, the report [Substantive Environmental Rights](#) relates to the right to a specific environmental condition, such as a “healthy”, “healthful” or “clean” environment. This report discusses definitions, which can be set in statutes or regulations. The report includes a helpful comparative table of language from other Canadian jurisdictions.

[Third Party Oversight and Environmental Rights](#) reviews and analyzes the use of administrative third party oversight bodies in various frameworks and other jurisdictions. The report makes recommendations for the design of a third party environmental oversight system for Alberta, where currently the provincial Auditor General does not have a specific environmental mandate, but conducts financial audits or process/system audits of various environmental matters.

The latest report, published on December 19, [Citizen Enforcement](#) considers the question of who can enforce environmental laws and what types of enforcement mechanisms are available to them – in Alberta, but also Ontario, Quebec, Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and the U.S. The report concludes that citizen enforcement in Alberta relies primarily on the use of private prosecutions and the ability to request an investigation of an alleged violation, and recommends additional citizen-based enforcement tools to bolster enforcement capacity and to ensure accountability.

As for practical examples of the need for citizen involvement in environmental assessments and decision-making, Canadians need look no further than the federal government’s current review of the [Environmental Assessment Processes](#). [“EA Review – Report back from a public workshop”](#) at Evidence for Democracy describes one person’s experience at the Environmental Assessment public consultations and summarizes the main concerns of attendees – including the need for transparency, community and traditional knowledge, and open and independent science. In two recent articles in DeSmog Blog, scientists describe how their input has been ignored in past environmental assessments and decisions, including the TransMountain pipeline expansion decision. Read [“Canadian Scientists Say They’re Unsure What Trudeau Means When](#)

He Says 'Science' " (Dec. 15) and "Open Science: Can Canada Turn the Tide on Transparency in Decision-Making?" (Dec. 20) . Yet there is an eagerness amongst young Canadian scientists to become involved; an [Open Letter](#) to the Prime Minister in November, signed by 1,800 young scientists and researchers, calls on the government to return scientific integrity to the environmental assessment process, and outlines five ways to do that, including the use of best available evidence, making information and data available to the public, evaluating cumulative impacts of projects and eliminating conflicts of interest. See "[Five Ways to Fix Environmental Reviews: Young Scientists to Trudeau](#)" in *DeSmog Blog* (Nov. 15 2016) .

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Canada](#), [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act](#), [Environmental law](#), [environmental rights](#), [scientists](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

2017: what lies ahead?

Posted on **January 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Because 2017 is Canada's 150th anniversary, dozens of progressive organizations, including unions, have proposed an agenda for "Canada's Clean Growth Century", under the slogan "Out with the old and In with the new". Read their proposals for a green economy, including Just Transition, [here](#) . Clean Growth Century Facebook page is [here](#).

For Canadians watching the environmental performance of the Trudeau government, one of the most important markers will be the outcomes of the [Review of Environmental and Regulatory Processes](#), which is reviewing the National Energy Board, the *Fisheries Act* and the *Navigation Protection Act*, and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* . The report of the Expert Panel is scheduled for March 31, 2017. Discussions and implementation of the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) will roll along, debating carbon pricing policies – with the first "deliverable" said to be an assessment of best practices to address the competitiveness of emissions-intensive, trade-exposed sectors.

Other articles that look ahead to the coming year's events around the world – acknowledging but not dwelling on the Trump-effect, include: [2017 Climate Calendar: Key dates](#) at *Climate Change News* ; "[In 2017, disruptive forces will shape climate action](#)" for an international overview with a European perspective ; and "[Where is environmental movement going in 2017?](#)" from *Environmental Health News*, which looks at the Flint water crisis and Standing Rock pipeline protests and predicts "expect the push for environmental justice to center more around the issue's intersections with racial, economic and environmental equality."

"[Four Critical Energy Issues to watch in 2017](#)" highlights U.S. policies, including the end of the U.S. coal leasing moratorium; repeal of the Clean Power Plan; continued support for renewables, especially wind power; and continued massive transformation in the U.S. electricity sector, led by state initiatives. And given President-elect Trump's previous statements, one might add [the approval of the Keystone Pipeline](#) as a fifth likely development.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Environmental Justice](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Small steps for the miners behind electric vehicles and smart phones

Posted on **January 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Cobalt is a key ingredient in the lithium-ion batteries that power smartphones, laptops and electric cars. 60% of the world's supply is mined in Congo, according to "The Cobalt Pipeline" (September 2016), a *Washington Post* special report which documented the appalling working conditions of the "artisanal miners". Occupational health and safety concerns for miners was also expressed in "The Battery Revolution is exciting, but Remember they Pollute too", by Carla Lipsig Mumme and Caleb Goods in *The Conversation* (June 2015).

In a [December 20 article](#), the *Washington Post* reports on two new initiatives to curb "the worst forms of child labor" and other abusive workplace practices in the supply chain for cobalt. The first, the Responsible Cobalt Initiative, is being led by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce for Metals, Minerals and Chemicals Importers and Exporters, and supported by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with members pledging to follow [OECD guidelines](#) which call for companies to trace how cobalt is being extracted, transported, manufactured and sold. Apple, HP, Samsung SDI and Sony have signed on.

The second initiative, the [Responsible Raw Materials Initiative \(RRMI\)](#) has been launched by the [Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition](#), a nonprofit group sponsored by more than 110 electronics companies, and "dedicated to improving the social, environmental and ethical conditions of their global supply chains." The EICC states that it "engages regularly with dozens of non-member organizations including civil society groups, trade unions and other worker's groups, academia and research institutions, socially responsible investors, and governmental and multilateral institutions." Ford Motor Company is a member of the Responsible Raw Materials Initiative, by virtue of being the first auto manufacturer to join the EICC. (Press release is [here](#) (February 2016). Ford has sought to brand itself as a leader in [ethical supply chain management](#) ; see their report, [Going Further towards Supply Chain Leadership](#) . Tesla, the most high-profile electric vehicle manufacturer, is said to be considering membership in the RRMI. According to a report from *Energy Mix* (June 24, 2016) "[Tesla's Ambitions Demand 'Unprecedented Quantities' of Key Minerals](#)" , including lithium, nickel, cobalt, and aluminum to produce vehicle batteries. As of January 2017, *Energy Mix* also [reported](#) that Tesla started mass production at its [lithium-ion battery Gigafactory](#) in Nevada, which will be the world's largest when it is complete in 2018 .



— Tesla Gigafactory, Nevada. Photo from the Tesla website .

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [cobalt](#), [decent work](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Ford Motor Co.](#), [Lithium Ion Batteries](#), [mining industry](#), [Supply chains](#), [Tesla](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board lags international financial community on recognition of climate change risks and stranded assets

Posted on **January 8, 2017** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In what the [WWF has called](#) “a landmark moment for responsible investment in Europe”, the European Parliament voted in November 2016 to mandate that all workplace pension administrators must consider climate risk and risks “related to the depreciation of assets” -stranded assets- in investment decisions. It also requires greater transparency about investment policies. Individual governments of the EU now have two years to pass into national law this updated version of the existing Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision (IORP) Directive. Currently, the directive would affect occupational pension plans affected covering approximately 20% of the EU workforce, mostly in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany . A September 2016 [Briefing Note from the European Parliament](#) details the administrative/political evolution of the Directive; a December [article from Corporate Knights](#) or [Go Fossil Free](#) or [Reuters](#) provide summaries.

In December 14, 2016, the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure, chaired by Michael Bloomberg, released its [report and recommendations](#) to the Financial Stability Board, a G-20 organization chaired by Mark Carney. An [article by the two men](#) appeared in *The Guardian*, capturing the gist of the work: “We believe that financial disclosure is essential to a market-based solution to climate change. A properly functioning market will price in the risks associated with climate change and reward firms that mitigate them. As its impact becomes more commonplace and public policy responses more active, climate change has become a material risk that isn't properly disclosed.” The Task Force calls for companies to make voluntary disclosure of climate risks to their business, to help investors, lenders and insurance underwriters to manage material climate risks, and ultimately to make the global economic and financial systems more stable. A 60-day public consultation period began with release of the report; an updated report, incorporating that input, will be released in June 2017. The Task Force report was summarized in [“Climate disclosure framework creates a better environment for investors”](#) in the *Globe and Mail* ; *Bloomberg News* also reported on another recommendation, [“Carney Panel Urges CEO Compensation Link With Climate Risk”](#) , stating that the time has come for organizations to provide detailed reporting of how manager and board member pay is tied to climate risks. (See a Dec. 1 [Reuters article](#) about Royal Dutch Shell's moves to link CEO bonuses to GHG reduction).

In Canada, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, which administers the assets of the national public pension fund, seems to be standing on the sidelines. A [recent article](#) in the *Globe and Mail* was written by the director of the CPPIB Sustainable Investment department , which is described in more detail in their [2016 Report on Sustainable Investing](#) . The report states (page 11) “ CPPIB has established a cross-departmental Climate Change Working Group to consider how physical risks, as well as technological, regulatory and market developments will impact climate change-related risks, and create opportunities, in the future. This review, which will take some time, is being done from a long-term perspective in light of how the gradual transition to a lower-carbon global economy might unfold.... On the topic of divestment and climate change, research has shown that investors with longer horizons tend to be more engaged with the companies that they invest in, and CPPIB is a case in point. As responsible owners, we believe that in many cases selling our shares to investors who might be less active in terms of considering material risks, including climate change, would be counterproductive.” In light of this very slow approach, Friends of the Earth (FOE) has been frustrated [in its divestment campaign for the CPPIB](#) in 2016 ; FOE maintains a petition website, [Pensions for a Green Future](#), which calls for the CPPIB to, among other things, “report immediately to its 19 million members on the carbon footprint and exposure to climate solutions of our CPP investment portfolio” and “to replace climate polluting investments with those in green energy, technologies and infrastructure that support Canada’s commitment to act to avoid 1.5°C of warming.” The CPPIB discloses the companies it is invested in [here](#) .

In contrast to the CPPIB, the [Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec \(CDPQ\)](#), the second largest pension fund manager in Canada, is highlighted in a [new report by the World Economic Forum](#) as “ one of the most important institutional investors in wind power” for its investment of close to \$2.5 billion (US) in both onshore and offshore wind projects in Europe and North America, starting in 2013 with a tentative investment in the Invenergy , and now including the London

Array wind farm in the outer Thames estuary. The Caisse statements on environmental and social responsibility are [here](#) ; it is a signatory to the U.N. Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), a member of the Carbon Disclosure Project and the Carbon Water Disclosure Project, and endorses the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#) , which monitors the oil and gas industry .

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec](#), [Canada Pension Plan](#), [Climate Risk, compensation policies](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [CPPIB](#), [environmental responsibility](#), [European Union](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [pension plans](#), [Quebec](#), [Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 Nikoforuk 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."

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Coastal First Nations](#), [Energy policy](#), [First Nations](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [Line 3](#), [North Dakota pipeline](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 energetique Quebec (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* .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [attitudes to climate change](#), [climate change and mental health](#), [Disasters](#), [energy conservation](#), [motivation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Energy East pipeline](#), [First Nations](#), [New Brunswick](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [comprehensive wealth](#), [Economic Diversity](#), [economic policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Cities and Climate Change](#), [diesel cars](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Toronto](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta Federation of Labour](#), [Oil Refining Jobs](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 brinkmanship](#)” 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.

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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”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [community action](#), [community benefits agreement](#), [disadvantaged workers](#), [Infrastructure](#), [labour union policies](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [Toronto](#), [Transportation Infrastructure](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 UNFCCC 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 UNFCCC 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.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [ACW](#), [Job Quality](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [labour union policies](#), [Metro Toronto and York District Labour Council](#), [Toronto, Workplace Environment Committees](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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.

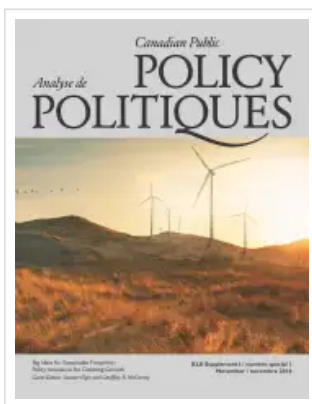
Others dispute that the pipeline is even needed, on economic grounds – see [Climate Action Network](#) or Robyn Allan in “Opinion: Premier Notley relies on fiction to push Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion” in the *National Observer* (Nov. 14) . From Vancouver-based Conversations for Responsible Economic 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.).

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 Nikoforuk 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 of 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 Democratiques 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

Posted on **November 6, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)



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 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](#).



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.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [Canada](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [I-732](#), [State of Washington](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Business attitudes](#), [General Motors](#), [Life Cycle](#), [Supply chains](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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.

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](#), [Internationa 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."

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#), [COP21](#), [India](#), [Paris Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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."

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 *Macleans 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 [Tzaporah 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."

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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 \(BEEEx\)](#), 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.](#)

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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 Tzeporah 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.

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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](#)” .

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Update: National Energy Board suspends Energy East hearings, Regulatory review process underway

Posted on **August 12, 2016** by [elizabethperry493](#)

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.

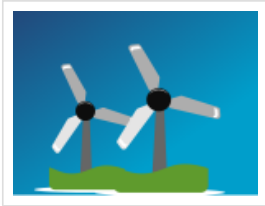
And amidst the high heat and drought that all of us are feeling in central Canada this summer comes scientific validation of our experience: the release of [State of the Climate 2015](#) , the 26th edition of the assessment released each summer as a supplement to the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological 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. Once 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](#).

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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](#)”.

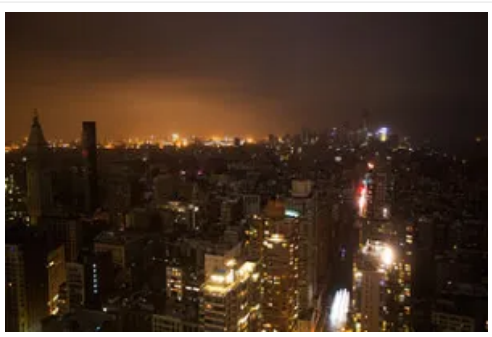
The Brookings Institute provides a sober overview of the issues and some international research: “[On World Oceans Day, a reminder that climate change action must consider the oceans](#)”, but last word goes to Howard Breen, the Director of

Urgent Ocean and Climate Rapid Response (UCORR) in “We need tsunamis 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.

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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](#) .

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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](#) .

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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."

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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.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [energy efficiency](#), [New York City](#), [New York City Environmental Justice Alliance](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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](#).

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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).

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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.”

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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?](#)” .

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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](#).

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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.

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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 Nikofoeruk 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 CO₂e, (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.

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 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.

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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 Mihar, 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](#).

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.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal people](#), [Climate change policy](#), [First Nations](#), [Fraser River](#), [Northern Gateway pipeline](#), [Site C Dam](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 trinational 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 Nikofooruk 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 Loughheed-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 Chronicle-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](#)” .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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).

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")

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [community action](#), [First Nations](#), [Kinder Morgan](#), [National Energy Board \(NEB\)](#), [Northern Gateway](#), [Oil pipelines](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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](#)

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 GtCO_{2e} by 2030 – greater than China's current annual output, and 47.4 GtCO_{2e} 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 communique 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.

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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.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Environmental law](#), [Manitoba](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 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 UNFCC 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 UNFCC: [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](#)

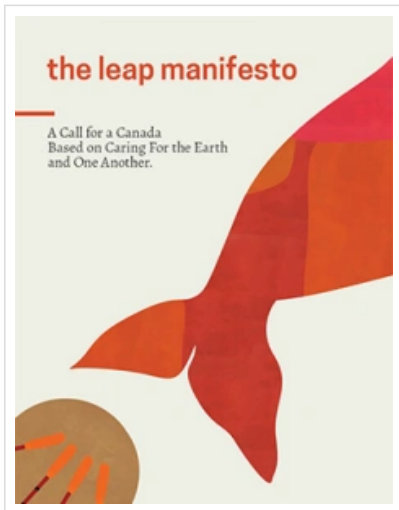
On July 2, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) set the new 2015 Social Cost of Carbon at \$36/ton of CO₂, representing the cost of the damage to society caused by one ton of carbon dioxide emission. At the same time, the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Carbon released its 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-Keynesian 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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [life cycle analysis](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 UNFCC](#) 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 UNFCC 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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Municipal Government](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean Power Plan](#), [Just Transition](#), [renewable energy](#), [Renewable Energy Incentives](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 diversify 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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Divestment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 communiqués 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 \$24.5billion 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 involve massive disruption, given that most wells would be fracked wells. Further, author David Hughes argues that it 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](#), [Liquefied 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."

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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Financial Risk](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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](#).

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 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 (MITEI). 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.

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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Employers](#), [LEED](#), [Sustainability Initiatives](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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](#)".

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Risk](#), [Health](#), [Heat Illness](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 Rebeck'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.

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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.

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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Climate Policy](#), [CCPA Alternative Budget](#), [Climate Policy](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [Low-Carbon Transition](#), [Smart Grid](#), [Sustainable Canada Dialogues \(SCD\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [John Godfrey](#), [Ontario](#), [Ontario Climate Change Advisory Group](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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](#).

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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).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Adaptation](#), [Climate Resilience](#), [Grantham Institute](#), [London School of Economics](#), [Multinational Corporations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

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 Sage 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.

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](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **California** | [Leave a reply](#)

Study Examines “High Road”, Unionized Jobs in the California Solar Industry

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A study released on November 10 by the University of California at Berkeley examines the environmental and economic impact of a boom in utility-scale solar electricity generation in California since 2010.

The report describes the overall economic and policy situation, then calculates the new construction, maintenance, and operations jobs created, plus the upstream and downstream jobs. It estimates the income and health and pension benefits of these new construction and plant operations jobs, most of which are unionized.

In California, the union contracts have required payments into apprenticeship training programs; the study calculates the new monies that have been generated for apprenticeship programs, and asserts that the boom in utility-scale solar construction has set in motion a related boom in apprenticeship and other forms of training for electricians, operating engineers, ironworkers, carpenters, millwrights, piledrivers, and laborers. The author estimates how apprenticeship affects lifetime earnings- using the example of electrical apprentices, who are estimated to see a lifetime income approximately \$1 million higher than that of workers without similar training.

Finally, the report describes the policy environment that has facilitated this solar boom, and makes recommendations for the future. The author, Peter Philips, from the University of Utah, is currently a Visiting Scholar at the UC Berkeley Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, at the Donald Vial Center on Employment in the Green Economy.

LINKS

[Environmental and Economic Benefits of Building Solar in California: Quality Careers, Cleaner Lives.](#)

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Apprenticeship, Economics of Renewables, Education and Training, Job Creation, Labour Policy, Renewables, Solar Energy, Solar PV Manufacturing, Union Jobs, University of California** | [Leave a reply](#)

Literature Review of Job Creation Impact of Energy Efficiency Investments

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A study released by the U.K. Energy Research Centre (UKERC) on November 4 presents an analytical literature review of fifty studies published since 2000 on the relationship between green energy investment and job creation in the U.S.,

Europe and China. The report outlines the key concepts and modelling methodologies, and provides a comparative analysis of the job impact results of the studies surveyed.

Overall, the authors found that renewable energy and energy efficiency create up to ten times more jobs per unit of electricity generated or saved than fossil fuels. However, they conclude that the job creation issue is complex and is often wrongly focussed on short-term benefits. "The proper domain for the debate about the long-term role of renewable energy and energy efficiency is the wider framework of energy and environmental policy, not a narrow analysis of green job impacts."

LINKS

[Low Carbon Jobs: The Evidence for Net Job Creation from Policy Support for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#) is available from the Energy Research Centre website.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Economics of Renewables](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Job Creation](#), [Renewables](#), [U.K. Energy Research Centre \(UKERC\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Environmental Education: Post Secondary Guides, Context, and New Initiatives for Public Outreach

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Alternatives Journal in October published a special issue addressing environmental education. The fifteenth annual Environmental Education Guide helps students heading to postsecondary education to identify and compare the 700 interdisciplinary programs available in 120 Canadian universities and community colleges.

Three accompanying articles emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary studies: "Academic Evolution: Innovation knows no Boundaries", profiles the work of Dr. James Orbinski, who leads research on global health and climate change as the Research Chair in Global Health at the Balsillie School of International Affairs at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, and Tim Kruger, who is the Coordinator of the Geoengineering Program at the Martin Oxford School at University of Oxford, and one of the authors of the Oxford Principles.

A quote from Kruger sums up the point of the article: "Climate change presents systems problems, involving multiple, complex mechanisms...What is left now, are those problems which are not amenable to being solved by a single disciplinary approach." "The Genius of the Generalist", describes the educational paths of three graduate students- two of whom have Masters of Environmental Studies degrees from York University in Toronto and "Meet 6 Environmental Grads" profiles careers after graduation from various environmental programmes in Canada, and one in Freiberg, Germany.

For students heading for an MBA, Corporate Knights magazine released its annual guide to Sustainable MBA programs around the world in October. As in past years, York University's Schulich School of Business ranked first, followed closely by the Sauder School of Business at University of British Columbia.

And two new online initiatives to promote climate change literacy and climate justice emerged from British Columbia in October. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the B.C. Teachers' Federation jointly created free classroom-ready materials designed for students in grades 8 to 12. Eight modules explore climate justice within the context of B.C.'s communities, history, economy and ecology. On October 28th the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions at the University of Victoria, launched "B.C Climate Impacts & Adaptation", an interactive online module free to anyone interested in expanding their climate literacy. At the same time, PICS updated the content of the educational section of their website, which houses other modules and mini-lessons.

LINKS

Alternatives Journal Education Issue (October 2014). It includes the *AJ* 2014 Environmental Education Guide, as well as the following articles: “Academic Evolution: Innovation knows no Boundaries”, “The Genius of the Generalist”, and “Meet 6 Environmental Grads”

“100 Shades of Green” (a guide to Sustainability in MBA curricula of universities around the world) in the Fall 2014 issue of *Corporate Knights Magazine*

CCPA/BC Teachers Federation classroom modules about Climate Justice, and Climate Literacy modules and mini-lessons at the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions website

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alternatives Journal, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Climate Education, Corporate Knights, Education, Environmental Education Guide, Generalism, Integrative Thinking, Interdisciplinarity** | [Leave a reply](#)

A New Commission with a Prescription of “Ecofiscal” Policies for Canada

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Canada’s Ecofiscal Commission was launched on November 4, with the release of a report which makes the economic case for a new suite of Canadian policies at the municipal, provincial and national level.

“Ecofiscal policies correct market signals to encourage the economic activities we want (job creation, investment, and innovation), while discouraging those we don’t (greenhouse gas emissions and pollution of our land, air, and water). They use prices to help companies and individuals make decisions that take the true value of our environmental assets into account.” The Commission describes itself as independent, and representative of all political viewpoints; this manifests itself in the membership, which includes prominent former politicians Jean Charest, Bob Rae, Preston Manning, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, and Mike Harcourt. It is housed at McGill University, and led by Professor Chris Ragan of the McGill University Department of Economics (formerly a special adviser to the Bank of Canada).

LINKS

View the

[The Ecofiscal Commission website.](#)

Smart, Practical, Possible: Canadian Options for Greater Economic and Environmental Prosperity, Inaugural Report of the EcoFiscal Commission ([English Version](#) / [French Version](#)).

Chris Ragan is interviewed by Tyler Hamilton of *Corporate Knights* magazine.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Ecofiscal, Ecofiscal Commission, Economic Incentive, McGill University** | [Leave a reply](#)

Corporate Leaders Sign on to an Open Letter for More Climate Change Leadership, Carbon Pricing in Canada

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In an open letter to Canada's federal and provincial political leaders, including Prime Minister Harper, the Clean 50 states that Canada needs to put a higher priority on climate change action, and specifically, "We believe that one solution is to develop a well thought out framework that includes setting a price on carbon at some specific date in the future, that would reduce other taxes, and provide an incentive for businesses and individuals to take steps to reduce their use of carbon." The Clean 50 is a group founded and managed by Delta Management, a corporate search firm specializing in green jobs; it includes sustainability professionals from corporate Canada, as well as academics and individuals. [See the website and their Open Letter.](#)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Clean 50](#), [Climate Policy](#), [Prime Minister Harper](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Superlatives for the U.S.-China Agreement on Climate Change, and what it Means for Canada

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Media superlatives signal the importance of the surprising climate change announcement by the U.S. and China on November 11. President Obama pledged that the U.S. will emit 26 to 28 percent less carbon in 2025 than it did in 2005, and will double the pace of reduction it had previously targeted for the period from 2005 to 2020. China's President Xi Jinping pledged to reach peak carbon emissions by 2030, if not sooner, and that clean energy sources would account for 20 percent of China's total energy production by 2030.

[See the White House press release](#) and the [White House Fact Sheet](#). For a summary of U.S. reactions, see the Blue Green Alliance at "[What Leaders are Saying about the Historic Agreement](#)".

What is the impact in Canada? A [Globe and Mail article](#) stated that the agreement would put pressure on Prime Minister Harper to act on climate change, yet [columnist Jeffrey Simpson wrote](#), "Leadership means a willingness to spend political capital on an issue, and in Canada's case, there is no such leadership at the top. That this absence would suddenly shift as a result of a China-U.S. understanding is improbable in the extreme".

[Alberta's new premier Jim Prentice](#) announced that the province will "stiffen" its regulations for fossil fuel extraction. "It's the desire of Alberta to be participatory in any sort of international agreement that we can arrive at, modeled on what the United States and China have been able to achieve". When the U.S. – China agreement was announced, Ontario's Kathleen Wynne, accompanied by green business leaders, had just returned from a trade mission to China.

According to the [University of Victoria PICS Newscan](#), Guelph's Canadian Solar Solutions signed a \$70-million deal to build solar energy plants in China, and China Energy Conservation and Environmental Protection Group signed an agreement for future collaboration.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [2 Degree Target](#), [Chinese Solar Industry](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [Kathleen Wynne](#), [President Obama](#), [Renewables](#), [U.S. Climate Action Plan](#), [U.S.-China Agreement](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change Momentum Continues at the G20 Summit in Brisbane

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

Despite the efforts of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott to keep it off the agenda, pressure to address climate change was heaped on the G20 group, notably by the climate agreement signed by the U.S. and China. Pope Francis sent a letter to Prime Minister Abbott that admonished "unbridled" consumerism, environmental degradation, and their capacity to undermine global economic stability. See "[U.S., EU Override Australia to put Climate Change on G20 Agenda](#)" from

Reuters and “Pope Francis to World Leaders: Consumerism Represents ‘Constant Assault’ on the Environment” from [ClimateProgress](#).

The final communiqué expressed strong support for the Green Climate Fund. Canada announced on November 20 that it would contribute \$300 million to the Green Climate Fund. See the [government press release](#) and [government backgrounder](#), and see also “Green Climate Fund in the Spotlight at G20 Leaders’ Meet” from the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [ClimateProgress](#), [G20](#), [G20 Summit](#), [Green Climate Fund](#), [International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development \(ICTSD\)](#), [Pope Francis](#), [Tony Abbott](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario and Quebec sign Agreements on Electricity Trade and Climate Change

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

On November 21, Ontario and Québec announced a number of agreements to “strengthen Ontario and Québec’s partnership to build up Central Canada’s economy, create jobs and make a difference in people’s lives”. These agreements specifically focused on electricity trade, climate change (including carbon pricing), infrastructure investments, the Energy East pipeline, interprovincial trade, and the Francophonie.

Relating to Energy East, Ontario affirmed Québec’s concerns and insistence that climate change is considered by the NEB and that the unfair burden of risk born by those nearby the converted aging gas pipelines is addressed.

Read [Ontario’s press release](#) and [Ontario’s backgrounder](#), and see CBC coverage in “[Ontario, Québec sign deals on Electricity, Climate Change](#)”. According to the *Globe and Mail*, federal and Alberta government ministers will be travelling to Quebec soon to press the case for Energy East. Read reaction to the Ontario-Quebec agreement by [Clare Demerse at Clean Energy Canada](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Agreement](#), [Energy East](#), [Energy Infrastructure](#), [Francophonie](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Ontario](#), [Ontario-Quebec Agreement](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Analysis of the Canada – EU Trade Agreement

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada was announced as a “done deal” in Ottawa on September 26, despite the fact that the text had never been made public till that time.

The agreement abolishes almost all tariffs and reduces many non-tariff barriers, but most controversial is the chapter on investment protection, which includes Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions. The ISDS mechanism gives foreign corporations the ability to sue Canada or a province, if the companies allege that domestic health or environmental policies and regulations interfere with their right to make a profit.

The Council of Canadians has been a vocal opponent of CETA because of these ISDS provisions and released a new book in November. *Trading away Democracy* (co-published by a number of other organizations, including Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canadian Union of Public Employees, European Federation of Public Service Unions, Friends of the Earth Europe).

The International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development in Geneva has published a detailed review which includes a summary of the Environment and Labour chapters of the CETA . The article points out a departure from past trade agreements such as NAFTA: disputes under the Environment or Labour chapters cannot be initiated by civil society,

but only by a government- to -government mechanism specifically defined in each chapter. See “Unpacking the EU Canada Free Trade Deal” in *Bridges* (Nov. 3).

Also see the Government of Canada website relating to CETA, including a link to the text of the agreement (English version / French version).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), Council of Canadians, EU, Foreign Policy, Free Trade, International Trade, Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), NAFTA** | [Leave a reply](#)

Grid Parity for Solar and Wind Energy

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

According to the [Global Wind Energy Outlook](#) published by the Global Wind Energy Council and Greenpeace International, wind power alone could supply as much as 19 percent of global electricity needs by 2030, and 30% by 2050, given policy support. The economics of wind and solar production are leading the way: see an [overview of recent studies](#) relating to grid parity of solar and wind energy, including the October report by Deutsche Bank analyst Vishal Shah, and a [New York Times](#) article. The Deutsche Bank report found that solar has already reached grid parity in the ten states that represent 90 % of U.S. solar electricity production. Wind continues to face community opposition, but a Health Canada study in November concludes that there is no evidence of a causal relationship between exposure to wind turbine noise and self-reported medical illnesses and health conditions. See the [Health Canada study](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Global Wind Energy Outlook, Grid Parity, Low-Carbon Electricity, Low-Carbon Transition, Renewables, Solar Energy, wind energy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Pipeline News: Report Questions Economic Benefit of Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Project ahead of Mass Arrests

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A report released by Simon Fraser University and The Goodman Group Ltd. on November 10th asserts that pipeline company Kinder Morgan has exaggerated the number of jobs to be created by its Trans Mountain Expansion Project and drastically underestimated the potential cost of spills.

While the company holds that the project will support 36,000 person-years of work for British Columbians, with an additional 2000 jobs in spin-offs, the Goodman Group report estimates a maximum of 12,000 person-years during the construction period – amounting to about 4000 jobs per year. Further, revenues for the province may also be lower than claimed. The Goodman report was released just after Kinder Morgan was granted an injunction on November 14th against a group of residents protesting the Trans Mountain project on Burnaby Mountain. 53 protestors have been arrested as of November 22nd.

Read the Goodman report, *Economic Costs and Benefits of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project (TMX) for B.C. and Metro Vancouver*. Read “Economists Question Projected Value of Trans Mountain’s Pipeline” from *The Globe and Mail*. For information about the protests, see “Kinder Morgan Slaps Burnaby Residents with Multi-Million-Dollar Lawsuit” from the *Vancouver Observer*, and “Kinder Morgan Protests: More Protesters are Arrested as Test Drilling Starts” from the CBC.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Burnaby, Burnaby Mountain, Kinder Morgan, Pipeline Jobs, Trans Mountain Pipeline** | [Leave a reply](#)

Pipeline News: Energy East Application filed at NEB; Quebec Response

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On October 30th, Trans Canada filed a formal application for its Energy East pipeline project from the National Energy Board (NEB). See the [NEB website](#) for information about the Energy East application and the National Energy Board process, including how to participate, or see the CBC website for “[TransCanada Formally Applies to NEB for Energy East Pipeline Approval](#)”.

TransCanada claims the project will directly or indirectly create 14,000 jobs, and help create \$36 billion worth of economic activity, basing its projections on a new Conference Board of Canada report, which updates a previous report by Deloitte consultants. See [Energy East Pipeline Project: Understanding the Economic Benefits for Canada and its Regions](#). See also an “[Economic Backgrounder](#)” from Trans Canada.

On November 6th, the Québec National Assembly unanimously passed a resolution asserting provincial jurisdiction to conduct its own environmental assessment and casting a vote of non-confidence in the NEB process. The resolution condemned the NEB’s exclusion of climate impacts from the factors it considers and the failure of the federal government to adopt national emissions regulations for oil and gas. Québec’s Minister of Natural Resources said the province will analyze potential economic and environmental impacts and the threat to its wintertime natural gas supply in consultation with the public, and will appear before the NEB with its findings. Find the resolution in the legislative [Votes and Proceedings](#) for Nov. 6 at page 471, and the [Quebec press release](#). See [reaction to the resolution](#) from the Pembina Institute, emphasizing climate impacts. The Québec Minister of Environment also sent a letter to Trans Canada on November 18th which outlined seven project conditions, including assurance the province will benefit economically and adequate involvement of the public and First Nations in decision-making. Read the conditions in “[Environment Minister sets Conditions for TransCanada in Quebec](#)”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Energy East](#), [Environmental Assessment](#), [National Energy Board \(NEB\)](#), [Quebec](#), [TransCanada](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How Should Canada Prepare for Climate Migrants?

Posted on **November 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

As part of its Climate Justice program, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – B.C. Office released a report in November, asking: “given Canada’s historical and ongoing contribution to global warming, what is our collective obligation to people fleeing regions most affected by climate change, and how prepared are we to meet these obligations?” Researchers found serious gaps in current policies and thinking around climate migration, and recommend legislative reform to create a new immigration class of “climate migrants”, with targets and programs to ensure Canada absorbs its fair share of those migrants. Recognizing that most climate migrants will remain in developing countries, Canada should also increase its support to those countries which will bear the brunt of climate displacement. Read [Preparing B.C. for Climate Migration](#).

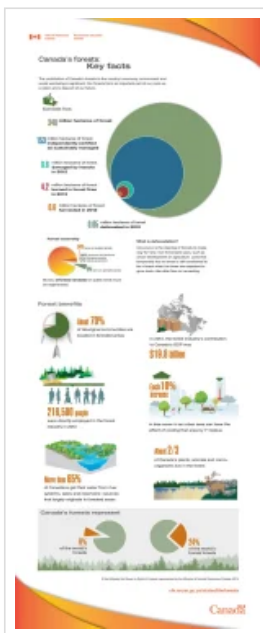
Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives \(CCPA\)](#), [Climate migrants](#), [Displacement](#), [Immigration](#), [Refugees](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Forests, Climate Change, and the Roles of Government and Professionals

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On September 24, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources released the 2014 edition of State of Canada's Forests, which includes "sustainability indicators" which highlight key social, economic and environmental data such as GhG emissions, contribution to GDP, and labour force growth and wage levels.

In a table showing "Benefits to the Canadian Economy", the forest sector ranks as providing 9.34 jobs per million dollars of value added; in comparison, the energy sector provides 1.94 jobs (see <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/report/economy/16517>). The federal government report strikes an optimistic and positive note, highlighting government's role in providing financial incentives through the Investments in Forest Industry Transformation program, the Expanding Market Opportunities program and the Forest Innovation program.



In contrast, a September report from the Intact Forest Landscapes Initiative states that Canada has led the world in forest loss from deforestation since 2000 (half of such forest loss occurred in just three countries: Canada, Russia and Brazil). According to Global Forest Watch Canada, the major causes of Canada's forest loss are massive increases in oil sands and shale gas developments, as well as logging and road building. The Intact Forest project is produced by the Global Forest Watch Network, an international collaboration that includes Greenpeace, University of Maryland, and World Resources Institute among others, and uses satellite imagery technology to determine the location and extent of the world's last large undisturbed forests.

In British Columbia, four professional associations related to the forestry industry released an "unprecedented" joint statement in July, which states, "Our members have crucial roles to play in both climate change mitigation and adaptation; their knowledge, expertise and professionalism are key parts of the solution. But they also have important professional and ethical responsibilities related to the changing climate. Professional associations have an obligation to define those responsibilities and to provide the training and structures that will allow members to meet their responsibilities to their clients and to the public". The statement also calls on government to show leadership, and calls for a review of a range of provincial laws in light of climate change. Signatories to the joint statement are: the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP), the Association of Professional Biologists (APB), the College of Applied Biology (CAB), and the Planning Institute of BC (PIBC).

LINKS:

State of Canada's Forests 2014 is available, with accompanying infographics and summaries at: <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/report/16496> (English version), and <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forets/rapport/16497> (French version)

Intact Forest Landscapes is at: <http://intactforests.org/>; Global Forest Watch Canada is at: <http://www.globalforestwatch.ca/>

Professional Associations of B.C. Joint Statement is at:

http://www.abcfp.ca/about_us/media_centre/documents/Pro_Leadership_in_a_Changing_Climate-Joint_Statement_20140708.pdf; accompanying 1-page background document is at:

http://www.abcfp.ca/about_us/media_centre/documents/Joint_Statement_on_Climate_Change-Backgrounder_20140708.pdf. The Association of B.C. Forest Professionals released their own position paper in January

2014 at: http://www.abcfp.ca/publications_forms/publications/documents/ABCFP_Climate_Change-Position_Paper_2014.pdf

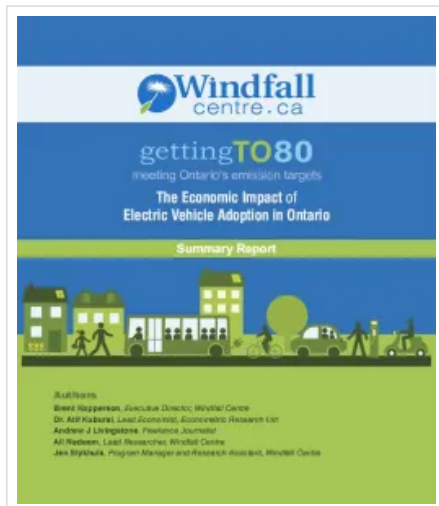
Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Deforestation, Global Forest Watch Canada, Intact Forest Landscapes Initiative, Minister of Natural Resources, State of Canada's Forests, Sustainability Indicators** | [Leave a reply](#)

Electric Vehicles Good for Ontario Economy

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

According to a new report from the non-profit Windfall Centre, Ontario's economy would enjoy major economic benefits from increased electric vehicles (EV's), including considerable energy savings, government revenue, and thousands of new skilled, well-paid jobs in manufacturing, research, business and professional services, and infrastructure development.

According to Windfall, these benefits would outweigh losses in other sectors, including oil and gas and Ontario's sagging gasoline vehicle manufacturing sector. The report estimates that if 10% of Ontario's passenger vehicles were to be electric by



2025, the province's total income would increase by more than \$3.6 billion with an added 34,000 person years of work.

The importance of such a conversion is underlined in a September report from the Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport. "Without transport contributing in a significant manner to the mitigation of climate change it will not be possible to shift to a global stabilization pathway that can keep warming below 2 Degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels".

California's Governor Jerry Brown also cast his vote for EV's in September with S.B. 1275, *The Charge Ahead California Initiative*, to get 1 million EV's driving in the state by 2020. Governor Brown's decision was celebrated by the BlueGreen Alliance, who noted that most EV's in California are union-made in the U.S.

LINKS:

The Economic Impact of Electric Vehicle Adoption in Ontario is available at: <http://www.windfallcentre.ca/drive-electric/studies/ev-adoption/report/>

For more about electric vehicles, see “Plugged in: Electric Vehicles Coming to Canada in 2015” from the *Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-drive/culture/technology/plugged-in-electric-vehicles-coming-to-canada-in-2015/article20592549/>, or follow the Electric Vehicle News Blog at FleetCarma at: <http://www.fleetcarma.com/category/electric-vehicle-news/>

Land Transport's Contribution to a 2°C Target is at: <http://www.slocat.net/transporttwodegree>

“The Effort to Get One Million Electric Vehicles on California’s Roadways Just Got A Jumpstart” from BlueGreen Alliance is at: <http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/blog/the-effort-to-get-one-million-electric-vehicles-on-californias-roadways-just-got-a-jumpstart>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Automobiles, BlueGreen Alliance, Canadian Manufacturing, Electric Vehicles, Green Job Creation, Green Jobs, Jerry Brown, Ontario Manufacturing, The Charge Ahead California Initiative, Windfall Centre** | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal Government Scientists: an Open Letter in their Support, and an Injunction for Energy East Based on their Concerns

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), along with the Union of Concerned Scientists, marked the Government of Canada’s Science and Technology week with an advertising campaign which included an open letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.



The letter states: “Canada’s leadership in basic research, environmental, health and other public science is in jeopardy... We urge you to restore government science funding and the freedom and opportunities to communicate these findings internationally”. The letter was signed by more than 800 scientists from 32 countries, from institutions such as Harvard Medical School in the U.S. and the Max Planck Institute in Germany. PIPSC, which represents scientists employed by the federal government, has published earlier surveys of its members to document their perceptions of being “muzzled”; a related advocacy group, Evidence for Democracy, released its own report on October 8, compiling and ranking the communications policies of federal government departments.

The world has seen this before, as described in a blog by the Union for Concerned Scientists, and coincidentally, by the New York Times obituary on October 19, 2014 for Rick Pitz. Pitz was a U.S. whistleblower who exposed the subtle manipulation of scientific reports on climate change in the Bush administration between 2002 and 2003.

Ignoring the opinions of federal government scientists has its perils. On September 23, the Quebec Superior Court issued a temporary injunction to stop TransCanada's exploratory drilling for the Energy East pipeline. Part of the reason for the injunction: environmental groups provided internal documents showing that scientists from the federal department of Fisheries and Oceans had been raising concerns for months about the impact of the exploratory drilling on the habitat of threatened St. Lawrence beluga whales, and of the proposed oil terminal that would be built to service 250-metre long supertankers. The court ruled that, by ignoring the scientists' concerns, Quebec's Minister of the Environment erred in issuing a permit for the exploratory work.

LINKS:

PIPSC Press release, with a link to the Open Letter, is at:

<http://www.pipsc.ca/portal/page/portal/website/news/newsreleases/news/21102014>

Can Scientists Speak? Grading Communication Policies For Federal Government Scientists is at:

<https://evidencefordemocracy.ca/canscientistspeak>, with a blog which summarizes Canadian and U.S. experience at the Union of Concerned Scientists at: <http://blog.ucsusa.org/want-to-talk-to-a-scientist-in-canada-dont-look-to-the-federal-government-678>

See the CBC report at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/foreign-scientists-call-on-stephen-harper-to-restore-science-funding-freedom-1.2806571> for links to previous stories in this ongoing issue.

Rick Pitz obituary in the New York Times (Oct. 19, 2014) is at: http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/19/a-passing-rick-piltz-a-bush-era-whistleblower/?_php=true&_type=blogs&module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar&r=0, and the related expose of Philip A. Cooney, "Bush Aide Softened Greenhouse Gas Links to Global Warming" in the New York Times (June 8, 2005) at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/08/politics/08climate.html?emc=eta1>

"TransCanada work on St. Lawrence port Suspended by Quebec Court Order" on the CBC website (September 23) at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/transcanada-work-on-st-lawrence-port-suspended-by-quebec-court-order-1.2775613>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Science, Energy East, Environmental Science, Evidence for Democracy, Muzzled Scientists, PIPSC, Public Science, Science Funding, TransCanada, Union for Concerned Scientists** | [Leave a reply](#)

Productivity Loss due to Workplace Heat Stress: an Issue for North America, too

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In an article appearing in Our World, a publication of the United Nations University, author Tord Kjellstrom argues that economists need to consider the impact of the physiological limits of people exposed to ambient heat when they work.

His article reviews the literature to date on this issue, and contends that climate change is resulting in huge financial losses because of reduced labour productivity: estimated in 2012 as approximately US\$2 trillion globally by 2030. High temperatures are already having an impact in tropical and sub-tropical countries, as well as the southern U.S. and Europe, and Australia.

How relevant is this to North America? In 2014, as part of the Risky Business project, the American Climate Prospectus included a chapter on labour productivity, which projected that heat-related losses of labour productivity in 2050 and 2090

in the United States would be the largest actual economic cost of climate change – amounting to approximately 0.2 percent of GDP in 2050. And in October 2014, an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that “By 2050, many US cities may experience more frequent extreme heat days. For example, New York and Milwaukee may have 3 times their current average number of days hotter than 32°C (90°F)...The adverse health aspects related to climate change may include heat-related disorders, such as heat stress and economic consequences of reduced work capacity”. The article continues to list many other adverse health outcomes and the implications for physicians. Wor

LINKS:

“Productivity Losses Ignored in Economic Analysis of Climate Change” in Our World (September 23, 2014) at: <http://ourworld.unu.edu/en/productivity-losses-ignored-in-economic-analysis-of-climate-change>

American Climate Prospectus: Economic Risks in the United States (June, updated August 2014) at: <http://rhg.com/reports/climate-prospectus>

“Climate Change Challenges and Opportunities for Global Health” in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) at: <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1909928>

For more, see the Hothaps website at: <http://www.climatechip.org/>. Hothaps = High Occupational Temperature: Health and Productivity Suppression, an international research program which studies “the effects of heat exposure on working people (including gender aspects and effects on pregnant women and on children), to quantify climate change-related increases in workplace heat exposures and the impact this will have on human health and productivity”.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **American Climate Prospectus, Heat Stress, Labour Productivity, Occupational Health and Safety, Our World, Productivity, United Nations University** | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour Should Lead with a Worker-Friendly Climate Plan

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Drawing on American economic and labour policy during World War II, authors Jeremy Brecher, Ron Blackwell and Joe Uehlein envision what climate policy could look like with labour in the lead, in an article in the September 2014 issue of New Labor Forum.

The authors acknowledge that unions are caught between the immediate interests of their members, many of whom work in industries vulnerable to new climate regulations, and long-term social, economic, and ecological wellbeing. As a result, labour has at times remained “aloof” to the climate movement, but the authors advocate that the labour movement should take the initiative to develop its own government-led climate plan – one that bridges the divide between work and environment, reverses austerity, raises wages, and offers full employment, job security, and transition training.

As during wartime, the authors contend, climate change demands ramped up production and expansion in innovative sectors. The government should take the lead in financing the low-carbon transition during its initial, more expensive stages, thereby encouraging private investment by creating stable green markets. Citizens should be supported during the transformation through the establishment of a welfare state that diverts carbon tax revenues to workers and the unemployed, provides education and training, and recruits and distributes workers to where they are most needed.

LINKS:

“If Not Now, When? A Labor Movement Plan to Address Climate Change” in New Labor Forum (v.23, #3) is at: <http://nlf.sagepub.com/content/23/3/40.full.pdf+html>

New York Climate Summit: Labour Marches and Business Makes Pledges

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The New York Times Editorial Board pronounced its verdict on the U.N. Climate Summit – focussing on the People’s March rather than the official meetings, and noting “a palpable conviction that tackling climate change could be an opportunity, and not a burden”.

The article notes that cooperation between the U.S. and China could create the conditions for a breakthrough agreement in 2015, “But what might really do the trick – if Climate Week is any guide – is the emergence of a growing bottom-up movement for change”. In an article in Truthout, Abby Scher summarizes the support for the People’s March by national unions in the U.S., including Service Employees (SEIU) and Communication Workers of America, as well as the New York state and city unions and the community-labour alliances which have taken root in New York since Hurricane Sandy.

The business community made headlines with its reports and announcements over the Climate Summit week: a Global Investor Statement by nearly 350 global institutional investors representing over \$24 trillion in assets, calling for stable, reliable and economically meaningful carbon pricing and a phase-out of fossil fuels; the Carbon Tracker Initiative published a report for investors to measure their risk exposure and start directing capital away from high cost, high carbon projects; the new We Mean Business coalition released The Climate has Changed report; and iconic companies like Kellogg’s, Nestle, Apple, and IKEA and others released their own statements supporting climate change action.

CalPERS, the largest public pension fund in the U.S., pledged to measure and publicly disclose the carbon footprint of its \$300 billion investment portfolio, and the California State Teachers Retirement System announced that it will increase its clean energy and technology investments from \$1.4 billion to \$3.7 billion over the next five years. And according to a New York Times summary of business initiatives: “The major Indonesian palm oil processors, including Cargill, issued a separate declaration on Tuesday pledging a crackdown on deforestation, and asking the Indonesian government to adopt stronger laws. Forest Heroes, an environmental group, called the declaration “a watershed moment in the history of both Indonesia and global agriculture. We should not underestimate the significance of what is happening”.

And for an interesting, more neutral point of view: consider the special report Climate Protection as a World Citizen Movement, presented to the German Federal Government on the occasion of the UN Climate Summit in New York. The German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU) recommends a dual strategy for international climate policy: governments should negotiate the global phasing-out of fossil CO2 emissions at the Paris meetings in 2015, while civil society initiatives, including those of trade unions and religious organizations, should be supported and encouraged.

LINKS:

“A Group Shout on Climate Change” Editorial in the New York Times (September 27) is at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/28/opinion/sunday/a-group-shout-on-climate-change.html?emc=edit_th_20140928&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=67440933&_r=0. In contrast, see also “Moving Forward after the People’s Climate March” in Canadian Dimension at: <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/moving-forward-after-the-peoples-climate-march>

“At Least Some Unions Step Up for Big Climate March!” by Abby Scher in Truthout at: <http://www.truthout.org/news/item/26137-at-least-some-unions-step-up-for-big-climate-march>, with a list of the unions who officially endorsed the People March at: <http://peoplesclimate.org/organizedlabor/>. See also the BlueGreen Alliance statement at: <http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/news/latest/members-of-labor-environmental-partnership-front-and-center-in-peoples-climate-march>

For Business documents, see Global Investor Statement is at: <http://investorsonclimatechange.org/>; Carbon Supply Cost Curves: Evaluating Financial Risk to Oil Capital Expenditures is at the Carbon Tracker Initiative at: <http://www.carbontracker.org/report/carbon-supply-cost-curves-evaluating-financial-risk-to-oil-capital-expenditures/>; We Mean Business website is at: <http://www.wemeanbusinesscoalition.org/>, with The Climate has Changed at: <http://www.wemeanbusinesscoalition.org/stories>. CalPERS statement is at: <http://www.calpers.ca.gov/index.jsp?bc=/about/newsroom/news/montreal-carbon-pledge.xml>; California Teachers Retirement System press release is at: <http://www.calstrs.com/news-release/calstrs-commits-increase-clean-energy-and-technology-investments>; "Companies take the Baton in Climate Change Efforts" in the New York Times at: http://mobile.nytimes.com/2014/09/24/business/energy-environment/passing-the-baton-in-climate-change-efforts.html?_r=3

Climate Protection as a World Citizen Movement by the German Advisory Council on Global Change is at: http://www.wbgu.de/fileadmin/templates/dateien/veroeffentlichungen/sondergutachten/sn2014/wbgu_sg2014_en.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing, Carbon Tracker Initiative, Clean Energy Investment, Communication Workers of America, COP 20, Green Investment, Hurricane Sandy, New York, New York Climate Summit, Paris 2015, People's Climate March, Service Employees (SEIU)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change is the Theme of ILO World Day for Decent Work, and CLC Announces a Climate Change Week of Action

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

According to the Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO), "To mark this year's World Day for Decent Work, trade unions have chosen the theme of climate change, urging governments to move now to create prosperity for all on a sustainable planet". "There is a growing consensus that climate change and decent work for all are the two defining challenges of the 21st century". The Canadian Labour Congress also marked the day, and, referring to the Report of Canada's Commissioner of the Environment, made this statement: "In keeping with the Climate Justice theme for World Day for Decent Work, the CLC used this report to invigorate the preparations for its planned national climate change week of action this December, set to coincide with the United Nations global climate change meeting (COP 20) in Lima, Peru, from December 1 to 12, 2014".

LINKS:

ILO Director's blog is at: <http://iloblog.org/2014/10/08/there-are-no-jobs-on-a-dead-planet/>

CLC announcement of Climate Change Week of Action is at: <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/news-room/statements/october-7-2014-world-day-decent-work>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), COP 20, Good Jobs, ILO, International Labour Organization** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada will miss 2020 Copenhagen Emissions Target, says Environment Commissioner

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Report from the Canadian Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development states that, in addition to failing to develop a national framework, enact any legislation that targets climate change, or release long-awaited oil and

gas regulations, Canada's tar sands monitoring is inadequate, neglects cumulative impacts, and lacks a plan beyond next year. The tar sands are Canada's fastest growing source of emissions. Commissioner Gelfand also highlighted uncertainty surrounding which projects are subject to an environmental assessment and inadequate public and aboriginal consultation following the introduction of Bill-C45 in 2012, which profoundly altered environmental legislation in Canada. She also noted the dire need to improve planning in the Arctic, as shipping increases in the absence of updated navigation information or emergency response strategies.

Read the 2014 Fall Report of Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development at: http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_cesd_201410_e_39845.html (English), and http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/Francais/parl_cesd_201410_f_39845.html (French). The Commissioner appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development to discuss her report on October 8; see the transcript at:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6723122&Language=e&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2>(English), and

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6723122&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2&Language=F>

(French). See "Highlights of the Environment Commissioner's Fall Report" from the CBC at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/highlights-of-environment-commissioner-s-fall-report-1.2790164>.

For reaction see "Commissioner's report shows Canada must do more for environment" from the David Suzuki Foundation at: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/science-matters/2014/10/commissioners-report-shows-canada-must-do-more-for-environment/>; "Treading Water on Climate Change: Sierra reacts to Environment Commissioner's Report" from Sierra Club Canada at: <http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/report-fail>; and "No Overall Vision:" Scathing New Audit from Environment Commissioner Exposes Canada's Utter Climate Failure" from Desmog Canada at: <http://www.desmog.ca/2014/10/07/no-overall-vision-scathing-new-audit-environment-commissioner-exposes-canada-s-utter-climate-failure>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Arctic Shipping, Bill C-45, Canadian Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, Copenhagen Summit, Emissions reduction targets, Oil and Gas Regulations, Oil Sands, Tar Sands** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario is the First Canadian Province to Issue Green Bonds

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In early October, Ontario's sale of green bonds attracted orders of almost \$2.4 billion from investors around the world.

The funds will be used to finance clean transportation; energy efficiency and conservation; clean energy and technology; forestry, agriculture and land management; and climate adaptation and resilience. Toronto's Eglinton Crosstown LRT will be the first project to receive funding. Read the news release from the Government of Ontario at: <http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2014/10/strong-demand-for-ontarios-first-green-bond.html>. See also "Ontario goes green with the latest bond sale" from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions at: <http://pics.uvic.ca/news/news-scan/pics-climate-news-scan-september-25-2014#solutions>.

For an financial explanation of green bonds, see the TD Economics report Green Bonds: Victory Bonds for the Environment (November 2013), at: http://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/GreenBonds_Canada.pdf. According to a September report released by UNEP, World Bank and others, green bonds are on the rise worldwide and are "integral" to financing the global low-carbon transition. Read Financial Institutions Taking Action on Climate Change at: http://investorsonclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FinancialInstitutionsTakingActionOnClimateChange_Final.pdf.

Bloomberg estimates that the global green bond market will reach US\$40 billion by the end of the year, three times more than 2013.

B.C. LNG Setor: New Legislation and a New Report

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In the week of October 20, British Columbia introduced the Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act and the Liquefied Natural Gas Income Tax Act. The former requires liquefied natural gas plants to purchase carbon offsets and punishes those who fail to limit their carbon emissions to 0.16 tonnes per tonne of LNG – the strictest standards in the world, according to B.C. Environment Minister Mary Polak.

However, Merran Smith of Clean Energy Canada criticized the Act for focussing exclusively on port facilities, at the end of the supply chain. Matt Horne of the Pembina Institute asserted that 70% of the industry's emissions would be released before reaching the ports. See "B.C.'s New LNG Emissions Regulations A Good Start, But Not Enough" from Desmog Canada at: <http://www.desmog.ca/2014/10/22/bc-new-lng-emissions-regulations-good-start-but-not-enough>, and Pembina's comments at: <http://www.pembina.org/media-release/pembina-reacts-to-tabling-of-bc-lng-carbon-pollution-legislation>.

The new tax legislation imposes a 3.5% rate on operating income, half the amount B.C. had initially planned. Read the government press release at: <http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/bc-to-have-worlds-cleanest-lng-facilities.html>, and for details on the Act, see the government's website at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=75BD4BF2B6B5493FB8A36DB05EBA764D>. Jack Mintz, from the University of Calgary, states: "the B.C. shale gas royalty is one of the most distortionary systems developed in industrialized countries".

For his financial and policy critique, see "Jack M. Mintz: Why B.C.'s LNG tax policy sets a bad precedent" in the Financial Post at: <http://business.financialpost.com/2014/10/22/jack-m-mintz-why-b-c-s-lng-tax-policy-helps-neither-the-province-nor-the-industry/>. For a broader view, see Marc Lee's reaction in "A B.C. Framework for LNG, part 2: The LNG income tax" at Rabble.ca at: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/policynote/2014/10/bc-framework-lng-part-2-lng-income-tax>.

And the last word: Pembina will release a new report on October 27th, LNG and Climate Change: The Global Context.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BC LNG, Carbon Offsets, Emissions Regulations, Industry Taxation, Liquefied Natural Gas, LNG** | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy Efficiency in Canadian Industrial Sectors

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On October 16, the Council of Canadian Academies released a report commissioned by Industry Canada, based on a survey of more than 1,000 Canadian firms. It provides an overview of how Canadian businesses have adapted to rising and increasingly volatile energy prices. "The Panel focused on Canadian sectors that are particularly exposed to energy prices and therefore potentially vulnerable to changes: the energy intensive resource-based, manufacturing, and transport sectors; the capital intensive oil and gas, mining, and electric power sectors; and the transport equipment sector".

59% of firms surveyed have invested in equipment to manage energy costs over the past few years; only 18% of surveyed firms had access to information that allowed them to benchmark their energy efficiency against their competitors (the Forest Products industry being one example of an industry that does benchmark).

The report was prepared by a 13-member expert panel, chaired by Fred Gorbet . See [Energy Prices and Business Decision-Making in Canada: Preparing for the Energy Future](#) at: <http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed/energy-prices.aspx> (English), and <http://sciencepourlepublic.ca/fr/assessments/completed/energy-prices.aspx> (French), with an abridged English version (6 pages) at: http://www.scienceadvice.ca/uploads/eng/assessments%20and%20publications%20and%20news%20releases/energy_prices/energyprices_rif_en.pdf.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Manufacturing, Council of Canadian Academies (CCA), energy efficiency, Energy Price, Industry Canada, Transportation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Cities Making Progress in the Fight against Climate Change

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new global network, The Compact of Mayors, was announced at the New York Climate Summit in September, to expand city-level GHG reduction strategies; make existing targets and plans public; and make annual progress reports using a newly-standardized measurement system that is compatible with international practices. The new Compact will work with existing organizations and global networks of cities (C40, Cities Climate Leadership Group, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)). See a summary at:

<http://www.iclei.org/details/article/global-mayors-compact-shows-unity-and-ambition-to-tackle-climate-change-1.html>, read The Compact document at:

http://www.iclei.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ICLEI_WS/Documents/advocacy/Climate_Summit_2014/Compact_of_Mayors_Doc.pdf, or see the World Resources Institute blog at: <http://www.wri.org/blog/2014/09/compact-mayors-cities-lead-tackling-climate-change-un-summit/>.

At their annual meeting on September 23, the B.C. Mayors Climate Leadership Council reviewed their accomplishments since the group was founded 5 years ago. Climate Action Plans have been established in 50% of municipalities in British Columbia, covering 75% of B.C.'s population. 31 local governments achieved carbon neutrality for their operations in 2012. See the press release at: <http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/News/BC-Municipalities-Marching-Ahead-Climate-Action>. For more information about action in cities across Canada, see the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection latest National Measures Report at:

http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/PCP/2014/PCP_National_Measures_Report_2013_EN.pdf (the PCP is part of the global ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability). See also Best Practices in Climate Resilience from Six North American Cities (from City of Toronto, June 2014) at:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Environment%20and%20Energy/Programs%20for%20Businesses/Images/16-06-2014%20Best%20Practices%20in%20Climate%20Resilience.pdf>.

The Carbon Disclosure Project surveyed 207 cities worldwide in its new report, *Protecting Our Capital: How Climate Adaptation In Cities Creates a Resilient Place for Business*. The survey included the following Canadian cities: Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Brandon, Winnipeg, Burlington, Hamilton, London, Toronto, and Montreal. The report attempts to identify the alignment of how companies and the cities in which they operate perceive climate-related risks. It finds most commonality in recognizing risks from increased temperatures and heatwaves, which have immediate impacts across the public and private sectors. It is assumed that cities that develop reasonable risk assessment and reduction strategies will be better positioned to attract and retain business. See <https://www.cdp.net/CDPResults/CDP-global-cities-report-2014.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Adaptation, C40, Carbon Disclosure Project, Cities Climate Leadership Group, Climate Risk, Emissions reduction targets, Emissions Regulations, ICLEI, New York Climate Summit, Sustainability Measures, Urban Adaptations** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Compensation: Considering the Liability of Oil and Gas Companies on the Toronto Stock Exchange

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

CLIMATE COMPENSATION: CONSIDERING THE LIABILITY OF OIL AND GAS COMPANIES ON THE TORONTO STOCK EXCHANGE

A report released on October 9 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) and West Coast Environmental Law considers the total potential liability of five oil and gas companies currently trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange—EnCanada, Suncor, Canadian Natural Resources, Talisman, and Husky. Informed by a discussion of the liability claims against the tobacco industry, the authors provide an overview of possible legal approaches to climate compensation, and conclude that those five TSX-listed companies alone could be incurring a global liability as high as \$2.4 billion per year for their contribution to climate change.

See *Payback Time? What the Internationalization of Climate Litigation Could Mean for Canadian Oil and Gas Companies* at the CCPA website at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/payback-time>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Climate Risk, Liability, Toronto Stock Exchange, TSX, West Coast Environmental Law** | [Leave a reply](#)

New European Targets for Emission Reductions and Renewables

Posted on **October 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On October 24, members of the European Union reached agreement on new emissions targets for 2030: 40% cuts to greenhouse gas emissions, 27% target for the renewable energy market share and, an optional target of 27% increase for energy efficiency improvement. The EU is holding up the agreement as a model for other countries in advance of the Paris climate talks of 2015, though like all politically-driven compromises, it has its critics. According to Greenpeace EU: “People across Europe want cleaner energy, but EU leaders are knocking the wind out of Europe’s booming renewables sector”, and from the European Green Party, “It is shameful that the council gave veto power against better goals to Poland on renewables, to France on interconnectors, and to the UK on efficiency. [...] We used to have a polluter-pays-principle; now we’ve gotten a polluter-vetos-principle”.

See The Guardian at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/24/eu-leaders-agree-to-cut-greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-40-by-2030>; Statements and Reactions are found at: <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-priorities-2020/eu-leaders-adopt-flexible-energy-and-climate-targets-2030-309462>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Emissions reduction targets, EU, European Union, Renewables** | [Leave a reply](#)

Union Should Embed Climate Change in their Core Agenda, says TUED Report

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy is convening a 40-person strategy discussion on September 20 as part of the People's Climate March activities in New York. The meeting will discuss "central political issues facing the global labor movement around energy, climate change, impacts of pollution, and the need to develop an inspiring vision of a truly sustainable political economy based on solidarity and sufficiency".

To focus discussion, TUED has released a working paper, written by Sean Sweeney of the Cornell Global Labor Institute, taking stock of what he calls "the great inaction" – UN-led climate negotiations and labour's participation in them. He advocates that "social dialogue and social partnership need to be replaced by a new trade union narrative around movement-building and alliances, coupled with a new agenda or program grounded in economic democracy and popular power". He concludes: "Focusing on climate change as a distinct and separate issue is counterproductive. To connect with their own members unions will need to embed climate protection into the work they are presently doing to defend and promote workers' rights, fight privatization, austerity, and defend public services...By integrating climate protection into their present battles, unions can broaden the social base of support for what they presently regard to be their 'core agenda'. Furthermore, they can play a role in articulating a clear and inspiring alternative that mounts to a new ecological and economic development paradigm".

Sweeney cites Naomi Klein's speech at the founding convention of UNIFOR in September 2013 as a statement of a desirable approach. Ms. Klein will also speak at the TUED event about her new book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*.

LINKS:

Climate Change and the Great Inaction: New Trade Union Perspectives by Sean Sweeney is at: <http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TUED-working-paper-2-Final.pdf>

Agenda for the TUED meeting, *Power to the People: A Strategy Discussion on Advancing Social Ownership of Energy* is at: <http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/tued-strategy-discussion-sept-20-draft-agenda>

Naomi Klein's website is at: <http://www.naomiklein.org/main>; see the book review of *This Changes Everything in the Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media/book-reviews/naomi-kleins-this-changes-everything-a-convincing-case-that-global-warming-is-the-defining-issue-of-our-era/article20700657/>, and an excerpt at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media/naomi-klein-the-price-of-free-trade-is-unchecked-climate-change/article20578823/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cornell Global Labor Institute, Labour Policy, Political Economy, Sean Sweeney, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Greening the Workplace: UK Unions Experience

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A July report from the Trades Union Congress (TUC), *The Union Effect: Greening the Workplace*, explores six U.K. case studies in which notable attempts were made to improve workplace environmental footprints, including a government department, a hospital, a port, and a financial services company. While some initiatives were instigated by management and achieved variable success rates, unions played key roles overall. In some cases, unions pro-actively worked for environmental change, for example by educating members directly or instigating campaigns.

In other cases, they supported initiatives by helping shape workplace behaviour and "staff culture", working closely with management, and adding staff input to the planning process. In general, unions saw it as their role to lobby employers to view a green workplace as a long-term invest



tment. Unfortunately, the current reliance on voluntary commitments meant that environmental initiatives sometimes stalled or failed as enthusiasm waned. The report concludes that “the right for a recognised trade union to appoint union environmental reps could have a transformative effect”, and that there are three essential underpinnings to success: “sufficient time off for appropriate and relevant environmental training; sufficient time to carry out an energy and environmental audit with management; by agreement with management, the option to establish a joint environment forum”.

LINKS:

The Union Effect: Greening the Workplace is available at: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/economic-issues/social-issues/environment/climate-change/union-effect-greening-workplace>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy Efficiency Investment Bring Jobs in US Scenario

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A new report by lead authors Robert Pollin and Heidi Garrett-Peltier proposes a new energy investment program for the U.S., requiring public and private investment of \$200 billion per year over the next 20 years, and focussing on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

“Green Growth: A U.S. Program for Controlling Climate Change and Expanding Job Opportunities” argues that the U.S. can cut its carbon pollution by 40% from 2005 levels and create a net increase of 2.7 million clean energy jobs, if policies and investment undergo “a transformational shift in how we construct, finance, and deploy our energy infrastructure”. The report provides estimates of fiscal impacts and job impacts. The authors cite four essential conditions for their scenarios, one of which is “Regional equity and transitional support for communities and workers”, described as “allocating federal government clean energy investment spending equitably among all regions of the country, targeted community-adjustment assistance, extensive worker-training programs, and adjustment-assistance programs for fossil fuel workers. The national clean energy investment program can itself provide a critical base for generating new opportunities among workers and communities that are presently dependent on the fossil fuel industries”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Economics](#), [Education and Training](#), [Energy Investment](#), [Green Growth](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green skilling](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy Efficiency: Measuring the Multiple Benefits

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The International Energy Association (IEA) on September 9 released a guide aimed at policy makers, including assessment tools to measure the multiple benefits of energy efficiency. In addition to the customary benefits (reduced GHG emissions, energy savings, and improved energy security), the IEA also lists improved health and well-being, industrial productivity, increased employment, poverty alleviation, and improved local air pollution, among others. It argues that energy efficiency is now the “first fuel” rather than the “hidden fuel”.

Note that in the 2014 International Energy Efficiency Scorecard published by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) in July, Canada ranked 10th out of 16 countries; the U.S. ranked 13th, and Germany ranked #1.

LINKS:

Green Growth: A U.S. Program for Controlling Climate Change and Expanding Job Opportunities by Robert Pollin, Heidi Garrett-Peltier, James Heinz and Bracken Hendricks, released by the Center for American Progress (CAP), and the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) is available at: <http://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/GreenGrowthReport.pdf>. Reaction is at: http://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PERI_quotesheet9.18.pdf

Capturing the Multiple Benefits of Energy Efficiency is summarized at: <http://www.iea.org/newsroomandevents/pressreleases/2014/september/name-125300-en.html>, with an executive summary at: <http://www.iea.org/Textbase/npsum/MultipleBenefits2014SUM.pdf>

Press release for 2014 International Energy Efficiency Scorecard by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) is at: <http://www.aceee.org/press/2014/07/germany-italy-eu-china-and-france-to>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **energy efficiency, Energy policy, International Energy Association (IEA)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Business and Climate Change: Canada, US, and a new International Coalition

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Corporate Knights magazine released its 13th annual ranking of the best Corporate Citizens in Canada in June. Companies are ranked on 12 key performance indicators, including energy, carbon and water productivity, waste productivity, safety performance and employee turnover, and “clean capitalism pay link” (defined as: at least one senior executive’s compensation tied to clean capitalism-themed performance targets). A companion article, “The Sustainability Pay Link”, discusses the extent to which executive compensation is tied to ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria, and the reasons why it is not as widespread as might be expected.

Also in June, U.S.- based Ceres released a 2014 edition of its ongoing series, Power Forward 2.0: How American Companies are Setting Clean Energy Targets and Capturing Greater Business Value. It reports that clean energy is becoming mainstream for U.S. corporations – with 60% of the Fortune 100 having goals for renewable energy or greenhouse gas reductions, resulting in a decrease in annual CO2 emissions of approximately 58.3 million metric tons. The report also chronicles the evolving business practices, financial tools, and policy developments, including case studies and profiles. For example, it includes a note about the compensation policy at Clorox, which awards its CEO a bonus for meeting corporate environmental goals.

In the lead-up to the U.N. Climate Summit in New York, a new coalition of business and climate organizations is being launched. The founding partners of “We Mean Business” are: BSR, the B Team, CDP, Ceres, The Climate Group, the Prince of Wales’s Corporate Leaders Group (CLG) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). Their mission statement says: “we are calling for national and international policies that will continue to scale-up

clean energy and energy efficiency, unleash low carbon innovation and send the right price signals to drive investment in clean technologies”.

LINKS:

Corporate Knights' Canada's Best Corporate Citizens is at: <http://www.corporateknights.com/report/2014-best-corporate-citizens-canada>, with details of the performance criteria at: <http://www.corporateknights.com/report/2014-best-corporate-citizens-canada/methodology>. “The Sustainability Pay Link” is at: <http://www.corporateknights.com/article/sustainability-pay-link>

Power Forward 2.0: How American Companies are Setting Clean Energy Targets and Capturing Greater Business Value is at: <http://www.ceres.org/resources/reports/power-forward-2.0-how-american-companies-are-setting-clean-energy-targets-and-capturing-greater-business-value/view> (free registration required)

We Mean Business website is at: <http://www.wemeanbusinesscoalition.org/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Architects Commit to Build Zero Emissions World by 2050

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In early August, at the International Union of Architects (UIA) World Congress, architects from around the world signed the “2050 Imperative”, committing them to eliminating emissions in the built environment by 2050.

UIA member organizations alone represent 1.3 million architects in 124 countries. From Canada, the declaration was signed by The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC). From the text: “We recognize our responsibility to seize this unique opportunity to influence ethical, socially responsible development throughout the world: to plan and design sustainable, resilient, carbon -neutral and healthy built environments that protect and enhance natural resources and wildlife habitats, provide clean air and water, generate on-site renewable energy, and advance more livable buildings and communities”.

LINKS:

The 2050 Imperative and the media advisory from Architecture 2030 are available at: http://architecture2030.org/news/uia_declaration_081414.html. The 6-page declaration is at: http://www.architecture2030.org/downloads/uia_declaration_full.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **2050 Imperative**, **Architecture**, **International Union of Architects (UIA)**, **Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)**, **Urban Emissions** | [Leave a reply](#)

Provincial Updates, including the Premiers Agreement on a National Energy Plan

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

As the annual Premiers conference ended on August 29, Canada’s premiers announced a reinvigorated Canadian Energy Strategy (CES), a shared vision and set of principles emphasizing environmental responsibility, a diversified, climate-friendly energy and clean technology sector, and a robust, lower-carbon economy utilizing carbon pricing.

A driving force at the Premiers Conference may have come from Ontario Premiers Kathleen Wynne and Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard, who had agreed to revive the Ontario-Québec partnership at a bilateral meeting one week earlier. The central Canadian bloc will increase economic and energy integration between the provinces and advocate for national progress on climate change.

Reaction to the Energy Strategy announcement from Keith Stewart of Greenpeace provides historical context to the Premiers' meetings, and laments the failure of the federal government to contribute meaningfully to the development of a coherent, effective national approach.

Yet Canadian provinces have made uneven progress on their climate action plans, according to monitoring reports released over the summer. In Alberta, the Auditor General's report stated that the province lacked a plan to meet its goals. British Columbia has achieved its first interim target of a 6% emissions reduction below 2007 levels by 2012, largely due to government policies, including its well-regarded carbon tax. The Ontario Environment Commissioner reported that Ontario will meet its 2014 target (a 6% reduction in emissions below 1990 levels) largely because of the shutdown of the province's coal plants, but it will miss the 2020 target because so little else has been done. In New Brunswick, the Climate Action Plan 2014-2020 document reports that New Brunswick's GHG emissions declined by 17 per cent between 2005 and 2010, thus meeting its goals for 2012. A new plan establishes provincial GHG emissions reduction targets of 10 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 and 75 to 85 per cent below 2001 levels by 2050.

LINKS:

The Canadian Energy Strategy and premiers' news release are available at:

<http://www.canadaspremiers.ca/en/latest-news/74-2014/398-canadian-energy-strategy>

The Ontario news release on partnering with Québec is available at: http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/08/quebec-and-ontario-partner-to-strengthen-central-canadas-economy.html?utm_source=ondemand-multimedia&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=p

Comments from Keith Stewart of Greenpeace are available at: <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/Blog/provinces-leave-harper-increasingly-alone/blog/50444/>

A Letter to the *Ottawa Citizen* by Mark Winfield and Pierre Olivier Pineau provides insight into Ontario's and Quebec's electricity markets at: <http://marksw.blog.yorku.ca/2014/06/11/ontario-quebec-electricity-and-climate-change-time-for-a-new-relationship/>

For a summary of the energy-related policies in Ontario's July 2014 Budget statement, including the Industrial Electricity Incentive program to promote job creation, see the Gowlings Newsletter at: <http://www.gowlings.com/KnowledgeCentre/article.asp?pubID=3675>

Alberta Auditor General's report is at: <http://www.oag.ab.ca/webfiles/reports/AGJuly2014Report.pdf>, with a Pembina Institute analysis at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/auditor-generals-scathing-review-puts-pressure-to-improve-albertas-weak-climate-policy>

Ontario's Environmental Commissioner's report, *Looking for Leadership: the Costs of Climate Inaction* is at: http://www.eco.on.ca/index.php/en_US/pubs/greenhouse-gas-reports/2014-ghg-looking-for-leadership

In British Columbia, *Climate Action in British Columbia Progress Report 2014* is at: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cas/pdfs/2014-Progress-to-Targets.pdf>.

The Pembina reaction to the report is generally positive at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/bc-climate-action-plan-2>

New Brunswick released its *Progress Report for 2012-2013* at: <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/env/pdf/Climate-Climatiques/ClimateChangeProgressReportSummary2012-2013.pdf>, followed by a new *Climate Change Action Plan 2014 to 2020* (April 2014) at: <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/env/pdf/Climate-Climatiques/ClimateChangeActionPlan2014-2020.pdf>. Energy and fracking are dominant issues in the provincial election, held on September 22. See CBC at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-votes-2014/new->

brunswick-election-voters-challenged-to-choose-on-resources-jobs-1.2739029 and <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-votes-2014/brian-gallant-defends-stance-on-natural-resource-jobs-1.2748023>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Emissions, Canadian Energy Strategy, Canadian Premiers Conference, Carbon Pricing, Kathleen Wynne, Low-Carbon Economics, Philippe Couillard** | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Energy From Canadian Perspective: a Call for Renewable Policies in Canada and a Global Review

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

“A New National Prize: Making Clean Energy the Next Oil Sands” by Clare Demerse and Dan Woynillowicz appears in the September October issue of *Policy* magazine. The article distills the findings of the UN-backed study, *Pathways to Deep Decarbonization*, in which research teams from 15 countries, including Canada, proposed strategies for national energy reform that will allow us to limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees.

The report of the U.N.-based Pathways project was presented to the Secretary General in July, to support the UN Climate Summit in September. The press release and details of the Pathways project is at: <http://unsdsn.org/news/2014/07/08/ddpp-press-release/>.

The Demerse/Woynillowicz article summarizes the overall findings and focuses on the Canadian findings, including that by 2050, wind and solar sources could comprise 27% of Canadian electricity generation, up from 2% today. The article concludes by proposing two simple policy changes to kick off a stronger commitment to clean energy in Canada: more favourable tax treatment for power storage and solar technologies, and consumer incentives for electric vehicles. See “A New National Prize” at: <http://policymagazine.ca/pdf/9/PolicyMagazineSeptember-October-14-DemerseWoynillowicz.pdf>.

Citing the “wave of hope” generated by the People’s Climate March, on Sept



ember 21, Clean Energy Canada released its first-ever annual review, called *Tracking the Energy Revolution: Global Edition* at: <http://cleanenergycanada.org/2014/09/21/tracking-energy-revolution-builds-surg-ing-wave-hope/>. With maps, photos and infographics, it is loaded with statistics that reveal the extent of the global shift to renewable energy by governments and businesses.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Energy Mix, Canadian National Energy Plan, Canadian Renewable Energy Sector, Clean Energy, Clean Energy Canada, Decarbonization, Electric Vehicles, Policy Magazine, Tax Incentives, United Nations** | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia Bans Onshore Fracking; Explores Energy Options

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Following a two-year moratorium and the release of the report of a 10-person expert panel chaired by Cape Breton University president David Wheeler, Nova Scotia announced its decision to prohibit onshore high-volume fracking on September 3rd. The ban does not include less risky onshore extraction methods or offshore high-volume fracking.

Nova Scotia's offshore oil and gas reserves are significantly larger and have already attracted \$2 billion in investments and proposals to build three LNG plants. The South Canoe wind project, currently under construction, and a tidal turbine to be built next year will further buttress the province's energy resources.

Consultations with the public and Mi'kmaq communities revealed a strong mistrust of fracking. See the website of the Hydraulic Fracturing Review at: <http://www.cbu.ca/hfstudy>, with links to submissions, studies and press coverage. See also "High-volume fracking to be banned in Nova Scotia" available at the CBC at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/high-volume-fracking-to-be-banned-in-nova-scotia-1.2754439>.

On the heels of the announcement, a study released by the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health found that some fracking workers are exposed to unsafe volumes of benzene when inspecting storage tanks. "Evaluation of Some Potential Chemical Exposure Risks During Flowback Operations in Unconventional Oil and Gas Extraction: Preliminary Results" is available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/VBDknKOUras#.VBySDmOIn4U>, summarized in the Los Angeles Times at: <http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-fracking-benzene-worker-health-20140910-story.html#page=1>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Community benefits, Fracking, Fracking Moratorium, LNG, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Nova Scotia, Occupational Health and Safety, South Canoe wind project, Tidal Turbine, Wheeler Report** | [Leave a reply](#)

Tsilhqot'in Landmark Decision with Implications for Resource Developments in Canada

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to grant British Columbia's Tsilhqot'in nation title over a portion of their ancestral lands marks the first time Aboriginal title has been formally recognized in Canada. Gowlings law firm calls it "one of the most significant Aboriginal law cases in Canadian history" and a blog at West Coast Environmental Law calls the decision "a watershed moment".

Notably, the decision clarifies the test for whether an indigenous group has title over an area, including such criterion as occupation prior to the Crown assertion of sovereignty and continuous occupation since. In particular, the case established that "nomadic or semi-nomadic" land use, such as that of the Tsilhqot'in, does not preclude title.

It also offers some explanation about what legal rights and responsibilities title entails, such as decision-making power over how the land will be used, the right to derive economic benefits from the land and to use and manage it. Yet considerable uncertainty remains about resource extraction or other projects espoused by the government. The decision stops short of requiring consent, but recommends seeking consent from title-holders prior to project approval.

The West Coast Environmental Law blog offers an analysis of the text of the decision and how it may impact pipeline development in B.C. See the Supreme Court decision at: <http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/14246/index.do>; subsequently, the B.C. government announced a letter of agreement with the Tsilhqot'in in a press release at: <http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/09/tsilhqotin-bc-sign-historic-letter-of-understanding-set-the-stage-for-lasting-reconciliation.html>.

See also: "Supreme Court of Canada grants Tsilhqot'in Aboriginal title claim" summary from Gowlings Law Firm available at: <http://www.gowlings.com/KnowledgeCentre/article.asp?pubID=3399> and "Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia: Implications for the Enbridge Tankers and Pipelines Project" from West Coast Environmental Law is available at: <http://wcel.org/resources/environmental-law-alert/tsilhqotin-nation-v-british-columbia-implications-enbridge-tankers>.
Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal Law, Aboriginal Title, Indigenous Peoples, Supreme Court of Canada (SCC), Tsilhqot'in Decision** | [Leave a reply](#)

An Update on Canadian Climate Change

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

At the end of June, Natural Resources Canada released the latest in its climate change assessment reports, updating the 2008 version. *Canada in a Changing Climate: Sector Perspectives on Impacts and Adaptation* synthesized over 1500 publications since 2007, and includes chapters on natural resources, food production, industry, biodiversity and protected areas, human health, and water and transportation infrastructure.

Editors of the compilation are F.J. Warren and D.S. Lemmen of the Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Division of Natural Resources Canada; over 90 authors and 115 expert reviewers contributed to the document. See <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/environment/resources/publications/impacts-adaptation/reports/assessments/2014/16309> for the 2014, 2008, and 2004 assessment reports.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada, Climate Economics, Committee on Natural Resources (Canada) Pipeline** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Food Industry Targets Waste Reduction

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report on waste in Canada's food industry calls for a collaborative, coordinated approach that includes businesses and consumers to reduce waste. An estimated 30-40% of all the food produced in Canada is wasted.

The report asserts that because businesses tend to focus narrowly on the waste of food products, it overlooks the waste of energy, water, labour, and productive capacity. Where efforts are made to reduce food waste, they tend to emphasize waste diversion, particularly recycling. Far more effective is waste reduction, which eliminates waste diversion costs before they arise.

Although consumers are the greatest source of food waste, the report states that one of the main barriers to preventing food waste at source were the attitudes and behaviour of management and staff. *Developing an Industry Led Approach to Addressing Food Waste in Canada* was commissioned by Provision Coalition (a national association of food and beverage manufacturers), and written by Provision Coaliton, Network for Business Sustainability at the Ivey School of Business, and Value Chain Management Centre. See a summary at: <http://www.provisioncoalition.com/blog/blogdetail/Industry%20Collaboration%20Needed%20To%20Tackle%20Food%20Waste%20Challenge%20in%20Canada>. The full report is at: <http://www.provisioncoalition.com/assets/website/pdfs/Provision-Addressing-Food-Waste-In-Canada-EN.pdf>.

For a recent article on the "food waste hierarchy" and the growing international concern about food waste, see the Food Climate Research Network at: <http://www.fcrn.org.uk/research-library/waste-and-resource-use/food-waste/food-waste->

[hierarchy-framework-managing-food-surp](#). The authors argue for a distinction between food surplus and food waste, and advocate a hierarchy of action, beginning with prevention, followed by re-use, recycle, recovery and finally, disposal.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Food and Agriculture](#), [Food Wastage](#), [Sustainable Food System](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Need for Energy Efficiency will Transform Manufacturing

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A report released on July 30 by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) describes the components of “smart manufacturing” – networked devices, predictive and anticipatory software, culminating in an integrated, cloud-based, open-access smart manufacturing platform which “in a few decades will transform the industrial sector and fundamentally alter the way products are manufactured”.

See *The Energy Savings of Smart Manufacturing* at: <http://aceee.org/research-report/ie1403>.

See also the July 4 white paper *Smart Freight: Applications of Information and Communications Technologies to Freight System Efficiency*, which describes and provides examples of companies using new, more sophisticated information and communications technology (ICT). Although examples are given of new systems of electronic monitoring of truck drivers, the majority of the report describes sophisticated logistics innovations. The report is at: <http://aceee.org/files/pdf/white-paper/smart-freight-ict.pdf>.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy](#), [energy efficiency](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

People’s Climate March Under the Eyes of the World

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Climate Leadership Summit convened by U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in New York City on September 23 has created a flurry of reports and statements, some of which are summarized below. Most world leaders are expected at the Summit, with the notable exceptions of the leaders of China, India, and Canada – which will be represented by Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq. See the official U.N. website at: <http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit>. Oxfam International has published *The Summit that Snoozed*, which calls for government action at the meeting and provides a checklist/toolkit for sorting out promises from greenwash at:

http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bkm_climate_summit_media_brief_sept19.pdf.

On September 21, the People’s Climate March, organized by 350.org and Avaaz, brought together people from diverse social movements from across the globe to demonstrate the size and diversity of the support for urgent climate action. In New York, Avaaz presented a petition containing 2.1 million signatures. Donald Lafleur, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress marched – as did an estimated 311,000 other people, including U.N. Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, Al Gore, New York mayor Bill de Blasio, Ontario Environment Minister Glen Murray as well as Bill McKibben and Naomi Klein. According to the *New York Times* coverage at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/22/nyregion/new-york-city-climate-change-march.html?ref=todayspaper&_r=0, “the People’s Climate March was a spectacle even for a city known for doing things big”... and it was only one demonstration of hundreds across the globe. The official March website is at:

<http://peoplesclimate.org/>; see also the *Toronto Star* coverage, which reported 3000 demonstrators including leaders from the Sierra Club, Toronto 350, and Quebec-based Equiterre, at:

http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/09/21/3000_join_climate_march_at_nathan_phillips_square.html; CBC Vancouver estimated a crowd of 1000 for that city at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/un-climate-summit-vancouver->

joins-thousands-in-worldwide-rallies-1.2773535, see the CTV video from Calgary for a taste of the demonstration there at: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/canadians-join-global-climate-protest-in-nyc-1.2017167#>, and the *Montreal Gazette* at: <http://www.montrealgazette.com/technology/Montrealers+march+back+climate+summit/10223004/story.html>.

See Britain's *The Guardian* for a world-wide report, with photos, at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/21/sp-climate-change-protest-melbourne-london-new-york-protest>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **350.org, Avaaz, Ban Ki-Moon, International Climate Summit, New York, People's Climate March, Protests & Rallies, United Nations** | [Leave a reply](#)

No Contradiction Between Climate Progress and Economic Growth

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In September 2014, with the U.N. Summit on the horizon, the Global Commission on the Climate and the Economy released a consultation document, *Better Growth, Better Climate*, which culminates in a 10-point plan of key recommendations, aimed at the international community of economic decision-makers.

According to *The Guardian* newspaper, this report is the most significant intervention in climate politics for Lord Nicholas Stern since his 2006 report. "The report from the international commission concludes that making progress on the climate would not come at the expense of the global economy, but that there will have to be a sharp shift away from carbon-intensive fossil fuels if the world is going to avoid the worst impact of a changing climate". See reaction at The Guardian at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/16/barack-obama-report-economy-grow-fight-climate-change-un-summit?CMP=EMCENVEML1631>.

The Toronto *Globe and Mail* reaction honed in on the implications for Canada's oil and gas industry of the report's call for higher carbon pricing and the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies – see <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/oil-reliant-firms-at-risk-report/article20607843/#dashboard/follows/>. Paul Krugman wrote an OpEd in *New York Times* on Sept. 18 at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/19/opinion/paul-krugman-could-fighting-global-warming-be-cheap-and-free.html>.

The Global Commission on the Climate and the Economy was commissioned in 2013 by seven countries, with its programme of work conducted by eight research institutes, led by Washington-based World Resources Institute. The Commission is chaired by former President of Mexico Felipe Calderón, and includes Nicholas Stern amongst its other prominent members. Read *Better Growth, Better Climate: the Synthesis Report* at: <http://static.newclimateeconomy.report/TheNewClimateEconomyReport.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Economics, Cornell Global Labor Institute, Nicholas Stern, World Resources Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

Statements of European Policies for a Green Economy

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In early July, the European Commission adopted the Green Employment Initiative Communication, a labour market and skills policy framework document which advocates developing labour skills and improving forecasting of which skills will be needed, anticipating sectoral change and promoting worker mobility, supporting job creation by shifting taxation from labour to pollution, and increasing transparency and data quality to better monitor changes to the labour market. See the

European Commission press release is at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-765_en.htm; for more specifics see the FAQ's re the Green Employment Initiative Communication at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-446_en.htm.

Much of the theory behind the policy framework is reiterated and elaborated in the European Environment Agency (EEA) report *Resource-efficient Green Economy and EU Policy*, released on July 15th. Noting that change is coming too slowly, it states: "what is required is a much bigger, deeper, and more permanent change in the EU economy and society to create both new opportunities and substitution processes across the economic structure". The report then emphasizes the importance of strong fiscal reforms to support the green transition, including environmental taxation, emissions-trading, and phasing out subsidies to harmful industries, but notes that keeping the EU competitive will take delicate balance. The EEA report also underscores the need for eco-innovation and reducing barriers to adoption and diffusion through the free circulation of green knowledge, greater financial resources. See *Resource-efficient Green Economy and EU Policy* at: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/resourceefficient-green-economy-and-eu>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **European Commission, Green Employment Initiative, Green Job Creation, Green Skilling, Just Transition, Labour Policy, Low-Carbon Transition, Skilled Workers** | [Leave a reply](#)

...From the World Bank

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Released in June, a World Bank report presents "simulated case studies" of Brazil, China, India, Mexico, the United States and the European Union. It examines the benefits of implementing three sets of policies on clean transportation, energy efficiency in industry, and energy efficiency in buildings. The report introduces a new macroeconomic modeling framework that can incorporate socioeconomic benefits such as public health and environmental externalities. See *Climate-Smart Development: Adding Up the Benefits of Actions that Help Build Prosperity, End Poverty and Combat Climate Change* at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/06/23/study-adds-up-benefits-climate-smart-development-lives-jobs-gdp>. The World Bank has also praised British Columbia, along with Sweden, California, and even China for their carbon pricing initiatives in "What does Carbon Pricing Success Look Like? (September 18) at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/09/18/what-does-carbon-pricing-success-look-like-ask-the-leaders>, along with a June 3 2014 Statement, *Putting a Price on Carbon*, at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/pricing-carbon>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing, Climate Economics, Climate Policy, Externality, World Bank** | [Leave a reply](#)

IMF Calls for Higher Taxes on Fossil Fuels Around the World, including Canada

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Getting Energy Prices Right: From Principle to Practice "green-shift" tax analysis calculates the cost of carbon energy – including health effects of pollution – in 156 countries, and proposes precise levels of taxation: higher levels on fossil fuels, and lower levels on people and capital. Their prescription is gradual tax increases which would be balanced by decreases to income taxes – for Canada, the tax increases average out to about 52% on gasoline and diesel.

Canadian Finance Minister Joe Oliver rejected the proposals, according to a report at the CBC website at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/imf-calls-for-green-shift-with-52-gas-tax-hike-in-canada-1.2724294>. See also the *Globe and Mail* article at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/imf-calls-on-canada-to-raise-carbon-taxes-cut-income-taxes/article19872600/>.

The full report is available for purchase (\$28) at: <http://www.imfbookstore.org/ProdDetails.asp?ID=9781484388570>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Tax, External Cost, International Monetary Fund (IMF)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Leaked IPCC Updates

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In June, the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) released a 20-page guide which summarizes the most pertinent findings relating to workers and employment in the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Climate Change: Implications for Employment* is available from <http://www.etui.org/Publications2/Guides/Climate-change-Implications-for-employment>.

In late August, news media obtained a leaked version of the IPCC draft Synthesis Report of the AR5, scheduled for official release in November. While the facts are unchanged from the three reports it summarizes, the tone was reported to be blunter and more “stark”. See Bloomberg News at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-08-26/irreversible-damage-seen-from-climate-change-in-un-leak.html> or the *New York Times* at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/27/science/earth/greenhouse-gas-emissions-are-growing-and-growing-more-dangerous-draft-of-un-report-says.html?ref=science&_r=4.

The leaked draft emphasizes the need for urgent action – a point also made by in the July 31 report from the U.S. Council of Economic Advisors. See *The Cost of Delaying Action to Stem Climate Change* at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/the_cost_of_delaying_action_to_stem_climate_change.pdf.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Economics, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), IPCC** | [Leave a reply](#)

China Announces Coal Restrictions and a National Carbon Market to Begin in 2016

Posted on **October 3, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Chinese government has shown new muscle in its efforts to rein in its enormous GHG emissions. China’s planning agency, the National Development and Reform Commission, issued a directive banning the sale or import of coal with 40 per cent or more ash content and 3 per cent or more sulphur content, with tighter restrictions (ash content limits at 16 per cent and sulphur at 1 per cent) in major economic hubs, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Australians, whose coal industry could be adversely affected, see this as a move to protect the Chinese coal mining industry, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald* at: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/china-coal-ban-to-rescue-domestic-mines-20140917-10ibcl.html>. See also a *Wall Street Journal* report at: <http://online.wsj.com/articles/china-coal-ban-highly-polluting-types-banned-starting-in-2015-1410852013>.

In September, China also announced that it plans to launch a national carbon market in only two years, in 2016. See the *New York Times* announcement at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/01/business/international/china-plans-a-market-for-carbon-permits.html>, a brief summary by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development at: <http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/bridges/news/china-unveils-plans-for-national-carbon-market-by-2016> or a detailed analysis by Caron Brief at: <http://www.carbonbrief.org/blog/2014/09/analysing-china-carbon-market/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Australia, China, Coal, Emissions Regulations** | [Leave a reply](#)

Information and Communications Technologies as a Path to Sustainable Infrastructure and Systems

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On June 17th, the Council of Canadian Academies released the report of its Expert Panel on the Potential for New and Innovative Uses of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) for Greening Canada. The multidisciplinary panel of experts was chaired by David Miller, President and CEO of WWF-Canada. The report discusses interconnected ICT opportunities which can achieve environmental, economic, and social benefits for Canada, and organizes these opportunities in six key thematic areas: “environmental monitoring; smart interconnected utilities; smart interconnected buildings and neighbourhoods; smart interconnected mobility; smart interconnected production; and healthy people and healthy communities”. It also states that Canada is well positioned to be a leader in green data centres, because of our cooler climate and relatively clean electricity supply. Regarding our human capital capabilities to achieve ICT innovation, the report states that they “are difficult to assess”, and that skills gaps are likely to occur on both the demand and supply sides. Increased computer literacy training will be required from elementary to post-graduate levels.

LINKS:

Enabling Sustainability in an Interconnected World is at the Council of Canadian Academies website at <http://www.scienceadvice.ca/uploads/eng/assessments%20and%20publications...> (224 pages). The Backgrounder, with links to summaries, is at <http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed/greenict.aspx>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Communications Technology, David Miller, Green Infrastructure, Information Technology, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), WWF** | [Leave a reply](#)

Proposed Pipelines would Bring Miniscule Benefits to Quebec; Moratorium Urged for Oil Exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A report dated January 2014 but only released on June 2 examines the claims of economic benefits and job creation for Quebec if tar sands are transported and refined in Quebec. It concludes that Quebec will receive “miniscule” benefits but will bear almost all of the risk and cost of spills and other environmental impacts. Even if all the proposed projects (Line 9B, Energy East and a Suncor coker plant) were approved, the report estimates the economic contribution related to operating activities for the entire crude oil sector would likely remain at about 0.50% (or less) of the total economy and 0.30% (or

less) of total jobs. This report was prepared by the consultants at the Goodman Group, in collaboration with Équiterre and Greenpeace Canada.

A report by the St. Lawrence Coalition looks at the issue of the exploration for and exploitation of oil in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence River, and the impacts on the five provinces which border it: Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and Newfoundland. The report describes the environmental impacts, and also includes a section dealing with socioeconomic impacts such as job creation, wealth distribution, and how oil-related activity can coexist with the existing fisheries industry and with the First Nations. Because of the current gaps in knowledge, the report calls on the precautionary principle and recommends a moratorium on development to allow "a vast public consultation as part of an ad hoc public review ... , which would involve the coastal communities of the five Gulf provinces when it comes to decide whether or not the Gulf should be opened to the oil and gas industry." The authors of this report are employed at the David Suzuki Foundation, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) Quebec, Nature Québec, and Attention Fragîles.

LINKS:

Economics of Transporting and Processing Tar Sands Crudes in Quebec is available at

<http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/Global/canada/report/2014/06/Goodman%20report.pdf>

Gulf 101: Oil in the Gulf of St. Lawrence: Facts, Myths, and Future Outlook by the St. Lawrence Coalition is at

http://www.coalitionsaintlaurent.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/DSF_Golfe_101_English_June_4_2014_V2.pdf (English version) and http://www.coalitionsaintlaurent.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/DSF_Golfe_101_Francais_June_4_2014.pdf (French version).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Oil Refineries, Energy East, Equiterre, Greenpeace Canada, Gulf of St.Lawrence, Line 9B, Montreal Refineries, Quebec, St.Lawrence Coalition** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Forestry Industry Rebrands Itself as Innovative and Green

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Canada's forestry companies, through their organization the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC), recently released two "report cards" to measure their progress towards their Vision 2020 goals for productivity, environmental performance, and people . Regarding people, their Pathways to Prosperity report states: "the sector recruited 8,000 workers in the period 2010 to 2012, mainly to replace retiring baby-boomers." The environmental performance measures get far more attention: "

In 2010-2012, the reduction in waste to landfill was 31%, with 98% of wood residue now being used for either energy generation or composting. More than 66% of mills' waste water sediment is being used for either energy generation, composting or land application. The recycling rate also improved by another 4%. Canada has one of the highest recovery rates of waste paper and packaging in the world at 73% ... Energy use decreased by 8%. For example, the sector continued to invest in energy reduction projects including the installation of energy-efficient equipment to improve mills' competitiveness and increase the production of green energy. This has also served to improve the quality of air emissions with a reduction in particulate matter (PM) (11%), sulphur oxide (SOx) (6%) and nitrous oxide (NOx) (11%)".

The Productivity Scorecard report is based on a detailed analysis by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS). That study documents the trends in the labour force and in labour productivity, and concludes that the driving force behind rapid labour productivity growth in the forest products industry is multifactor productivity growth, made possible by investment in change and innovation. The report describes the two major initiatives: Future Bio-pathways Project (begun in 2010), and Construction Value Pathways (begun in 2013). The report recommends renewed focus on human and physical capital investment, as well as on R&D spending.

To rebrand the industry and attract a new generation of workers to the sector, FPAC launched The Greenest Workforce.ca website. The website states: "The industry's traditional products like pulp, paper and lumber are fundamental to the

success of new products like renewable bio-fuels, green bio-plastics, bio-pharmaceuticals, bulletproof vests, car parts and airplane wings which are part of the dynamic new face of the Canadian forest products industry.” Using videos and Twitter, the site includes job postings, job profiles, descriptions of the industry and career prospects.

Unifor, which represents more than 21,000 forestry workers, and just completed bargaining for a pattern agreement with Resolute Forest Products, agrees that the industry is in transition. In a President’s Statement of June 8, Jerry Diaz calls for the reinstatement of a Forestry Industry Council with “a specific mandate to investigate and make public recommendations for a strengthened high-value forestry industry.”

LINKS:

Vision2020 Pathways to Prosperity (June 17) is at <http://www.fpac.ca/index.php/en/page/vision2020>

Productivity Report Card summary (May 2014) is at [http://www.fpac.ca/publications/14-FPAC-0349-](http://www.fpac.ca/publications/14-FPAC-0349-ProductivityReportDesign2014-EN-Rev5.pdf)

[ProductivityReportDesign2014-EN-Rev5.pdf](http://www.fpac.ca/publications/14-FPAC-0349-ProductivityReportDesign2014-EN-Rev5.pdf) with the detailed analysis prepared by the Centre for the Study of Living standards (CSLS) at <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2014-01.pdf> .

Greenest Workforce.ca is at <http://www.thegreenestworkforce.ca/index.php/en/>

Unifor Statement is at <http://www.unifor.org/en/blog/new-resolute-collective-agreements-covering-2000-workers>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Forest Products Associaton of Canada (FPAC), Forestry Industry, Green Innovation, Recycling, Resolute Forest Products, Sustainable Forestry, Unifor** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Ranks #1 Outside the U.S. for LEED Projects; A New Guide for Engineers Recognizes the Impact of Sustainability Requirements

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Canada was ranked first for LEED® installations, of all countries outside the U.S., in a list compiled by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The list is intended to demonstrate the global reach of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) movement – a green building certification system that provides third-party verification of the features, design, construction, maintenance, operation and effectiveness of green buildings.

According to the USGBC, Canada has 17.74 million GSM of LEED-certified space, and in total, it has 4,068 LEED-certified and -registered projects representing 58.66 million GSM. A related report, LEED in Motion: Canada, details all LEED activity in Canada, and features a list of the cities in Canada that have incorporated LEED into their local building codes, as well as provincial and federal green building requirements. It states that there are 3,651 people in Canada who hold LEED credentials.

For Canadian consulting engineers dealing with infrastructure projects, the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – Canada (ACEC) recently released Sustainable Development for Canadian Consulting Engineers. It states: “It is clear that sustainable development will increasingly drive the project requirements of clients of the consulting engineering industry in Canada. The industry needs to take sustainability issues seriously ...” The report identifies systems currently in use for sustainability measurement on infrastructure projects in the U.S., U.K., France and Australia , and considers their possible application for Canada. The report acknowledges the importance of the existing PIEVC Engineering Protocol for evaluating the impact of climate change on infrastructure

LINKS:

LEED in Motion: Canada is available at http://www.usgbc.org/sites/default/files/LEED_In_Motion_Canada_0.pdf ,with the press release re the List of LEED countries at [http://www.cagbc.org/AM/Template.cfm?](http://www.cagbc.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=News_and_Media_Room&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16357)

[Section=News_and_Media_Room&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16357](http://www.cagbc.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=News_and_Media_Room&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16357)

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Engineers, Green Building, Green Infrastructure, LEED, U.S. Green Building Council** | [Leave a reply](#)

6.5 Million People Employed in the Global Renewable Energy Industry

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Renewables Global Status Report released by REN21 on June 4th covers recent industry and policy developments, and key growth trends in the global renewable energy industry, striking an optimistic tone with the statement that more than 22% of the world's power production now comes from renewable sources. China, the United States, Brazil, Canada, and Germany remain the top countries for total installed renewable power capacity. REN21 reports that 6.5 million people are directly or indirectly employed in renewable energy industries worldwide. Data is provided by industry at the global level, with greater detail for some countries, including U.S. China, India, EU, but not for Canada. Most renewable jobs are concentrated in a few countries: China, Brazil, U.S., India, Bangladesh, and some EU countries; of these, 60% of China's employment is concentrated in the solar pv industry. Regarding the employment data, the report states: "Global statistics remain incomplete, methodologies are not harmonised, and the different studies used are of uneven quality. These numbers are based on a wide range of studies, focused primarily on the years 2012–2013."

LINKS:

Renewables Global Status Report website, with links to the full report, figures, summaries and previous editions back to 2005 is available at <http://www.ren21.net/REN21Activities/GlobalStatusReport.aspx>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Green Growth, Green Jobs, REN21, Renewables Global Status Report** | [Leave a reply](#)

Proposed Carbon Tax Model Forecasts Job Increases; Hank Paulsen Calls Urgent Action Against Climate Change, Including a Carbon Tax

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report models the effects of a carbon tax in the U.S. at the point of extraction, beginning in 2016 at a rate of \$10 per metric ton of carbon dioxide and escalating at \$10 per year until 2035. All proceeds from the carbon tax would enter into a "fee-and-dividend" (F&D) system that would refund money to all American households on a monthly basis, based on the number of people in the household. The report forecasts that by 2025, there would be: 2.1 million more jobs under the F&D carbon tax than in the baseline; 33% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from baseline conditions; 13,000 premature deaths avoided because of improved air quality. The report was prepared for the Citizen's Climate Lobby by consultants Regional Economic Models (REMI) and Synapse Energy Economics.

Models and research about carbon taxes may assume higher prominence as the U.S. business community becomes more and more open about discussing the possibility.

In an OpEd in the New York Times on June 21, Former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Hank Paulsen, a Republican, states that climate change is the challenge of our times and "The solution can be a fundamentally conservative one that will empower the marketplace to find the most efficient response. We can do this by putting a price on emissions of carbon dioxide — a carbon tax.... Putting a price on emissions will create incentives to develop new, cleaner energy technologies."

Paulsen, along with former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and billionaire Tom Steyer, founded a business-oriented research initiative called Risky Business. Their high profile report is scheduled to be released on June 24, and will expand on the themes of Paulesen's OpEd: the urgency of action and the risks of delay in fighting climate change.

LINKS:

The Economic, Climate, Fiscal, Power, and Demographic Impact of a National Fee-and-Dividend Carbon Tax is at <http://citizensclimatelobby.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/REMI-carbon-tax-report-62141.pdf>

"The Coming Climate Crash" in New York Times OpEd (June 21) is at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/22/opinion/sunday/lessons-for-climate-change-in-the-2008-recession.html?ref=opinion>

Risky Business website is at <http://riskybusiness.org/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Tax, Citizen's Climate Lobby, Climate Economics, Climate Risk, Economic Risk, F&D, Michael R. Bloomberg, Publications, Risky Business** | [Leave a reply](#)

Lord Stern Proposes an Alternate Model of the Economic Cost of Climate Change

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new academic paper by Nicholas Stern and Simon Dietz critiques the widely-used Dynamic Integrated model of Climate and the Economy (DICE), developed by William Nordhaus in the 1990's, and updated in 2013. In a summary from the London School of Economics, Lord Stern states: "I hope our paper will prompt other economists to strive for much better models which will help policy-makers and the public to recognise the immensity of the potential risks of unmanaged climate change." By modifying assumptions – for example, using a range of temperatures from 1.5C to 6C for climate sensitivity, rather than the single 3C level of the DICE model – Stern and Dietz arrive at a level of \$200 per tonne for the cost of carbon – astonishingly higher than \$40 – \$50 per tonne cost that the DICE model would produce. (The carbon tax in British Columbia grew from \$10 per tonne at its inception in 2008, to the current level of \$30 per tonne of CO₂, since July 2012.)

LINKS:

London School of Economics press release is at http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/news/dietz_stern_june2014/ . A working paper version of the article , Stern and Dietz (2014) Endogenous growth, convexity of damages and climate risk: how Nordhaus' framework supports deep cuts in carbon emissions, is available from a link at

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/publication/endogenous-growth-convexity-of-damages-and-climate-risk-how-nordhaus-framework-supports-deep-cuts-in-carbon-emission/>.

"We're massively underestimating climate costs, experts warn" (June 16) at Grist at <http://grist.org/news/were-massively-underestimating-climate-costs-experts-warn/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Economics, Dynamic Integrated model of Climate and the Economy (DICE), Economic Risk, London School of Economics, Nicholas Stern, Simon Dietz** | [Leave a reply](#)

Reaction to the Harper Government Northern Gateway Decision

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Neither the Prime Minister nor any cabinet ministers were available for comments or questions about the expected cabinet approval, released at the last possible moment via a brief press release on June 17. "After carefully reviewing the report, the Government accepts the independent Panel's recommendation to impose 209 conditions on Northern Gateway Pipelines' proposal." ... Moving forward, the proponent must demonstrate to the independent regulator, the NEB, how it will meet the 209 conditions. It will also have to apply for regulatory permits and authorizations from federal and provincial

governments. In addition, consultations with Aboriginal communities are required under many of the 209 conditions that have been established and as part of the process for regulatory authorizations and permits." See the press release at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=2&nid=858469&crtr.tp1D=1> and the government's summary statement of the 209 conditions is at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&crtr.page=1&nid=858489&crtr.tp1D=930>.

The province of British Columbia has conditions of its own, which Environment Minister Polak reiterated in the official B.C. reaction to the decision on June 17 at <http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/06/northern-gateway-pipeline-more-work-needed-to-meet-bcs-five-conditions.html>. Most notably, the First Nations of B.C. have condemned the decision: see the Coastal First Nations website at <http://www.coastalfirstnations.ca/>, where Art Sterritt, Executive Director of the Coastal First Nations says: "The government's announcement giving its approval to Enbridge is meaningless. 'It's an approval in name only. This project is dead. '..... The project can't proceed with these conditions. We've been clear there is no technology to clean up an oil spill and the dispersant that is used causes more damage than the oil itself." (<http://www.coastalfirstnations.ca/news-release/june-17-2014-215pm>).

Another press release from the Coastal First Nations, on June 16th, states: "With many First Nations gearing up for court battles to protect their territories from this risky proposal, representatives of Coastal First Nations, Dogwood Initiative, Unifor, West Coast Environmental Law, Douglas Channel Watch and One Cowichan promised to work together to defeat Northern Gateway, regardless of any approvals issued by the federal cabinet."

The internet is alive with opposition campaigns: Within B.C., the Dogwood Initiative is calling for a referendum at Let B.C. Vote at <http://www.letbcvote.ca/>, (includes a compilation of news reports). Stand Strong Christy, co-ordinated by ForestEthics Advocacy, at <http://standstrongchristy.ca/> has an online petition urging B.C. Premier Christy Clark to hold firm to her earlier stated 5 conditions for Northern Gateway approvals in B.C.

Leadnow.ca and ForestEthics Advocacy host another petition at <http://www.enbridge21.ca/> naming the Enbridge 21 (the 21 federal Conservative cabinet ministers from B.C.) and providing an online email form to contact them, and "hold them accountable" by pledging to vote for whoever opposes Enbridge in the 2015 election.

David Suzuki posted an open Letter and has an online petition to Stephen Harper, and the leaders of all federal parties at http://action2.davidsuzuki.org/no-enbridge-pipeline?utm_campaign=enbridgeEmail&utm_source=EM1&utm_medium=email&utm_content=link&mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRolu6XLZKXonjHpfSx66u8kXK%2B3lMI%2F0ER3fOvrPUfGjI4CSsFiI%2BSDLwEYGJlv6SgFS7jNMbZkz7gOXRE%3D.

The federal Green Party also has its own petition at <http://www.greenparty.ca/media-release/2014-06-17/predictable-cabinet-decision-enbridge-project-launches-fight-stop-pipelines>. Environmental Defence has an online email form to send a protest message to the political leaders at http://environmentaldefence.ca/stop-tar-sands-expansion?utm_source=Environmental+Defence+Campaign+Email+List&utm_campaign=06cf692bda-Lighten+Up+FINAL&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_df56834cfa-06cf692bda-27545293.

For reaction from environmental groups, see EcoJustice at <http://www.ecojustice.ca/media-centre/press-releases/federal-approval-doesnt-guarantee-enbridge-northern-gateway-will-be-built>; Pembina Institute at <http://www.pembina.org/reacts-fed-decision-gateway>, Greenpeace Canada at <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/Blog/harper-just-picked-a-fight-he-cant-win/blog/49666/>, Environmental Defence Canada at <http://environmentaldefence.ca/articles/statement-environmental-defence%E2%80%99s-tim-gray-in-response-federal-cabinet%E2%80%99s-irresponsible-deci> and Natural Resources Defence Council (U.S.) at http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/eshope/canada_approves_northern_gatav.html.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, Coastal First Nations, David Suzuki, Dogwood Initiative, Enbridge, Environmental Defence Canada, First Nations, ForestEthics, Greenpeace Canada, Leadnow.ca, National Energy Board, NEB, Northern Gateway, Pembina Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Taxes and the Need for Social License

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Especially timely, given the June 17th Northern Gateway decision, is a recent report by the Canada West Foundation about the concept and means to achieve “social license”, and a Pembina Institute blog which reviews it. Pembina provides this definition: “Social license is generally considered to exist when the perceptions, opinions, and beliefs held by a local population regarding a development allow for the ongoing public approval of the related activity.” The Canada West Foundation, an advocate for Western development, states: that ... “A positive brand will only endure if it is based on solid and constantly improving performance at the local level.” The author calls for industry to lead a systematic effort to engage supporters in communities affected by resource development, and calls on government to be involved with “public policy, legislation and regulation needed to sustain progress”. Regarding a carbon tax, for example, he states: “The net benefit/cost might well be positive for resource industries since a stable carbon management regime would add to policy stability and social legitimacy.”

LINKS:

From The Ground Up: Earning Public Support for Resource Development (May 27) from Canada West Foundation at <http://cwf.ca/pdf-docs/publications/From%20the%20Ground%20Up%20Report%20v9.pdf>.

The Costs of Losing Social License (June 6) at Pembina Institute at <http://www.pembina.org/blog/the-costs-of-losing-social-licence>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Branding, Canada West Foundation, Carbon Tax, Public Support, Social License** | [Leave a reply](#)

House of Commons Standing Committee Applauds the Oil and Gas Industry

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In the lead-up to the Northern Gateway decision, on June 11th the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources presented its 7th Report on the Cross-country Benefits of the Oil and Gas Industry. The report selectively reproduces the testimony of industry-affiliated witnesses, and quotes the Assistant Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Canada, who is reported to have said that “the socio-economic benefits from the oil and gas industry are universally positive.” Not only socio-economic benefits, but, according to the Standing Committee, “the development of the oil and gas industry generates various environmental benefits, including improved air quality, water quality, and reforestation. Many of these improvements are achieved through world-class innovation and clean technologies developed and supported by the industry”.

Dissenting reports from the Liberal and New Democratic members of the committee attempt to give voice to some of the less enthusiastic witnesses. See the report at

http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/412/RNNR/Reports/RP6644319/412_RNNR_Rpt07_PDF/412_RNNR_Rpt07-e.pdf (English version) or

http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/412/RNNR/Reports/RP6644319/412_RNNR_Rpt07_PDF/412_RNNR_Rpt07-f.pdf (French version). Briefs and evidence submitted are not available online, but the oral testimony and minutes of the committee meetings can be read at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/committeebusiness/CommitteeMeetings.aspx?Cmte=RNNR&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2> (English)

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/committeebusiness/CommitteeMeetings.aspx?Cmte=RNNR&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2> (English)

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/committeebusiness/CommitteeMeetings.aspx?Cmte=RNNR&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=2&Language=F> (French version).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Natural Resources Canada (NRC), Northern Gateway, Oil and Gas, Oil Sands** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Electors Return a Liberal Government, Avoid Conservative Cuts to Green Energy

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Green Prosperity Scorecard at <http://www.greenprosperity.ca/scorecard/> compared the environmental policies of the four political parties contesting the Ontario election of June 12. Professor Mark Winfield of York University also highlighted the positions in his OpEd at <http://marksw.blog.yorku.ca/2014/05/26/ontarios-not-so-green-election/>. "There is...almost across-the-board silence on basic environmental issues like air and water quality, waste management, the protection of biological diversity, parks and protected areas, and endangered species." After the success of the Liberal party and Premier Kathleen Wynne, Professor Winfield wrote: "Wynne's party owes a great deal of its success last night to younger and progressive voters in towns and cities, for whom urban, energy and environmental issues are of central importance. With the threat of a PC government removed, these voters, and the province's organized environmental movement, can afford to push the Liberals much harder in these areas than they have over the past few years."

See <http://marksw.blog.yorku.ca/2014/06/13/the-2014-ontario-election-outcome-the-electoral-politics-of-economic-transitions/>. Specifically, Environmental Defence reacted with the statement: "Most immediately, we look forward to the reintroduction of the Great Lakes Protection Act, the Protection of Public Participation Act, and the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act." See <http://environmentaldefence.ca/articles/statement-tim-gray-environmental-defence%E2%80%99s-executive-director-kathleen-wynne%E2%80%99s-election-pre>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Clean Energy, Conservative Party, Green Energy, Green Prosperity Scorecard, Kathleen Wynne, Liberal Party, Mark Winfield, Ontario, Ontario election, York University** | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Electricity in Alberta Means Less Reliance on Coal

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

While the government of Alberta continues to develop its Alternative and Renewable Energy Policy Framework, a new report from the Pembina Institute and Clean Energy Canada argues that "With effective policy, the province could cut the percentage of grid electricity that is supplied from coal energy from over 60 per cent today to less than four per cent by 2033." (p.1) According to the report, in 2013, coal power generation supplied 63.7 per cent of electricity in Alberta's grid (compared to 39.1 per cent of the in the United States). And whereas total coal power generation in the United States decreased by 21.3 per cent between 2007 and 2013, it decreased by only 13 per cent in Alberta. (p.4). See *Power to Change: How Alberta can Green its Grid and Embrace Clean Energy* at <http://www.pembina.org/docs/power-to-change-pembina-cec-2014.pdf> with a backgrounder at <http://www.pembina.org/docs/power-to-change-pembina-cec-backgrounder.pdf>. Earlier in 2014, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment commissioned a survey which revealed that 80% of Albertans agreed that wind energy should be used to reduce reliance on coal-fired power in the province. See the CAPE Newsletter (Summer 2014) at <http://cape.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/capenewsummer2014.pdf>. And on May 23, a public opinion commissioned by the Alberta Energy Efficiency Alliance, in conjunction with the Pembina Institute, reported that 76 per cent of Albertans support the stronger greenhouse gas performance regulations for industrial facilities. See the Ipsos Reid poll at <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news-polls/pressrelease.aspx?id=6509>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Clean Energy, Clean Energy Canada, Clean Power, Coal, Coal Power, wind energy, Wind Power** | [Leave a reply](#)

No to Light Rail for the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future reported to the provincial legislature on May 23, with a recommendation not to proceed with a light-rail link between Calgary and Edmonton at this time because population is not sufficient to support it. However, for future infrastructure planning, the report recommended that the government should identify a greenfield transportation/utility corridor and begin acquiring land, while at the same time developing a regulatory framework to allow the private sector to participate. See the report at <http://www.assembly.ab.ca/committees/abeconomicfuture/EHS/Reports/2014/High%20Speed%20Rail%20Transit%20System%20in%20Alberta,%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Calgary, Calgary-Edmonton Corridor, Edmonton, Light Rail, Public Transportation, Transportation, Transportation Infrastructure** | [Leave a reply](#)

A Path to Sustainable De-Growth

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives on June 12 released an extended essay by University of British Columbia Professor Emeritus William Rees, the originator of "ecological footprint analysis". He states, "Ecological damage and resource scarcity is largely the result of production and consumption to satisfy just the wealthiest 20 per cent of the world's population." (p. 2) ... "Drawing on various disciplines from cognitive psychology through environmental science, sociology and economic history, I outline some of the broad framing necessary at the global level and specific policies needed at the national and (bio-)regional scales to achieve a planned descent to a sustainable steady state." (p. 4). Read *Avoiding Collapse: An Agenda for Sustainable Degrowth and Relocalizing the Economy* at https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2014/06/ccpa-bc_AvoidingCollapse_Rees.pdf.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), cognitive psychology, De-growth, ecological footprint analysis, Publications, Sustainability, University of British Columbia, William Rees** | [Leave a reply](#)

New Canadian NGO Promotes Polluter Responsibility and a Clean Economy

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Canadians for Clean Prosperity has launched a website with the goal of educating Canadians and advocating for political action towards polluter responsibility. The website estimates the costs of pollution clean-up – currently borne by taxpayers – at approximately \$27.1 billion dollars, or \$1779 per Canadian household.

Their online petition states: "We call on the government to impose pollution fees and use the revenues to cut taxes, dollar for dollar, on things we want, like jobs and income." Don Drummond, former Chief Economist of the TD Bank, Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip and Munir Sheikh, former Chief Statistician of Statistics Canada are among the Advisors to the group; the business-oriented Board of Directors includes Greg Keissling of Bullfrog Power, and Bruce Lourie, President of the Ivey Foundation. See the website at <http://www.cleanprosperity.ca/>.

President Obama's Landmark Executive Actions to Cut Coal Plant Emissions and Protect Oceans

Posted on **June 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

For details about the June regulatory initiatives in the United States, go to: Clean Power Plan Proposed Rule at the Environmental Protection Agency website at <http://www2.epa.gov/carbon-pollution-standards/clean-power-plan-proposed-rule> and for commentary, see "Taking Page from Health Care Act, Obama Climate Plan relies on States" in the New York Times (June 2) at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/us/politics/obama-epa-rule-coal-carbon-pollution-power-plants.html>. The Pembina Institute highlights the growing gap between Canadian and U.S. climate leadership at <http://www.pembina.org/blog/us-action-on-climate-amplifies-leadership-vacuum-in-ottawa>; The Natural Resources Defence Council discusses the possible impacts on jobs at http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/plehner/new_carbon_pollution_standards.html and <http://www.nrdc.org/media/2014/140529.asp>. Regarding the U.S. Executive Order on June 17th to expand protection of the oceans, see the White House press release at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/17/presidential-memorandum-comprehensive-framework-combat-illegal-unreported>, and "Pew Applauds Obama Administration's New Focus on Illegal Fishing" at <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/about/news-room/news/2014/06/pew-applauds-obama-administrations-new-focus-on-illegal-fishing> or "Obama to Expand Marine Reserves and Crack Down on Seafood Black Market" at The Guardian (June 17) at <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jun/17/obama-oceans-marine-reserves-leonardo-dicaprio>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Barack Obama, Clean Power Plan, Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Environmental Protection Agency, Fisheries, Ocean Protection, U.S. Climate Action Plan** | [Leave a reply](#)

Roadmap for Corporate Sustainability Practices Includes Employee Recruitment, Retention, Training and Support

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report produced by Ceres and Sustainalytics assesses the progress of 613 of the largest, publicly-traded companies in the U.S. in integrating sustainability into business systems and decision-making. Gaining Ground uses the framework of the Ceres "Roadmap", reporting on greenhouse gas emissions reduction programs, human rights in supply chains, and the sustainability aspects of product design, transportation and logistics, and supply chains. The Roadmap includes 3 activities related to employees (under the "Performance dimension"): recruitment and retention, training and support, and promotion of sustainable lifestyles. The report states that only 6 percent of companies can be considered "Tier 1", or exemplary, regarding their efforts to systematically engage employees in sustainability issues. General Electric is highlighted for "using its Human Resource department to integrate sustainability into the company's culture-from hiring practices to job education and training to employee well-being programs." Campbell Soup requires that every employee have a "CSR oriented goal" in their annual performance objectives (Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) includes sustainability). Bank of America provided \$3,000 reimbursement to employees who purchased hybrid vehicles. Gaining Ground concludes that there is progress in corporate sustainability initiatives, but it is insufficient at the current rate.

LINKS

Gaining Ground: Corporate Progress on the Ceres Roadmap for Sustainability is at: <http://www.ceres.org/roadmap-assessment/progress-report>, with interactive links to topics and company information. The Summary of employee related information is at: <http://www.ceres.org/roadmap-assessment/roadmap-in-action/explore-by-topic/performance-employees>.

See the Ceres Climate Declaration and list of signatories (including some Canadian companies) at: <http://www.ceres.org/bicep/climate-declaration/climate-declaration-full-signatory-list>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **CERES, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Corporate Sustainability, Sustainable Business, Sustainalytics** | [Leave a reply](#)

Drought Brings Economic and Job Loss in California's Agricultural Industry

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Researchers at the University of California at Davis were commissioned by the state Department of Food and Agriculture to prepare estimates of the economic impacts of the current drought to enable targeting of drought relief efforts. Their preliminary report concludes that losses will reach \$1.7 billion and 14,500 full-time and seasonal jobs in the intensively-farmed Central Valley. "...the smaller than expected reduction of water availability, crop acres and employment comes at the expense of the exhaustion of reserve groundwater storage and a substantial increase in groundwater overdraft. There will be substantial long term costs of groundwater overdraft that are not reflected in this study. Furthermore, if another critically dry year occurs in 2015 the socioeconomic impacts will likely be much more severe." Although the drought will cause hardship for farmers and communities, agriculture accounts for less than 3 percent of the state's \$1.9 trillion a year gross domestic product. Other economic concerns are for forest fires, the fisheries industry, and consumer prices for fruit and vegetables. California has been under a state of emergency since January 2014; its normal dry season begins around May.

LINKS

Preliminary 2014 Drought Economic Impact Estimates in Central Valley Agriculture is at: https://watershed.ucdavis.edu/files/biblio/Preliminary_2014_drought_economic_impacts-05192014.pdf, with a press release summary at: http://news.ucdavis.edu/search/news_detail.lasso?id=10933.

To keep abreast of the hardships and actions relating to California's drought, go to the government website at: ca.gov/drought.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Agriculture, California, Drought** | [Leave a reply](#)

Actions By International Unions: A Global Campaign for Climate Goals, and Demands for Labour Rights in TPP Trade Agreement

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On May 21, more than 50 unions representing millions of workers joined the Unions4Climate global campaign at the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) World Congress in Berlin. The sign-up launches the mobilisation campaign for industrial transformation, just transition measures to organise workers in green, decent jobs, and ultimately for a climate agreement in Paris in 2015. Hassan Yussuff, newly-elected President of the Canadian Labour Congress, and Secretary

Treasurer Barb Byers attended the Berlin meeting, though the CLC is not named in the press release as one of the signatories.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has released a detailed position statement regarding the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement, currently under discussion between the EU and the U.S. The ETUC position includes demands for consideration of the environmental impact of tar sands and shale gas, and for protection of labour rights on both sides of the Atlantic. On May 15, 240 unionists and activists were arrested in Brussels in protest against budget austerity and the trade agreement.

LINKS

The Unions4Climate Action website, including a sign-up form for individuals, is at: <http://act.equaltimes.org/unions4climate>; the full Statement, Climate Change is a Trade Union Issue, is at: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/en_unions4climate.pdf. The website for the 3rd Congress is at: <http://congress2014.ituc-csi.org/>, and includes a press release about the campaign.

“ETUC position on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership” statement from the European Trade Union Confederation is available at: <http://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-position-transatlantic-trade-and-investment-partnership#.UxX0sYW7Tm4>. See also “What does the TTIP really mean for workers?” (March 10) from ETUC’s Equal Times at: <http://www.equaltimes.org/what-does-the-ttip-really-mean-for?lang=en>.

Sierra Club and Power Shift TTIP analysis: Energy Trade in the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: Endangering Action on Climate Change is available at: <http://sierraclub.typepad.com/compass/2014/05/exposed-transatlantic-trade-pact-endangers-action-on-climate-1.html>.

“Hundreds of Protesters Arrested In Brussels as Business Leaders Debate ‘Maintaining Citizen’s Trust’” at: <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/european-business-summit-2014/hundreds-protesters-arrested-brussels-business-leaders-debate>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)**, **Green Jobs**, **International Trade Union Conference (ITUC)**, **Just Transition**, **Labour**, **Low-Carbon Transition**, **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Improvements to Canadian Regulations for Oil Tankers and Pipelines

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Following changes to railroad safety regulations in April, the Canadian government released back-to-back announcements of changes governing oil tankers (on May 13) and pipelines (on May 14). Regarding spills from oil tankers, the new regulations will increase company liability from the current \$161 million per incident to \$400 million per spill, and will also impose a levy on companies, with a total of \$1.6 billion available to clean up an oil spill and provide compensation. (The government’s own expert panel had recommended that corporate liability be unlimited in its report, delivered December 2013.) See the government press release at: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=847519> or the CBC report at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/new-tanker-spill-rules-raise-liability-for-companies-1.2641217>.

The changes to pipeline safety announced on May 14 include the introduction of “absolute liability” for all National Energy Board (NEB)-regulated pipelines, making companies liable for costs and damages irrespective of fault, up to the limit of \$1 billion for major oil pipelines; companies continue to have unlimited liability when at fault or negligent. The powers of the National Energy Board are expanded to give the NEB authority to order reimbursement of any cleanup costs incurred by governments, communities or individuals, and to take control of any clean-up operations if the company is unable or unwilling to do so. The regulations also call for developing a strategy with industry and First Nations communities to increase First Nations’ participation in pipeline safety operations. See the government press release and backgrounder at: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=848059>.

Report Re B.C. Site C Dam Draws Little Attention or Controversy

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Report of the Review Panel on British Columbia's Site C dam was released on May 8. See the Report of the Joint Review Panel at: <http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/documents/p63919/99173E.pdf>, the Globe and Mail coverage (May 8) at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/site-c-recommendation/article18565850/> or the summary at The Tyee at: <http://thetyee.ca/News/2014/05/08/Site-C-Review/>. The Panel was mandated "to inquire into the environmental, economic, social, health, and heritage effects of the Project and their significance, to examine proposals for the mitigation of adverse effects, and to record assertions of Project effects on the Aboriginal rights and treaty rights of the affected First Nations and Métis peoples." Their only recommendation relating to employment issues was that "If the Project proceeds, BC Hydro must work with training institutions to focus on employment in indirect and induced sectors for Aboriginal workers, as these jobs are likely to be longer lived than those related strictly to construction." An earlier WCR post links to a David Suzuki report about the Site C Dam: see: <http://workandclimatechangereport.org/2013/12/19/the-jobs-argument-and-the-costs-of-energy-development-two-views/>

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Shale Gas Reports Call for "More Research" and "Better Communication"

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

On May 1, the Council of Canadian Academies released a report by a multidisciplinary panel of experts who considered the state of knowledge of potential environmental impacts from the exploration, extraction, and development of Canada's shale gas resources. The report does not address the safety, nor the economic benefits of development. As stated in the press release: "It reviews the use of new and conventional technologies in shale gas extraction, and examines several issues of concern including potential impacts on groundwater and surface water, greenhouse gas emissions, cumulative land disturbance, and human health." The report concludes that suitability of shale gas development depends on regional context because of Canada's different geographies, geologies, and ecologies. Further, it states that scientific understanding is not yet sufficient nor conclusive. The Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction in Canada is at:

http://www.scienceadvice.ca/uploads/eng/assessments%20and%20publications%20and%20news%20releases/shale%20gas/shalegas_fullreporten.pdf; a press release and summaries are available at:

<http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed/shale-gas.aspx> (English) and

<http://sciencepourlepublic.ca/fr/assessments/completed/shale-gas.aspx> (French).

In the U.K. in early May, a Select Committee of the House of Lords tabled a report, The Economic Impact on UK Energy Policy of Shale Gas and Oil. The report examines the U.S. experience, and discusses U.K. environmental impacts, job impacts, and climate change implications. It concludes: "We consider that the risks to human health and the environment are low if shale development is properly regulated, with the improvements we recommend. We welcome the community benefit schemes announced by the industry which, if well-targeted, could play a role in winning public acceptance. We also recommend that the industry improves its presentation and communication skills and puts across more convincingly the economic and employment gains shale development can bring to areas like Lancashire." The official summary of the recommendations is at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/economic-affairs-committee/news/report-publication/>; the Report is at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldeconaf/172/172.pdf>.

Fraser Institute Argues the Economic Importance of the Energy Industry

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

A report released by the right-wing Fraser Institute on May 15 states: “Our examination of Canadian data leads us to conclude that energy use in Canada is not a mere by-product of prosperity, but a limiting factor in growth...policies favouring the abundant availability of energy are important for sustaining strong economic growth, and policies that deliberately limit energy availability will likely have negative macroeconomic consequences.” Read Energy Abundance and Economic Growth at: <http://www.fraserinstitute.org/research-news/display.aspx?id=21204>. For a critique of the report, see the Broadbent Institute blog by Matthew Patterson of the University of Ottawa, at: <http://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/en/blog/economic-freedom-and-politics-environmental-performance>.

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U.S. Scientists and Generals Sound the Alarm on Climate Change

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The landmark National Climate Assessment report was written by 300 experts, guided by a 60-member Federal Advisory Committee, and reviewed by a panel of the National Academy of Sciences. It documents climate changes, makes future projections, and analyses impacts nationally and regionally on seven sectors – human health, water, energy, transportation, agriculture, forests, and ecosystems. The report is available in a variety of formats – go to <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/highlights>. On May 14th, the U.S. Center for Naval Analyses and its Military Advisory Board (composed of 16 retired generals and admirals) released a “bipartisan call to action” in the form of its report: National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change at: http://www.cna.org/sites/default/files/MAB_2014.pdf. The report argues that climate-related events such as flooding, drought and rising sea levels bring population dislocation and food insecurity, and therefore act as “catalysts for instability and conflict”. Importantly for Canadians, they warn that an ice-free Arctic will bring competition for shipping lanes and access to undersea oil deposits – see an article in The Guardian at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/14/climate-change-arctic-security-threat-report?CMP=EMCENVEM1631>.

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U.S. Makes Progress in Pollution Regulations, Set Back in Energy Efficiency

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The bipartisan Shaheen-Portman bill, which would have raised energy efficiency standards for federal buildings and provided tax incentives for energy-efficient homes and commercial buildings, became pegged to the Keystone XL and coal plant issues during election-year political dealings, resulting in its defeat on May 12. See “Energy Bill Caught Up in Keystone XL Dispute” article from the Huffington Post at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/12/energy-bill-keystone_n_5308819.html or “Shaheen Energy Bill to Promote Energy Efficiency Failed” in the New York Times at:

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/13/us/politics/bill-to-encourage-energy-efficiency-fails-in-senate.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=0

On April 29th, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the EPA's Cross-State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR). About 1,000 power plants will now be required to adopt new restrictions on nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide. Information on the EPA's Cross-State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) is available from the EPA at: <http://www.epa.gov/airtransport/CSAPR/> and see also "Justices Back Rule Limiting Coal Pollution" (April 30) in the New York Times at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/30/us/politics/supreme-court-backs-epa-coal-pollution-rules.html>. New coal plant carbon regulations, which are expected to spur carbon trading on the west coast, will be announced on June 2 but still face legal and political challenges from the Republicans, the Chamber of Commerce, utilities, coal companies, and others. See the EPA's website at: <http://www2.epa.gov/carbon-pollution-standards/what-epa-doing#overview> and <http://www.c2es.org/publications/carbon-pollution-standards-existing-power-plants-issues-options/>.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is making headway in other areas, including taking the first step towards regulating the chemicals used in the fracking process. The EPA is considering filing information about the chemicals under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), but has not yet committed to forcing companies to submit data or to actively controlling chemical use. See "EPA Takes First Step Toward Regulating Fracking Chemicals" at Bloomberg News at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-05-09/epa-considers-requiring-disclosure-of-fracking-chemicals.html>.

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Bad News for Climate Change in the First Budget of Australia's Abbott Government

Posted on **May 29, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In what is being called the "Backwards Budget" delivered on May 13, the government of Australia continues to dismantle the existing national agencies related to a low-carbon economy. The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) joins the previously announced Climate Change Authority and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation on the chopping block. Funding for the Emissions Reduction Fund is now muddy, and the 3-year old carbon pricing system will be abolished, if government proposals are approved by the Senate in July. See the positions of Australia's Climate Institute at: <http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/>, Australia's coal miners' union (CFMEU) at: <http://cfmeu.com.au/campaigns/national/climate-change> or blogs by Alexander White from The Guardian: "Australia's Extreme Budget Meets Extreme Climate" (May 21) at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/southern-crossroads/2014/may/21/may-heatwave-budget-2014-abbott-renewable-energy-cuts> and "Could Australia Really Dismantle its Carbon Price" (May 26) at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/southern-crossroads/2014/may/26/carbon-price-abolish-tony-abbott-australia>.

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Canada's Oil Economy Through the "Staples" Lens

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In 1963, economist Mel Watkins achieved international recognition with the publication of "A Staple Theory of Economic Growth" in the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science. To mark the 50th anniversary, the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis published a collection of essays written by members of Canada's Progressive Economics Forum, placing Watkins' ideas in historical and global context. The section "Staple Theory and the Bitumen Boom" is essential reading, as authors Thomas Gunton, Gordon Laxer, Daniel Drache and Jim Stanford use staples theory to discuss the

fossil fuel addiction of our economy, its dangerous impact on the broader economy, on cultures, especially Aboriginal culture, and on the environment.

Part 4: “Modern Applications”, includes “The Staple Theory and the Carbon Trap”, by Brendan Haley; “LNG: BC’s Quest for a New Staple Industry” by Marc Lee, and “Staples Theory: Its Gendered Nature” by Marjorie Griffin Cohen, among others. In the final essay in the collection, Mel Watkins writes: “My 1963 article has perhaps encouraged some readers to think too much about linkages and how to enhance them, to focus on incremental change when it is transformative change that is necessary...Fifty years on I have grandchildren, and know that the world must move ASAP from dependence on fossil fuels to reliance on green technologies. This will involve a wrenching change for Canada because bitumen is now the superstaple driving our economy and our polity...These may not be the best of times, and they may well get worse, but there is room for hope if we will but face up to our situation. In Canada, that means escaping both the staple trap and the carbon trap by weaning ourselves from the export of bitumen”.

LINK

The Staple Theory @ 50: Reflections on the Lasting Significance of Mel Watkins’ “A Staple Theory of Economic Growth” is available at:

https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2014/03/Staple_Theory_at_50.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)**, **Mel Watkins**, **Staples Theory**, **Staples Trap** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Oil Economy Through the IMF Lens

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The International Monetary Fund has weighed in on the economic benefits of oil sands development in Canada, in a background report written in January 2014 but only released in April. Using Input-Output analysis based on 2009 data, the IMF report notes that overall the unconventional oil and gas industry make a small, positive contribution to Canada’s economy: for every \$1 invested in the oilsands, Canada’s GDP rises 90 cents – of which 82 cents goes to Alberta. The report states “employment in the energy sector increased by less than 13,000 over 2007-12, against a total 752,000 jobs created over the same period in Canada”. To measure broader spillover effects across Canada and across industries, the report uses a General Equilibrium Model which takes into account the “infrastructure constraints” – i.e. pipeline and transportation capacity. The report concludes “that the potential output gain for Canada’s energy products would reach only about 2 percent of GDP” over a ten year horizon, and that is conditional on construction of infrastructure (pipelines) for export to non-U.S. markets and for interprovincial energy integration, and if inter-industry linkages are encouraged across Canada to more widely distribute economic benefit.

LINKS

IMF Country Report 14/28: Canada: The Unconventional Energy Boom in North America; Macroeconomic Implications and Challenges for Canada is at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2014/cr1428.pdf>

Summary and commentary are at the DeSmog Blog at: <http://desmog.ca/2014/04/09/benefits-canadas-energy-boom-remain-energy-sector-alberta-reports-imf>, or in an article by Andrew Jackson at the Broadbent Institute at: <http://www.pressprogress.ca/en/blog/imf-oil-exports-aren%E2%80%99t-so-key-canada%E2%80%99s-economic-future-after-all>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian GDP**, **Economic Indicators**, **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** | [Leave a reply](#)

British Columbia Tripartite Working Group Makes Workforce Recommendations for LNG Development in the Face of Environmental Controversy and Public Opinion

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Since September 2013, the Premier's Liquefied Natural Gas Working Group has met to discuss workforce planning, skills training, and the use of temporary workers in LNG projects. Described by the government as "unprecedented", the working group included representatives from government, industry, the Haisla Nation, and organized labour, specifically: United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 170; B.C. Federation of Labour; B.C. and Yukon Building and Construction Trades Council; B.C. Government and Service Employees Union; Construction and Specialized Workers Union Local 1611; and Sheet Metal Workers International Association Local 280. The Working Group released their final report on March 31st and all fifteen recommendations were accepted by the Premier on April 3rd. Next step: a 10-year skills-training plan. The Terms of Reference did not include the environmental impact of the proposed LNG development and the contention that the LNG production will make it impossible for B.C. to meet its legislated carbon emissions targets.

The Final Report provides an inventory of existing and proposed LNG development in B.C. as of March 2014, as well as analysis of the workforce data and issues as identified by the B.C. Natural Gas Workforce Strategy and Action Plan, released in July 2013 and since updated by the government. Fifteen recommendations include the use of best practices relating to apprenticeship, mobility of labour within B.C. and Canada, and most contentiously, the use of temporary foreign workers. The report calls for the formation no later than July 2014, of an ongoing body which would include government, labour unions, industry and contractors, and First Nations, to participate in workforce planning, skills training, and to develop a protocol for the use of temporary foreign workers, "to limit their use, but also to plan accordingly for their use if and when needed".

Many First Nations groups oppose LNG development, and a new public opinion survey released on April 24 shows that 78% of British Columbians agree that "B.C. should transition away from using fossil fuels to cleaner sources of energy to prevent climate change from getting worse. More than two thirds (67%) agree the province should decrease its reliance on fossil fuel exports to avoid future boom and bust economic cycles". The survey was commissioned by the Pembina Institute, Clean Energy Canada and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, and conducted by Strategic Communications Inc. in April of 2014.

LINKS

Premier's Liquefied Natural Gas Working Group: Final Report is available at:

http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/pubs/pdf/lng_final_report.pdf, with a press release and backgrounder from B.C. Premier's Office at: <http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/04/premiers-lng-working-group-recommendation-road-map.html>

"Key Native Group in Northern B.C. threatens to Stop Talks on Pipelines" in the Globe and Mail (April 21) at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/native-group-threatens-to-stop-talks-on-pipelines/article18088799/>, but also see "B.C. and First Nations sign first LNG revenue-sharing Agreement, and Backgrounder" at: <https://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/04/bc-and-first-nations-sign-first-lng-revenue-sharing-agreements.html>

Public Opinion Survey is available from the Pembina Institute website at: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2539>

See also the BC LNG Info website, maintained by the Northwest Institute, SkeenaWild Conservation Trust, and Headwaters Initiative, with the stated goal of providing impartial, up to date information about the LNG industry in B.C. for the benefit of the community. See <http://bclnginfo.com/newsroom> for news and updates.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **B.C. and Yukon Building and Construction Trades Council, B.C. Government and Service Employees Union, BC LNG, Christy Clark, Construction and Specialized Workers Union, Haisla Nation,**

New Brunswick's Controversial New Forestry Plan Allows for Expanded Cutting on Crown Lands

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The New Brunswick government released a new forestry plan in March 2014, following heavy lobbying by the forest industry, led by J.D Irving Ltd. The industry argued that they needed a long-term commitment to access the wood supply from Crown Lands to justify the large capital investment necessary to make New Brunswick mills efficient. The 2014 Strategy for Crown Lands Forest Management increases the amount of softwood (chiefly spruce and fir) that can be harvested from Crown Lands by 20%, and reduces the areas that are off-limits to industrial cutting (including watercourse buffers, deer wintering areas, and old growth forest) from 28% to 23% over a 10-15 year period. The result, according to the government, will be "500 new, well-paid private sector jobs" and "more than \$22 million in additional annual wages". Direct forest sector employment in New Brunswick had fallen 24% and the number of mills had fallen 47% since 2004, according to the government. Since the release, J.D. Irving Ltd. has committed to \$513 million in capital investments in its mills, mostly at Irving Pulp & Paper in Saint John.

In response to the March Strategy document, Rino Ouellet, Atlantic area Director for Unifor, issued a press release which echoes the government's economic arguments and endorses the Forestry Plan. In a February press release, he had stated, "...in order for the plan to work, it must include in the process First Nations people, wood lot owners, labour, and crown land rights...and must continue to allow for environmentally-protected areas".

On another side of this triangular debate, opposition includes: the provincial leader of the Green Party, who calls it "a plan for plunder"; the executive director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness, who calls it "regressive"; Graham Forbes, a professor from University of New Brunswick, who says it is unsustainable; and Rod Cumberland, a retired government biologist, who says many provincial government scientists are alarmed, but are too afraid to speak out for fear of losing their jobs.

The political storm continues on this issue. On April 24th, the government tabled in the legislature the terms of an agreement with J.D. Irving which increases the company's annual allocations of softwood, for an initial term of 25 years, beginning on July 1, 2014. The contract calls for the company's performance to be reviewed every five years, with five-year renewals contingent upon satisfactory performance.

LINKS

Putting Our Resources To Work: A Strategy For Crown Lands Forest Management on the New Brunswick government website at: <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/nr-rn/pdf/en/ForestsCrownLands/AStrategyForCrownLandsForestManagement.pdf>

J.D. Irving press release is at: <http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/1335353/new-crown-forest-policy-drives-16-8-million-investments-in-the-forests-mills-and-suppliers-74-jobs-created>

Unifor's March press release: "Atlantic's Largest Forestry Union applauds Long term plan for Sector" at:

<http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/press-room/atlantics-largest-forestry-union-applauds-long-term-plan-sector>; February press release at: <http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/1298929/forestry-plan-much-needed-for-new-brunswick>

For Reactions: The Crown Lands Debate, a Feature on the CBC website at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/nb/features/crownforestrydebate/> including, "Irving clout with Government challenged in wake of Forest

Deal" at:<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/irving-clout-with-government-challenged-in-wake-of-forest-deal-1.2572410>; and "New Crown Forest Plan slammed by retired Provincial Biologist" at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-crown-forest-plan-slammed-by-retired-provincial-biologist-1.2580430>; "New Crown Forestry Plan greeted with Shock, Dismay" at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-crown-forestry-plan-greeted-with-shock-dismay-1.2570803>

"J.D. Irving's Crown Forest Contract Made Public" is at the CBC at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/j-d-irving-s-crown-forest-contract-made-public-1.2620780>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Boreal Forest, Crown Land, Forestry Industry, Forestry Management, J.D. Irving Ltd., New Brunswick, Unifor** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Union Makes Green Progress on Three Fronts

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report by the Public and Commercial Services Union of the U.K. outlines how that union is pursuing its green goals on three fronts: greening the union administration and operations through policies regarding energy use, waste reduction, green procurement and staff travel policies; at the workplace, supporting the green representatives through networks and online training; and in the community, through national and local campaigns, for example, against fracking, the Energy Bill Revolution and energy poverty, and through fair trade and trade justice campaigns. The report also summarizes the union's Green Forum in November 2013, and its new participation in the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) network, based at Cornell University's Global Labor Institute in New York. It will relaunch its One Million Climate Jobs campaign in 2014.

LINKS

Becoming a Greener Union is available from a link at the Public and Commercial Services Union website at:http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/resources/green_workplaces/index.cfm, which also gives a link to the full report and a video from the 2013 Green Forum

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cornell Global Labor Institute, Energy Bill Revolution, Green administration, Trade Unions, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, U.K. Public and Commercial Services Union** | [Leave a reply](#)

Eco-Industries Can Thrive with Supportive Government Policies and a Culture of Innovation

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report from EU think-tank the Ecologic Institute, prepared for the Greens in the European Parliament, asserts that eco-industries outperformed the broader economy during difficult times, including the 2008 financial crisis. The report examines five European countries since 2008, and compares them to the U.S., China, and Mexico. It states that, while European manufacturers in general fell behind on the global market, manufacturers of environmental goods and services managed to remain competitive. In addition, even when European eco-manufacturing lost out to global competitors like China's growing solar PV manufacturing sector, European jobs were retained in planning, installation, and maintenance. The resilience of the European eco-industries is attributed partly to rapid innovation, as measured by patent applications. Ecologic also noted that government policy that preserved investor confidence was crucial to maintaining resilient eco-industries.

LINKS

How Crisis-resistant and Competitive are Europe's Eco-Industries? Is available at: <http://www.ecologic.eu/10477>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Ecologic Institute, Green industry, Green Innovation, Green Manufacturing, Low-Carbon Transition, Solar PV Manufacturing** | [Leave a reply](#)

Links to IPCC 5th Assessment Reports, and Reactions

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

If somehow you missed the release of the two reports from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment, you will find Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaption, and Vulnerability (released March 31st) at: <http://www.ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/>. The second report, Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change (released on April 13th) is available at: <http://mitigation2014.org/>. The final Synthesis Report is scheduled for release in October 2014. What follows is a series of links to summaries and reaction, especially with a Canadian viewpoint. "UN report highlights urgency of near-term carbon cutting" (April 13) in the Globe and Mail at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/world-losing-ground-in-climate-battle-says-un-body/article17949953/>; "Only with Political Will can we Avoid the Worst" from David Suzuki at: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/science-matters/2014/04/only-with-political-will-can-we-avoid-the-worst-of-climate-change/>; "Dear Fossil Fuel Industry, It's Over" at the Greenpeace Canada website at: <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/Blog/dear-fossil-fuel-industry-its-over/blog/48924/>. There was no response from Environment Canada or the Prime Minister's office.

From the U.S., several items from the New York Times are at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/01/opinion/climate-signals-growing-louder.html?emc=edit_th_20140401&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=67440933&_r=0, and http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/14/science/earth/un-climate-panel-warns-speedier-action-is-needed-to-avert-disaster.html?emc=edit_th_20140414&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=67440933&_r=0, with a widely cited OpEd on April 17th by Paul Krugman, "Salvation gets Cheap", at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/18/opinion/krugman-salvation-gets-cheap.html?_r=0. From the U.K., The Guardian summary of U.K. reaction is at: <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/blog/2014/apr/14/climate-change-report-reactions-to-the-final-instalment-of-the-ipcc-analysis>, and a portal to all Guardian coverage of the IPCC reports is at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/ipcc>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, IPCC Reports** | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil and Gas Sector Contributed Almost One Quarter of Canada's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On April 11th, a Friday afternoon, Environment Canada quietly released its annual national greenhouse gas emissions inventory, as required by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). National emissions decreased by 0.3% between 2010 and 2012, but overall trends confirm that Canada is on track to significantly miss its commitment to a 17% decrease by 2020. Most provinces have cut their overall emissions, although Alberta's have increased by 7% between 2005 and 2012, mainly because the oil sands experienced an 80% emissions increase. The oil sands alone now account for 9% of total Canadian emissions, while the oil and gas sector overall contributes about one quarter.

Signs of progress are emerging in the manufacturing and transportation sectors, and electricity emissions intensity is decreasing, largely attributable to efficiency improvements and the Ontario coal phase-out, which reduced the province's electricity emissions by 56%.

Reaction from P.J. Partington, an analyst at the Pembina Institute, calls for Canada to make good on its promise to introduce national oil and gas regulations. See National Inventory Report 1990-2012: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada at the Environment Canada website at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/ges-ghg/default.asp?lang=En&n=3808457C-1&offset=6&toc=show> (English version), and <http://www.ec.gc.ca/ges-ghg/default.asp?lang=Fr&n=3808457C-1> (French version).

For P.J. Partington's blogs, go to "Big shiny trends: Canada's new emissions numbers" at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/789>; "Oil Sands Talking Point collides with Reality" at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/787>; and "Getting Back in Gear: Oilsands Climate Performance" at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/788>. The U.S. released its UNFCCC National Inventory documents in the same week, showing that U.S. emissions are now 10% below 2005 levels, the lowest they have been in 20 years. Go to: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/usinventoryreport.html>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Emissions, Emissions reduction targets, Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Oil Sands Emissions, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Cities Rank High in Climate Change Adaptation – and Some Examples

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A newly released survey conducted by the researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology investigates the progress in climate adaptation planning in 468 cities worldwide – 298 of which were in the U.S., 26 were in Canada. Results show that 92% of Canadian cities are pursuing adaptation planning, compared to 68% worldwide, and 59% in the U.S.. The top ranked impacts identified by cities that conducted assessments were: increased stormwater runoff (72%), changes in electricity demand (42%), loss of natural systems (39%), and coastal erosion (36%). Other important issues were loss of economic revenue, drought, and solid waste management. The report, Progress and Challenges in Urban Adaptation Planning: Results of a Global Survey is available at: <http://www.icleiusa.org/action-center/learn-from-others/progress-and-challenges-in-urban-climate-adaptation-planning-results-of-a-global-survey>, and summarized at: http://www.icleiusa.org/blog/survey_us_cities_report_increase_in_climate_impacts_lag_in_adaptation_planningworldwide-progress-on-urban-climate-adaptation-planning. For a policy perspective, read the David Suzuki blog "Canada's Success depends on Municipal Infrastructure Investments" (March 13) at: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/science-matters/2014/03/canadas-success-depends-on-municipal-infrastructure-investments/>. For a more anecdotal report which names and describes some innovative Canadian municipalities, see "Five Canadian Communities Fighting Climate Change That You've Probably Never Heard of Before" from the DeSmog Blog at: <http://www.desmog.ca/2014/04/03/five-canadian-communities-fighting-climate-change-you-ve-probably-never-heard-of-before>. It describes Dawson Creek, B.C.; Guelph, Ontario; Varennes, Quebec; T'Sou-ke First Nation, B.C.; and Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. An overview of the Upwind-Downwind Conference of municipalities in Hamilton in March, and a summary of Hamilton's climate action initiatives, appears in "Ontario Municipalities take Action on Air Quality and Climate Change" at: <http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/community/blogs/current-events/ontario-municipalities-take-action-air-quality-and-climate-change>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Adaptation, Cities and Climate Change, Climate Resilience, Coastal Cities, Economic impacts, Green Infrastructure, Infrastructure, Infrastructure Investment, Municipal Emissions, Municipal Government** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Future of Canada's Electrical System

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On March 25, the Canadian Electricity Association (CEA) released Vision 2050: The Future of Canada's Electricity System, a report which offers recommendations and calls for urgent decisions and action. The report concludes with "Principles for

Prudent Investment” which include: reliability, equity (calling for social policies to support ratepayers and protect low income consumers from energy poverty), integration of intermittent sources of electricity (i.e. solar and wind), innovation and modernization of infrastructure, energy efficiency improvements, and the electrification of transportation. See <http://www.electricity.ca/resources/publications/vision-2050-the-future-of-canadas-electricity-system.php>; See also the Sustainable Electricity Annual Report 2013 at: <http://www.sustainableelectricity.ca/media/AnnualReport2013/2013SustainableElectricityAnnualReport.pdf> (published August 2013), and Power for the Future: Electricity’s Role in a Canadian Energy Strategy (July 2013) at: <http://www.electricity.ca/media/ReportsPublications/PowerForTheFutureElectricityRoleCanadianEnergyStrategyE.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Electricity Association (CEA), Canadian Energy Strategy, Electricity, Electricity Efficiency, energy efficiency, Energy Infrastructure** | [Leave a reply](#)

Investment in Canadian Clean Energy Mirrors Global Trend to Solar Pre-Eminence

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Two new reports on investment in clean energy were released in March/April, both showing a global decline in investment levels, and that investment in solar now exceeds wind investment. A report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) shows a 14% decrease in global investment in renewables in 2013, but even so, renewables attracted \$192 billion for new capacity and comprised 43.6% of newly installed generation capacity in 2013. The U.S. continues to rank first among developed economies for investment in renewable energy with \$33.9 billion in 2013 – although this represents a 10% decrease, largely attributable to the uncertainty over the continuation of the Wind Tax Credit. Japan, Canada and the United Kingdom were the only G-20 countries in which investment increased. Canada ranked 6th amongst the G-20 countries with \$6.4 billion investment, largely in wind energy (\$3.6 billion) and solar energy (\$2.5 billion) in 2013. See “Six Canadian companies shaping the future of clean energy” (March 27) in Globe and Mail Report on Business Magazine at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-magazine/six-canadian-clean-energy-companies/article17685931/?page=4>. To read the Global survey, see Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2014, produced jointly by the Frankfurt School-UNEP Collaborating Centre, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF) at: <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=2787&ArticleID=10824&l=en>.

A related report was issued by the Pew Charitable Trusts, also utilizing Bloomberg data. Who’s Winning the Clean Energy Race? 2013 Edition contrasts a 16% decline in renewables investment in developed markets of G-20 countries (led by the U.S. and EU) with a growth of 15% in non G-20 countries, led by such countries as Chile and Uruguay. Pew ranks China as the top destination for investors; solar capacity in China increased fourfold in 2013. See Who’s Winning the Clean Energy Race? At: <http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/press-releases/pew-report-finds-that-global-clean-energy-investment-declined-in-2013-85899543052>. See also the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s April 2014 Electricity Monthly Update which shows that U.S. solar capacity also increased by 418% between 2010 and 2014, as described at: <http://cleantechnica.com/2014/04/24/us-solar-energy-capacity-grew-an-astounding-418-from-2010-2014/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Bloomberg New Energy Finance, Clean Energy, Clean Energy Investment, Low-Carbon Investment, renewable energy, Renewables, Solar Energy, wind energy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Low-Carbon Solutions to the GTA Gridlock – What Do They Mean for Workers?

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report from the Pembina Institute and the Toronto Atmospheric Fund presents policy options, innovative ideas, and examples from other countries of strategies that would reduce emissions, chiefly by greening delivery fleets and optimizing trip planning through sophisticated information sharing. Directed at government and business, this report also has implications for workers, particularly those in the transportation and delivery sectors, as well as the warehousing, manufacturing, retail and food services industries.

See Greening the Goods: Opportunities for Low-Carbon Goods Movement in Toronto at: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2536>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Municipal Emissions, Pembina Institute, Toronto, Toronto Atmospheric Fund** | [Leave a reply](#)

Divestment Still a Necessary Strategy as ExxonMobil Reports on Stranded Assets

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The largest oil and gas company in the world, ExxonMobil, agreed under pressure from activist shareholders to publish a “Carbon Asset Risk” report on their website, to provide information to shareholders on the risks that stranded assets pose to the company’s business model, and how the company is planning for a low-carbon world. Stranded assets for Exxon are the carbon reserves which would need to remain in the ground if the world were to follow a carbon budget to keep below 2 degrees of global warming.

Some environmentalists are claiming this transparency as a victory – GreenBiz described it as “a pivotal milestone on the road to a low-carbon economy”. Bill McKibben, noting that the Exxon report was released on the same day as the IPCC Report, said it is “probably at least as important in the ongoing battle over the future of the atmosphere”. But McKibben sees “consummate arrogance” in Exxon’s statement that “we are confident that none of our hydrocarbon reserves are now or will become stranded”. For McKibben, the solution remains a divestment campaign – a strategy that Archbishop Desmond Tutu also urged in an April essay in The Guardian.

See “Exxon, Stranded Assets and the New Math” at GreenBiz: <http://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2014/03/24/exxon-stranded-assets-and-new-math>, and an article in the Wall Street Journal Market Watch at: <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/landmark-agreement-with-shareholders-exxonmobil-agrees-to-report-on-climate-change-carbon-asset-risk-2014-03-20>. But see also Bill McKibben’s article in The Guardian on April 3rd, “Exxon Mobil’s Response to Climate Change is Consummate Arrogance” at: [http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/03/exxon-mobil-climate-change-oil-gas-fossil-fuels?](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/03/exxon-mobil-climate-change-oil-gas-fossil-fuels?CMP=tw_tfd&utm_content=bufferfc5c8&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

CMP=tw_tfd&utm_content=bufferfc5c8&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer, and Desmond Tutu, “We Need an Apartheid-style Boycott to Save the Planet” at: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/10/divest-fossil-fuels-climate-change-keystone-xl>.

For an overview of Stranded Assets, see Unburnable Carbon: Wasted Capital and Stranded Assets at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/publications/Policy/docs/PB-unburnable-carbon-2013-wasted-capital-stranded-assets.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Bill McKibben, Climate Risk, Economic Risk, Exxon, ExxonMobil, Fossil Fuel Divestment, GreenBiz, IPCC, IPCC Reports, Risk Reporting, Shareholder Activism, Stranded Assets** | [Leave a reply](#)

Pipeline News: Kitimat, First Nations Reject Northern Gateway; the Government Downgrades

Protection for Humpback Whales

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline has encountered new road blocks as communities voice renewed opposition to the project. In Kitimat, residents voted against the pipeline by 60% in a non-binding plebiscite on April 19th. Kitimat might stand to gain the most if the project proceeds, with a promise from Enbridge to bring 180 permanent jobs to the community in addition to indirect opportunities for local contractors and suppliers. The day before the vote, four First Nations from the Yinka Dene, just west of Kitimat, expressed their official opposition to Northern Gateway in a meeting with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, the National Energy Board, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Yinka Dene have already gathered 160 B.C. First Nations behind a petition against the project. Other communities that have previously stated their opposition include Terrace, Prince Rupert, and Smithers.

See "Kitimat Residents Vote 'No' in Pipeline Plebiscite" from The Globe and Mail at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/kitimat-residents-vote-in-northern-gateway-oil-pipeline-plebiscite/article17949815/>, "Does Kitimat's Vote Matter?" In The Tyee at: <http://thetyee.ca/News/2014/04/12/Kitimat-Northern-Gateway-Vote/>, and "Four Dene clans officially reject Northern Gateway pipeline" from The Globe and Mail at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/four-dene-clans-officially-reject-northern-gateway-pipeline/article17948468/>.

See <http://workandclimatechangereport.org/2014/01/28/northern-gateway-headed-to-court-as-neb-approval-provokes-criticism-of-review-process/> for background on the current lawsuits against the Northern Gateway project by First Nations and environmental groups.

Meanwhile, on April 22nd, Environment Canada has recommended that the humpback whale be reclassified, from "threatened" to "species of special concern" under the Species At Risk Act. This would remove legal protection for humpback habitat (which happens to include the British Columbia coast where oil tanker traffic would increase if Northern Gateway is approved, and is part of the basis of a lawsuit launched by EcoJustice and others). See the CBC report at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/humpback-whale-losing-threatened-status-amid-northern-gateway-concerns-1.2617633>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA)**, **Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)**, **Enbridge**, **Environment Canada**, **First Nations**, **Humpback Whales**, **Kitimat**, **Municipal plebiscite**, **National Energy Board, NEB**, **Northern Gateway**, **Pipelines**, **Species at Risk Act (SARA)**, **Yinka Dene**, **Yinka Dene Alliance** | [Leave a reply](#)

National Energy Board Rejects B.C. Academics' Participation in Transmountain Pipeline Hearings

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A public letter sent to the National Post states: "This week, the National Energy Board (NEB) announced plans for its upcoming hearings on the proposal to triple the capacity of Kinder Morgan's Transmountain Pipeline, which transports oil from Alberta to the Port of Vancouver. The new pipeline alone is expected to lead to 50% more carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions each year than all of British Columbia currently produces. That fact prompted 26 university professors who study climate change to apply to lend our expertise to the NEB's assessment of whether this project is in the public interest. Every one of us was rejected, because we proposed to talk about climate change..." See the letter at: <http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2014/04/10/donner-harrison-hoberg-lets-talk-about-climate-change/>; see the NEB website for the Transmountain project at: <http://www.neb.gc.ca/cf-nsi/rthnb/pplctnsbfrthnb/trnsmntnxpnsn/trnsmntnxpnsn-eng.html>.

Keystone Decision Delayed Again

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

U.S. President Obama announced on April 18th that he will extend the government comment period on the Keystone XL pipeline until at least the end of May, frustrating Canadian boosters of the project. Read the CBC report at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/u-s-to-delay-keystone-xl-decision-1.2615062>. Protests against KXL continue in the U.S., the latest including U.S. First Nations – see “Keystone Protesters mark Final Roundup – For Now” in Politico at: <http://www.politico.com/story/2014/04/keystone-protesters-mark-final-roundup-for-now-106053.html?ml=la>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Keystone XL, KXL, Pipelines** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Announces Strategy to Reduce Methane Emissions

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On March 28th, the White House released a Strategy to Cut Methane Emissions as part of the overall Climate Action Plan. It includes plans and timetables for research and consultation for agriculture, landfill, coal mining and oil and gas. Re oil and gas, the press release states: “in the fall of 2014, EPA will determine how best to pursue further methane reductions from these sources. If EPA decides to develop additional regulations, it will complete those regulations by the end of 2016”. See the press release and overview at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/03/28/strategy-cut-methane-emissions>; see the full Strategy Document at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/strategy_to_reduce_methane_emissions_2014-03-28_final.pdf.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Emissions Regulations, Environmental Protection Agency, Methane, Methane Emissions, U.S. Climate Action Plan, U.S. Emissions** | [Leave a reply](#)

Mandatory Emissions Trading Scheme for China

Posted on **April 30, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

China’s Ministry of Finance has announced a plan to launch a mandatory national emissions trading scheme sometime between 2017 and 2020. The country has chosen seven regions where carbon market pilots will begin in the meantime. Eleven regions across China have been conducting pollution trading pilots since 2007, partly modelled after the EU emissions trading scheme. While pilots to date have focussed on carbon dioxide (CO₂), the national scheme is expected to include sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrous oxide (NO_x) as well. One billion metric tonnes of CO₂ will be covered under the pilot programs, smaller only than the EU emissions trading scheme.

See “China aims to launch pollution permit market within 3 years” from Reuters at: <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/03/24/china-pollution-idINL4N0ML1OU20140324>. By 2020, China has pledged to cut its greenhouse gas emissions per unit of GDP by 40 to 45 percent from 2005 levels.

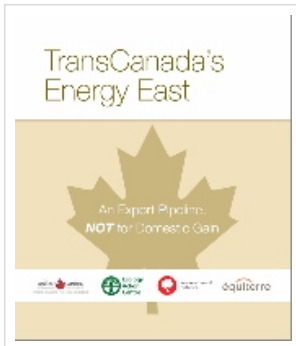
Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cap and Trade, China, Emissions Trading, EU Emissions Trading Scheme** | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy East Pipeline: Transporting Crude Oil for Export, not Processing

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Contrary to the economic projections put forth by TransCanada Pipeline, a new report released on March 18 contends that the proposed Energy East pipeline will be used primarily as a means to export crude oil, rather than to refine it in Canada.

The Energy East project would convert 3,000 kilometres of existing natural gas pipeline in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario to carry crude oil, and also would build over 1,500 km of new pipelines through Quebec and New Brunswick, with the objective



of carrying 1.1 million barrels of crude oil per day. In September 2013, an industry-sponsored report by Deloitte & Touche consultants projected job creation in the order of 10,000 jobs in development and construction, and 1,000 ongoing jobs in the operational phase.

TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline: For Export, Not Domestic Gain argues that the crude delivered by Energy East would exceed the processing capacity of existing Canadian refineries, given that they also source crude from the U.S., the Newfoundland offshore, and in the future, the newly-approved Line 9 pipeline project. The authors argue that new refineries are unlikely to be built in Canada, and point to TransCanada's proposed plans for export terminals at Gros Cacouna, Québec (east of Québec City) and Saint John, New Brunswick to prove that the intended purpose of the oil is export.

LINKS

TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline: For Export, Not Domestic Gain, prepared jointly by the Council of Canadians, Ecology Action Centre, Environmental Defence and Equiterre, is available at:

<http://www.canadians.org/publications/transcanada%E2%80%99s-energy-east-export-pipeline-not-domestic-gain>

CBC summary is at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/energy-east-pipeline-benefits-overblown-report-says-1.2576782>

Energy East: The Economic Benefits of TransCanada's Canadian Mainline Conversion Project (Sept. 2013) is on the Deloitte website at: <http://www.energyeastpipeline.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Energy-East-Deloitte-Economic-Benefits-Report.pdf>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Oil Refineries, Council of Canadians, Deloitte, Deloitte & Touche Consultants, Ecology Action Centre, Energy East pipeline, Environmental Defence, Equiterre, Job Creation, Montreal Refineries, Oil Exportation, Oil Refining Jobs, Pipeline Jobs, Saint John Irving Refinery, Staples Trap, TransCanada, TransCanada Corporation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Growth of Canada's Clean Tech Sector

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The fourth annual *Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report* by private consulting company Analytica Advisors was released on March 6 in Ottawa, stating that the clean-tech industry is “coming of age”. According to the report, the industry is comprised of over 700 Canadian companies which in 2012 generated \$5.8 billion in exports, spent \$1 billion in research and development, and created 41,100 new jobs across Canada. Twenty percent of the workforce in the sector is 30 years old and under. The survey authors predict that, at current growth rates, “this will become a \$28 billion industry by 2022, employing over 75,000”. The clean tech industry has benefited from government investment of \$598 million in 246 projects through the Sustainable Technology Development Fund and the NextGen Biofuels Fund, both administered by Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC).

LINKS

Press release re *Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report* is at: http://analytica-advisors.com/sites/default/files/2014%20Canadian%20Clean%20Technology%20Industry%20Report%20Analytica%20Press%20Release%20March%206th%202014%20SHORT_EN_Final.pdf.

The Table of Contents is at: http://analytica-advisors.com/sites/default/files/CTIR_TOC_2014.pdf, indicating the level of detail of the survey, but the full report is available only for sale at \$2,500.

Sustainable Technology Development Canada website is at: http://www.sdtec.ca/index.php?page=alias-3&hl=en_CA (English), and http://www.sdtec.ca/index.php?page=home&hl=fr_CA (French); their Knowledge Centre has an archive of reports on the sector.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Clean Technology**, **Canadian Clean Technology Industry Report**, **Clean Tech**, **Clean Tech Jobs**, **Green Growth**, **Green Job Creation**, **Green Jobs**, **NextGen Biofuels Fund**, **Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Expanding Recycling will bring New Jobs to California

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

According to a new report from the Tellus Institute, California could create 110,000 jobs if it meets its 2020 goal to recycle 75% of its solid waste. *From Waste to Jobs: What Achieving 75 Percent Recycling Means for California* is a follow-up to a 2011 report that asserted a 75% recycling rate for the entire U.S. could generate 1.5 million new jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 515 million metric tons.

Using recovered materials to create new products and packaging is more labour-intensive than incineration or sending them to the landfill. If California sticks to the 2011 AB 341 bill signed by Governor Jerry Brown, it will increase its solid waste diversion rate from half to three quarters while creating 34,000 jobs in materials collection, 26,000 jobs in materials processing, and 56,000 jobs during the manufacture of products using recycled materials. Plastics recycling is particularly significant, potentially delivering 29,000 new jobs alone. 38,600 indirect jobs could also be created in related sectors, such as equipment and services used by the recycling sector.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which commissioned the report, recommends encouraging product stewardship and extended producer responsibility programs requiring packaging manufacturers to support the expansion of recycling infrastructure.

LINKS

From Waste to Jobs: What Achieving 75 Percent Recycling Means for California is available at: <http://www.nrdc.org/recycling/files/green-jobs-ca-recycling-report.pdf>

The 2011 Tellus report *More Jobs, Less Pollution* is available at: docs.nrdc.org/globalwarming/files/glo_11111401a.pdf

NRDC California Recycling Website is at: <http://www.nrdc.org/recycling/green-jobs-ca-recycling.asp>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **California, Circular Economy, Green Growth, Green Job Creation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Recycling, Recycling Rate, Tellus Institute, Waste Diversion, Waste Incineration, Waste management** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Importance of New Skills Training for Construction, Managers and all Occupations, in a Low Carbon Europe

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Greener Skills and Jobs, a joint publication of the the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), was released at the 2nd Green Skills Forum in Paris in mid-February.

The publication consists of papers presented by policy makers, researchers, experts from international o



rganisations and academics at the first forum in 2012. With a focus on European experience, the papers are organized into three sections: Gearing up Education for Training and Growth; Enterprise Approaches For a Workforce Fit For a Green Economy; and Integrating Skills Into Local Development Strategies For Green Job Creation.

Beyond the expected overview of the quantity and quality of green jobs in the EU countries and the arguments for the need for labour market flexibility and retraining, the 228-page document also offers detailed and specific chapters, including: "Licensing and certification to increase skills provision and utilisation amongst low-carbon small and medium-sized enterprises in the United Kingdom" (a study of construction trades and the emerging energy efficiency jobs), and "Managerial skills in the green corporation", which used case study interviews to confirm the importance of three competencies for middle and top managers: change management leadership, collaborative openness, and eco-innovative mindset.

The overall message is that green skills will be needed "in all sectors and at all levels in the workforce as emerging economic activities create new (or renewed) occupations".

LINKS

Greener Skills and Jobs is available at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/industry-and-services/greener-skills-and-jobs_9789264208704-en (read-only, or download with OECD credentials). It is not yet available in French. Links to all the OECD Green Growth Studies are available at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/fr/environment/oecd-green-growth-studies_22229523

Meeting skill needs for green jobs: Policy recommendations (November 2013) is a related document published by the International Labour Organization, which describes the complex international policy environment related to green vocational education. It was prepared for the G20 Working Group relating to Human Resources Development. It is available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/—ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_234463.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Business Management, Construction Industry, Education and Training, Europe Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Green Growth, Green skilling, Green Skills Forum, Labour, Labour Market Flexibility, Labour Training, Low-Carbon Transition, Management Skills, OECD, Training** | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations for an Equitable Green Growth Architecture

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Green Economy Barometer, released at a U.K. conference in February, outlines the existing structures, organizations and national policies that underlie the green economy, and identifies gaps which may be impeding equitable growth. The report differentiates between green growth, which has focused on attracting investment, and green economy, which requires policy reform to create a more equitable economic system. "A green economy should start where the majority of people are, tackling poverty and helping them to develop their assets and meet their needs and aspirations. So it should actively include the informal economy, small and medium enterprises, and locally owned and run solutions – not just big business". The paper concludes: "For the shoots of the green economy to grow, mature and replace the current economic system, we need collective action to tackle some of the 'fault-lines' that are fragmenting the green economy landscape. We also need urgently to connect the macro objectives of a green economy transition to societal needs and aspirations".

LINKS

Green Economy Barometer: Who is Doing What Where and Why? by the Green Economy Coalition and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is available at: <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/16573IIED.pdf>

Summary of the report and discussions from the conference are at the International Institute for Environment and Development website at:

<http://www.iied.org/support-for-green-economy-surges-crucial-gaps-remain>, and a Reuters summary is at: <http://www.trust.org/item/20140227105421>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Economic Indicators, Green Economy Barometer, Green Growth, The Green Economy Coalition, U.K.** | [Leave a reply](#)

Controversial New Water Legislation Introduced in B.C.

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The B.C. Government introduced Bill 18, the Water Sustainability Act, on March 11th. It updates the current legislation passed in 1909, and "will bring groundwater into the licensing system, and will expand government's ability to protect fish and aquatic environments ". See <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/watersustainabilityact/> for the legislation and all supporting documents.

In a November 2013 posting during the lengthy consultation phase, the government had outlined how the proposed changes would impact oil and gas development, including a pledge that "in completing the new Act we are looking closely at the Oil and Gas Activities Act and the Environmental Management Act to ensure that surface and groundwater are protected during hydraulic fracturing operations" (see <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/watersustainabilityact/2013/11/14/blog-post-6-water-and-oil-gas-development/>). Yet on March 19, Western Canada Wilderness Committee and the Sierra Club of B.C. went before the Supreme Court of B.C., alleging that Encana has systematically avoided the current water licensing

regulations by applying to the provincial Oil and Gas Commission for repeated “short term” water permits for fracking (see <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/encana-s-water-permits-for-b-c-fracking-illegal-lawsuit-alleges-1.2578788>).

The aspect of pricing commercial and industrial water use has been deferred by a period of further consultations; see the consultation paper, Pricing B.C.’s Water, at: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/watersustainabilityact/files/2014/03/Pricing-B.C.s-Water.pdf>. Public comments will be accepted until April 8th.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BC Water Sustainability Act, Bill 18, Encana, Fisheries, Fracking, Fracking Regulations, Groundwater Contamination, Sierra Club, Water Licensing Regulations, Water Protection Legislation, Water Sustainability, Western Canada Wilderness Committee** | [Leave a reply](#)

BC Budget Announces Tax on LNG, Silent on Carbon Price

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On February 18th, British Columbia tabled a provincial budget that touts its Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) development plans and offers some highly anticipated clarification on the sector’s tax structure.

Proposed taxation will include a 7% levy on the liquefaction process (the most emissions-intensive part of the process), which will take effect after capital costs are recovered. Until then, companies will pay only 1.5%. While companies argue the tax may render B.C. LNG uncompetitive, Sustainable Prosperity argues that the rate will likely be lower in practice. Adding to the confusion over just how much revenue will accrue to the province is uncertainty about future LNG prices, and whether the existing carbon tax will apply.

The budget did not address the expected impacts on B.C.’s emissions reductions



targets. According to Sustainable Prosperity, five proposed LNG plants will emit 73 megatons of carbon alone, along with emissions from fracking, transportation, combustion, and any additional plants. In a new report, the Pembina Institute argues that the jobs and revenue figures published by the government would require five to seven LNG terminals, which it claims could put B.C. LNG emissions on par with oil sands emissions by 2020.

While the budget rolls back public spending overall, it also includes an expansion of the provincial Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP) which will draw the health and post-secondary education sectors into an existing scheme to establish a carbon-neutral school system. CNCP collects \$25 per ton of greenhouse gas emissions from participating sectors, which is then invested in low-carbon capital upgrades.

See the B.C. Budget and Fiscal Plan, along with highlights and backgrounders, at:

<http://bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2014/default.htm>. For reaction, see “Carbon regime missing in action in BC’s new LNG tax regime” from Sustainable Prosperity at: <http://www.sustainableprosperity.ca/blogpost87>; “B.C. Budget 2014: About that LNG Prosperity Fund” Blog from Marc Lee of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives at: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/policynote/2014/02/bc-budget-2014-about-ing-prosperity-fund>. Also see Wellhead to Waterline: Opportunities to Limit Greenhouse Gas Emissions from B.C.’s Proposed LNG Industry from the Pembina Institute at: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2524>.

Nova Scotia Approves LNG Facility at Goldboro, with 40 Conditions

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On March 21st, the Nova Scotia Minister of Environment gave his approval for an LNG plant and terminal which the company predicts will create up to 3,500 jobs during its construction and employ 200 full-time workers in the operational phase. The Minister followed the conclusions of a 3-person environmental panel which acknowledged “residual effects” on the environment, including increased greenhouse gas emissions, and damage to local fisheries, but concluded that the economic benefits outweighed these considerations. The project still needs approval by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, and a final decision by the company, Pieridae Energy Canada. See the government press release and all documents relating to the project at: <http://www.novascotia.ca/nse/ea/goldboro-lng.asp>. See a Globe and Mail press report at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/nova-scotia-government-gives-conditional-okay-for-lng-plant/article17612971/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **LNG, LNG Jobs, Nova Scotia** | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations for Québec’s Next Energy Policy Emphasize Energy Efficiency, Support Pipelines

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A 2-person commission appointed to review energy issues in Québec reported to the government in January 2014, generally recommending a change in direction to emphasize energy efficiency and limit new infrastructure investment. According to a report in the Montreal Gazette on March 2 (<http://www.montrealgazette.com/technology/Quebec+needs+energy+course+panel/9570190/story.html>), the recommendations included: set a goal of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by 75 per cent by 2050; study the possibility of suspending phases 3 and 4 of the Romaine River hydroelectric project; stop or suspend wind, cogeneration and small-dam projects that have not yet been built; support TransCanada’s west-east oil pipeline, conditional on study by the province’s environmental review board; support Enbridge’s Line 9B oil pipeline; improve public transit; update the provincial building code to improve the energy efficiency of buildings; and support the construction of a natural-gas pipeline connection to the Gaz Métro network to replace heating oil with natural gas. The Energy Consultation website is at: <http://consultationenergie.gouv.qc.ca/english/> (English version), and <http://consultationenergie.gouv.qc.ca/> (French version). The report and briefs presented to the Commission are available only in French.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Emissions reduction targets, Energy East pipeline, energy efficiency, Line 9B, Quebec, Quebec Energy Strategy, TransCanada, TransCanada Corporation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Fisheries in the News: Collaboration is Moving Newfoundland’s Cod Fishery to Sustainability

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) on the southern Newfoundland shore announced on March 13th that it has entered full assessment against the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard for sustainable and well-managed fisheries.

After the collapse of the cod fishery in the 1990's, this is an historic milestone, and according to World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF) President David Miller: "It demonstrates that good management and collaboration can lead to the recovery of cod populations – and that struggling fisheries can once again thrive, not only in Atlantic Canada but across the world". The recovery of the fishery is indeed the result of extensive collaboration and co-operation- led by Icewater Seafoods Inc. and Ocean Choice International, partnering with WWF (formerly World Wildlife Federation) to manage the FIP, with additional financial support from the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Resources Legacy Fund, and High Liner. The Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada are also cited as key supporters.

Read the press release at WWF at: <http://www.wwf.ca/newsroom/?14901/Newfoundland-cod-fishery-announces-milestone-sustainability-assessment>. Read about the FFAW Stewardship Program at: http://www.ffaw.nf.ca/?Content=Science_Research/Fisheries_Stewardship_Program, and an overview of the WWF Conservation Program in Atlantic Canada at: http://www.wwf.ca/conservation/oceans/atlantic_canada/.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Atlantic Cod Fishery, Commercial Fisheries, David Miller, Fisheries, Fishery Improvement Project (FIP), Icewater Seafoods Inc., Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Newfoundland, World Wildlife Fund (WWF)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Commercial Fisheries Still on Hold in the Arctic

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Although there is currently no commercial fishing in the Arctic, the rapidly warming waters may allow for one to develop. In 2012, scientists from 67 countries called for a moratorium on such fishing pending more research, to avoid damage to fish stocks. In February 2014, the five Arctic coastal countries – Canada, the United States, Russia, Denmark and Norway – agreed to avoid commercial fishing themselves and to work to include other countries in the agreement. In March, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling for protection of the High Arctic, prohibiting fishing, and prohibiting pollution from ships and oil rigs. See "Canada agrees to work to prevent fishing in High Arctic" on the CBC website at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/canada-agrees-to-work-to-prevent-fishing-in-high-arctic-1.2554332>. As part of its extensive work on ocean conservation, The Pew Charitable Trust provides many studies on the Arctic at: http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_detail.aspx?id=606; documents on Ocean Conservation and overfishing are at: http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_category.aspx?id=134.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Arctic, Arctic Development, Commercial Fisheries, Fisheries** | [Leave a reply](#)

On its 20th Anniversary, Criticism of NAFTA for Environmental, Economic Damage

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report from the Sierra Club, the Council of Canadians and others, condemns the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for failing to improve economic and environmental conditions for most Canadian, American, and Mexican citizens.

According to the report, exports from Canada to the U.S. increased by 200 percent from 1994 to 2008, yet wages stagnated. Further, NAFTA contract obligations for oil encouraged development of the oil sands, while alternative energy

sectors suffered, and NAFTA restricted Canada's ability to regulate oil sands emissions. Pollution increased in the U.S. due to growth in dirtier manufacturing sectors, although employment in American manufacturing dropped overall.

In Mexico, small farmers were unable to compete with large-scale, export-oriented intensive agriculture. Many failed in attempts to improve profits by converting carbon-sequestering forest to arable land. While the mining industry in Mexico did enjoy a boom, smallholders lost out to associated industrial pollution. Wages in the maquila manufacturing sector near the U.S. border simultaneously stagnated, even as operations and pollution levels grew.

Other environmental impacts noted by the report include a significant jump in North American greenhouse gas emissions, unsustainable water use, and the rippling effects of NAFTA clauses that provide corporations with legal avenues to challenge environmental regulations, such as Lone Pine Resources' ongoing lawsuit against Canada over the Québec fracking moratorium (see our previous report at: <http://workandclimatechangereport.org/2013/11/22/fracking-company-suing-for-lost-profits-in-quebec/>).

See *NAFTA: 20 Years of Costs to Communities and the Environment* at: <http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/main-page/new-report-reveals-environmental-costs-north-american-free-trade-agreement-environmental-d>, and "NAFTA Report Warns of Trade Deal Environmental Disasters" from the Huffington Post at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/11/nafta-environment_n_4938556.html.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Agriculture, Canadian Emissions, Council of Canadians, Emissions Regulations, Food and Agriculture, Fracking Moratorium, Lone Pine Resources, Manufacturing, Maquila Sector, Mexico, NAFTA, NAFTA Chapter 11, Quebec, Sierra Club, Water Politics, Water Sustainability** | [Leave a reply](#)

Capacity for Climate Change Action Diminishes in Canada, Grows in the U.S.

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

More cuts to Environment Canada were made public with the release of the annual departmental Plans and Priorities document for 2014-2015 in March. Although almost all programs are targeted for reduction, the 69% cut to climate change programs between now and 2016/17 speaks volumes about the current government's attitude to climate change. See Environment Canada Plans and Priorities 2014-15 document at: <https://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=024B8406-1>. Read commentary at the Toronto Star at: http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/03/12/environment_canada_braces_for_belttightening.html, or at The Tyee at: <http://thetyee.ca/News/2014/03/15/Environment-Canada-Cuts/>.

Cuts to Statistics Canada are also on the books amidst talk of "alternative data sources". In contrast, the U.S. White House announced on March 19th that "we are launching the Climate Data Initiative, an ambitious new effort bringing together extensive open government data and design competitions with commitments from the private and philanthropic sectors to develop data-driven planning and resilience tools for local communities....Data from NOAA, NASA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Department of Defense, and other Federal agencies will be featured on climate.data.gov, a new section within data.gov that opens for business today". See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/03/19/climate-data-initiative-launches-strong-public-and-private-sector-commitments>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Plans and Priorities Document, Statistics Canada, U.S. Climate Action Plan** | [Leave a reply](#)

Global Survey of National Climate and Energy Legislation Ranks Canada as a Laggard

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A February report surveys the development of climate change and energy legislation in 66 countries which account for 88% of the world's emissions. The survey, co-authored by the Global Legislators Organisation (GLOBE) and the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics, finds that 62 of the 66 countries have passed, or are in the process of passing, significant legislation; the countries lagging are Venezuela, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Canada. China and Mexico are held up as examples of progress; Japan and Australia are judged to have regressed.

See the 700-page GLOBE Climate Legislation Study: A Review of Climate Change Legislation in 66 Countries (4th edition) at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/publications/Policy/docs/Globe2014.pdf>; the GLOBE website is at: <http://www.globeinternational.org/>. And, for a further review of Canadian policy initiatives, see Regulating Carbon Emissions in Canada: Climate Policy Year in Review and Trends, 2013 at: http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2014/canadian_carbon_policy_review_2013.pdf. This annual review by the International Institute on Sustainable Development was released in February 2014, summarizing landmark policy initiatives and predicting issues to watch in 2014. For the coming year, it emphasizes the importance of provincial action, in the absence of central, federal leadership.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Legislation, Global Legislators Organization (GLOBE), London School of Economics** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Social Cost of Carbon Attacked and Defended

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The Social Cost of Carbon (SCC) is an important analytical tool which estimates the economic harm caused by one additional metric ton of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. It has been used in the U.S. and Canada to evaluate the costs of activities that produce greenhouse gas emissions, and the benefits of policies that reduce those emissions. See the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency webpage which lists the regulations which have used the SCC at: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/EPAactivities/economics/scc.html>.

A review of the SCC is currently underway in the U.S., led by the Office of Management and the Budget (the public comments period closed on February 27, 2014). Inevitably, this has been controversial, with oil and gas interests leading the push to prohibit the use of the SCC, on the grounds that it is imprecise and inaccurate. A joint submission by the Environmental Defense Fund, Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University School of Law, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Union of Concerned Scientists supports the use of the SCC and refutes the arguments of its critics; their statement is available at: http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/global_warming/Joint-Comments-to-OMB.pdf. See the terms and links to the Technical document at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/01/27/2014-01605/technical-support-document-technical-update-of-the-social-cost-of-carbon-for-regulatory-impact>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Environmental Defense Fund (U.S.), EPA, Natural Resources Defense Council, SCC, Social Cost of Carbon, Union of Concerned Scientists** | [Leave a reply](#)

Public Opinion on Climate Change Issues: North American and European

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

In March, Canada 2020 published key findings from polling, comparing U.S. and Canadian attitudes in 2013 and 2011. The results show that 81% of Canadians and 76% of Americans feel that humans have played a role in causing global warming.

77% of Canadians and 57% of Americans were “very concerned” or “somewhat concerned” about climate change. Canadian respondents ranked the importance of domestic policy priorities in the following order: #1: protect the environment (ranked 8.2), #2: strengthen economy and jobs (8.1), #3: show leadership on climate change (7.4), and #4: reduce taxes (6.3) (see <http://canada2020.ca/publications/2013-canada-us-comparative-climate-opinion-survey/>, or the complete results at: <http://canada2020.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Canada-2020-Background-Paper-Climate-Poll-Key-Findings-March-3-2014.pdf>).

The Canada 2020 poll surveyed attitudes to policies to promote renewable energy, and found that Canadians are more likely than Americans to support a carbon tax and are more willing to pay a premium for renewable energy. A new poll of Albertans commissioned by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, found that two-thirds of Albertans are willing to pay higher prices for electricity generated by wind and solar power (a majority believed that there are negative health effects related to burning coal) (Reported in the Edmonton Journal at: <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/news/Poll+shows+most+Albertans+favour+renewable+energy+over+coal/9584222/story.html>).

Contrast these North American attitudes with the responses from a survey reported by the European Commission on March 3rd. Data is provided for the EU, by country, and in some cases by socio-economic and demographic characteristics, with trends since the last survey in 2011. Amongst Europeans, 16% currently feel that climate change is the most important problem facing the world today and 50% feel that it is one of the three most important problems (in Sweden, 39% rank it as the top problem and 81% rank it as one of the top 3). When asked who bears the responsibility for tackling climate change, 48% of Europeans look to their national governments, 41% say with business and industry, and 25% consider themselves to have a personal responsibility for preventing climate change. 80% of European respondents agreed that fighting climate change and using energy more efficiently can boost the economy and jobs in the EU (see a summary at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-201_en.htm, and the full 97-page report at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_409_en.pdf).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada 2020](#), [Public Opinion Poll](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

American Scientists Frame Climate Change as a Risk Management Issue

Posted on **March 26, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

In the war for public support for action against climate change, a new campaign from the prestigious American Association for the Advancement of Science was launched with the document: What we Know: The Reality, Risks and Response to Climate Change (at: <http://whatwewknow.aaas.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/AAAS-What-We-Know.pdf>). From the AAAS press release: “Scientists have developed a solid understanding of how the climate is responding to the build-up of greenhouse gases, but they recognize the considerable uncertainty about the long-run impacts – especially potential economic damages. Economists understand how to create incentives to limit pollution production with maximum effect and minimum collateral damage, but crafting the appropriate response is a complex valuation process that requires quantifying those same uncertainties... To do so requires scientists and economists to work together, ask tough questions, and break the boundaries of their professional silos. That’s what’s this initiative aims to do”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#), [Climate Risk](#), [Climate Science](#), [Economic Incentive](#), [Economic Risk](#), [Policy Incentive](#), [Risk Management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Engineers Recognize Professional Challenges of Climate Change

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC) has published a position paper which asserts that the sector's professional standards and duty to protect public safety now imply a need to consider climate change as part of engineering and geosciences practice. *A Changing Climate in British Columbia: Evolving Responsibilities for APEGBC and APEGBC Registrants* states that engineers and geoscientists in particular face new professional challenges in light of uncertainty surrounding the climatic future. Fulfilling the professional standards outlined in the *Engineers and Geoscientists Act* has become more complicated, as project planning and providing advice to decision makers now must account for potential extreme weather events or unprecedented ongoing climatic stresses which may impact long-term safety and resilience. Some engineers are already being asked to consider climate change by their employers and clients, as they were during the development of legislated flood assessments in B.C.

In recognition of the gaps in current knowledge, training, and professional codes, APEGBC states it will implement professional development opportunities, update training procedures and codes, and ensure improved access to sound climate change data along with recommendations about its appropriate use. Entirely new professional guidelines may eventually be introduced. In the position paper, APEGBC instructs its registrants to remain informed and states that engineers and geoscientists are uniquely positioned, given their technical expertise, to help navigate the process of adaptation and building resilient communities.

LINKS

A Changing Climate in British Columbia: Evolving responsibilities for APEGBC and APEGBC Registrants is available at: <https://apeg.bc.ca/News/News-Releases/APEGBC-Releases-Climate-Change-Position-Paper>

"Engineers Leading the Way on Climate Change" Blog post at the West Coast Environmental Law website at: <http://wcel.org/resources/environmental-law-alert/engineers-leading-way-climate-change>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [APEGBC](#), [Engineers](#), [Professional Codes and Guidelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Government Scientists Have their Say Through their Union's Survey

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada released a new report with insights into the effects of the Harper government's attitude to environmental issues. *Vanishing Science: The Disappearance of Canadian Public Interest Science* summarizes the results of two surveys by Environics – one, a survey of



scientists who work for the federal government, and the other a survey of Canadians. Nearly 73% of Canadians believe public health, safety and protection of the environment should be a top government priority. Yet the survey states that "Over three-quarters of federal scientists (78%) report cuts to capacity in their own workplace. Nearly 7 out of 10 scientists (69%) at Environment Canada and over 8 out of 10 (83%) at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) believe Canada is doing a worse job of environmental protection and sustainable resource management than 5 years ago". An article by Andrew Nikoforuk in *The Tyee* gives voice to specific prominent scientists who have been let go.

LINKS

Vanishing Science: The Disappearance of Canadian Public Interest Science is at:
<http://www.pipsc.ca/portal/page/portal/website/issues/science/vanishingscience>

“Report Lists Top Scientists Who Lost Jobs Due To Federal Cuts” in *The Tyee* (Feb. 12) at:
<http://thetyee.ca/Blogs/TheHook/2014/02/12/Federal-Science-Cuts/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Environmental Science, Public Interest Science** | [Leave a reply](#)

New Evidence About the Climate Impacts of Methane Leaks Sparks a Union Call for a Global Moratorium on Fracking

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The January 28 meeting of the Global Advisory Group of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy considered a draft paper concerning fracking. The paper, prepared by the Cornell Global Labor Institute states, “This paper has been prepared to assist unions and their close allies who wish to better understand the impacts of shale gas drilling, or ‘fracking’, and want to develop a position or approach to fracking that protects workers, communities and the environment...” It is an extensive review of the core issues driving anti-fracking activism, and the current activities of social movement groups and unions (chiefly in the U.S. and Canada, but also in Europe and Argentina). It highlights the pro-fracking position of the AFL-CIO Building Trades union in the U.S. and the anti-fracking statements of Canada’s Unifor and CUPE. About Unifor and CUPE, the paper states: “their perspective on fracking combines a social movement approach that prioritizes solidarity with other movements but it is also grounded in a pragmatic approach to Canadian energy policy involving the use of their natural resources in ways that are responsible and beneficial for the Canadian economy as a whole”.

In a separate document, the Trades Union Congress of the U.K. reiterated its 2012 position in its February 13, 2014 presentation to an Inquiry of the House of Lords into shale gas. It encapsulates two competing interests of trade unions on the issue: the TUC “... wishes to focus on two issues of concern...the need for reliable forecasts of economic and employment benefits; and setting the highest standards for occupational health and safety at work”. It follows up on the TUC policy statement which is based on the precautionary principle and effectively calls for a moratorium on fracking.

Although water consumption and contamination were the initial concerns of anti-fracking activism, the TUED paper states that recent scientific research reveals that methane (the major component of natural gas) is “34 times stronger as a heat-trapping gas than CO₂ over a 100-year time scale, and 86 times more powerful over a 20-year time frame”. Reinforcing the TUED summary, a new paper published in *Science* in February analyzed more than 200 technical publications examining methane leakage in the natural gas industry, and by expanding the focus to include the production and delivery stages, the authors conclude that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is underestimating the amount of methane emitted in the United States by about 50 percent.

The TUED draft paper argues that natural gas can no longer be promoted as a “bridging” fuel towards a lower carbon energy system, and it is no longer appropriate for the fight against shale gas production to be led by local groups at the level of local government. The paper calls for a “global conference sponsored by one or more global trade union bodies”, [to] “work towards a common trade union approach, with the ‘precautionary principle’ as a point of departure”. The paper concludes by proposing a draft resolution for a global moratorium.

LINKS

Global Shale Gas and the Anti-Fracking Movement: Developing Union Perspectives and Approaches is available from the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy website from a link at: <http://energydemocracyinitiative.org/professor-robert-w-howarths-presentation-for-trade-unions-for-energy-democracy/>

An additional summary of scientific research on methane leakage in natural gas and fracking is at:

<http://energydemocracyinitiative.org/professor-robert-w-howarths-presentation-for-trade-unions-for-energy-democracy/>
TUC press release regarding the House of Lords Inquiry into Shale Gas is at: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/node/119642>

"Methane Leaks from North American Natural Gas Systems" by Brandt et al. in *Science* (Feb. 14, 2014) is available at: <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/343/6172/733.summary?sid=7f1c6729-6268-488d-9c49-88bdd0b553a1>, or summarized in "Study Finds Methane Leaks Negate Benefits of Natural Gas as a Fuel for Vehicles", (*New York Times*, Feb. 14) at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/14/us/study-finds-methane-leaks-negate-climate-benefits-of-natural-gas.html?_r=1

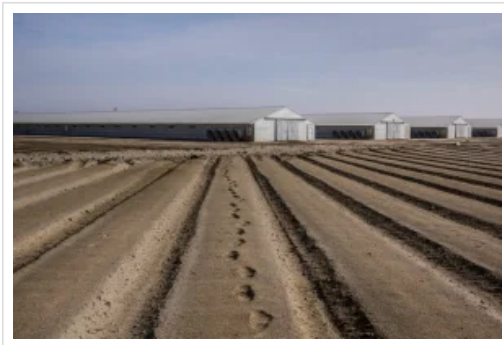
For those involved in community-level action in Canada, see the February publication by the Council of Canadians, *The Fractivist's Toolkit*, at: <http://www.canadians.org/publications/fractivists-toolkit>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cornell Global Labor Institute, Fracking, Fracking Moratorium, Labour Unions, Methane, Occupational Health and Safety, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, Trades Union Congress** | [Leave a reply](#)

Job Losses and Bankruptcies Result from California's Drought

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The worst drought in recorded California history will take a severe toll on the regional and American economy, particularly in the agricultural, fishing, tourism, and even energy industries. The drought, which President Obama and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack have linked to climate change, may result in an \$11 billion loss in annual state revenue from agriculture according to the California Farm Water Coalition. Farmers may be forced to fallow up to 500,000 acres of land during this year's planting season, threatening some with bankruptcy and endangering the livelihoods of the 117,000 Californians who work in farm production, processing and transporta



tion. While the wine industry and its associated tourism is suffering, livestock farmers may be taking the hardest hit as parched pasture is replaced with expensive imported feed. In the highly fertile Central Valley jobs directly related to agriculture comprise nearly 40% of employment. Previous droughts have seen unemployment in some towns skyrocket as high as 45%, while the 2011 to 2012 drought took an estimated \$50 billion toll on the American economy as a whole.

The availability of hydroelectric power, the state's cleanest and cheapest energy supply, has also been adversely affected. The state's salmon population could be severely affected, particularly if legislation from four California and Oregon senators is passed that would allow more water to be diverted to farms. The bill would contradict EPA regulations that protect fish stocks in the Bay-delta estuary. According to the National Resources Defense Council, the regulations themselves sustain thousands of jobs associated with the fishing industry and preserve water quality for regional farmers.

California Governor Jerry Brown has announced \$687.4 million in drought relief funding drawn partly from voter-approved bonds and the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. Money will go to local governments and agencies for water conservation and efficiency projects, food assistance, and emergency drinking water initiatives for communities facing

severe water shortages. President Obama's response to the drought includes \$100 million in federal aid to livestock ranchers, as well as \$15 million for areas hit hardest by the drought, and \$60 million for California food banks.

LINKS

California Seeing Brown where Green Used to be" in the *New York Times* is at:

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/14/us/california-seeing-brown-where-green-used-to-be.html?_r=0

"Punishing Drought has California Fearing the Worst" article from the *Globe and Mail* is available at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/punishing-drought-has-california-fearing-the-worst/article16650342/>

"Drought Forces California Farmers To Idle Cropland" article from Reuters available at:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/06/usa-drought-california-idUSL2N0LB00U20140206>

"California, Oregon Senators Introduce Drought Relief Legislation" from Senator Feinstein available at:

<http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=e7668832-d0be-4329-a30f-d1e5e47863aa>

"California Drought: Gov. Jerry Brown proposes \$687 million Aid Plan" from the *San Jose Mercury News* is available at:

http://www.mercurynews.com/california/ci_25181590/california-drought-aid-plan-set-687-million-plan

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Agriculture](#), [California](#), [Drought](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Solar Jobs Growing at Almost 20% in the U.S.

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by [Ava Lightbody](#)

The U.S.-based Solar Foundation released its annual National Solar Jobs Census for 2013 on January 27 followed by the State Solar Jobs Map on February 11. According to the Solar Foundation there are now 142,000 workers employed in the solar industry. Employment has increased by 24,000 jobs since 2012 nationally, a growth rate of almost 20% (compared to a rate of 1.9% for the economy as a whole). Employment growth in the coming year is estimated at 15.6%. The average solar installer earns between \$20.00 (median) and \$23.63 (mean) per hour – comparable to skilled electricians and plumbers in the U.S. Wages for production and assembly workers averaged \$15.00 (median) to \$18.23 (mean) per hour, slightly more than the national average for electronic equipment assemblers.

California continues to lead the U.S. in the number of solar workers at 47,223. And on Feb. 13th, after more than 3 years in construction, the world's largest solar thermal energy project went live in California: the Ivanpah Solar Electricity Project, a joint effort between NRG, Google, and BrightSource Energy.

We have no comparable measures for the Canadian solar industry. The latest report appeared in November 2013, from the Renewing Futures research project, which assessed the capacity of Canada's skilled workforce to meet the labour needs of all electricity-related renewable energy systems, including solar. It estimated that there were 41,000 employees in the entire renewable electricity sector in Canada in 2012. The latest labour market survey conducted by the Canadian Solar Industries Association was published in 2009.

LINKS

National Solar Jobs Census 2013, the State Solar Jobs Map, and detailed reports for California, Arizona, and Minnesota are all available at: <http://thesolarfoundation.org/>

A summary of the Renewing Futures reports appeared in the November issue of Work and Climate Change Report at: <http://workandclimatechangereport.org/2013/11/22/a-strategy-for-growth-for-human-resources-and-training-in-renewable-electricity-sectors/>

Canadian Solar Industries Association is at: <http://www.cansia.ca/market-intelligence/labour-force-market>

Press release regarding Ivanpah is at: <http://www.brightsourceenergy.com/ivanpah-achieves-commercial-operation#.UwIwx4Uz33V>

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Job Creation, Solar Energy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Advancing the Role of Women in Ontario's Renewable Energy Sector

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Women in Renewable Energy (WiRE) is a new group, launched at the 2013 CanWEA conference, with the aim to highlight, enhance, and expand the role of women in the renewable energy sector in Ontario. WiRE is taking over from the Greater Toronto Chapter of Women of Wind Energy (WoWE) and is led by women working in diverse sectors of the clean energy economy, including the engineering, legal, insurance, technology, environmental assessment and services, permitting, project and business development fields. WiRE focuses on advancing the knowledge base and professional development of its members and conducting community outreach.

Future initiatives will likely involve connecting women who work in the sector with students and others not currently involved in renewable energy. Related organizations worldwide include: Women in Renewable Energy Scotland and Women in Renewable Energy Hawaii. WoWE also continues to connect women working in wind energy through local chapters across North America.

See Women in Renewable Energy website at: <http://womeninrenewableenergy.ca/>; "New Ontario Organization is Advancing the Role of Women in Renewable Energy" Blog post at the *Alternatives Journal* website at: <http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/community/blogs/renewable-energy/new-ontario-organization-advancing-role-women-renewable-energy>.

Women of Wind Energy website is at: <http://www.womenofwindenergy.org/>; Women in Renewable Energy Scotland website is at: www.wirescotland.com/; Hawaii Women in Renewable Energy website is available at: <http://hawaiiwire.org/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Gender, Renewables, Women in Renewable Energy** | [Leave a reply](#)

After 14 Years, Forestry Companies and Environmentalists Reach Joint Recommendations to the B.C. Great Bear Forest Agreement

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On January 29th, recommendations were announced by the parties of the Joint Solutions Project, comprised of the forest companies operating in the Great Bear Rainforest (Western Forest Products, Interfor, Howe Sound Pulp and Paper, BC Timber Sales and Catalyst) and three environmental groups (ForestEthics, Greenpeace and Sierra Club of BC). Highlights of the 82-page document include: an additional 500,000 ha to be set aside for conservation; a harvest level consistent with a "viable forest industry"; changes to landscape planning that better account for old growth, cultural values, key wildlife habitat and riparian zones; and a legal and policy framework for implementation. The recommendations will be considered by the province of British Columbia and the Nanwakolas Council and Coastal First Nations, who are the decision-makers in

the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement, and in consultation with 12 other First Nations. The Joint Solutions Project was established in 2000 and the Great Bear Forest Agreement was reached in 2006.

See the ForestEthics press release at: <http://forestethics.org/news/forest-companies-and-environmental-groups-deliver-joint-recommendations-great-bear-rainforest>. The B.C. government press release is at: <http://www.coastforestconservationinitiative.com/pdf2014/2014FLNR0005-000099.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal Peoples, British Columbia, ForestEthics, Forestry Industry, Great Bear Rainforest, Greenpeace, Sierra Club, Sustainable Forestry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Keystone Pipeline: Protests Continue: Obama Takes his Time

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

The U.S. State Department released its Final Environmental Impact Report regarding the Keystone XL pipeline on January 31 (see: <http://keystonepipeline-xl.state.gov/finalseis/index.htm>), yet a date for the final decision is still unclear, and at the North American leaders summit in Mexico on February 18, President Obama rebuffed Prime Minister Harper's attempts to elicit approval. On February 19th, a court in Nebraska ruled that a 2012 law did not give the governor the authority to approve the Keystone route through the state. As a result TransCanada would have to negotiate with each landowner directly to build the pipeline through that state. See: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/keystone-xl-access-through-nebraska-shut-down-by-judge-1.2543898>.

In the U.S., Keystone continues to be a rallying point for environmental groups with an estimated 10,000 people attending anti-Keystone XL vigils in 280 locations across the U.S. shortly after the State Department release, and a planned "act of civil disobedience" announced by 350.org for Washington D.C. on March 2. Read the Inside Climate News report at: <http://insideclimatenews.org/news/20140210/environmental-movement-test-its-muscle-keystone-final-stretch>.

"Keystone XL and the Tar Sands: Voices from the Front lines" (Feb. 4) at: <http://www.thenation.com/blog/178224/keystone-xl-and-tar-sands-voices-front-lines>, includes a profile of Alberta Chippewa activist Eriel Deranger and her comments to the Tar Sands Exposed Tour in Boston and outlines the Chippewa First Nations arguments and actions against Keystone XL.

According to an article at the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy website, five U.S. unions are on the record as opposing Keystone XL, while the Laborers' International Union (LIUNA) and the AFL-CIO Building Trades support it. See "U.S. Unions Still Divided On Keystone XL Pipeline" at: <http://energydemocracyinitiative.org/u-s-unions-still-divided-on-keystone-xl-pipeline/>.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **350.org, Chipewyan First Nation, Keystone XL, Protests & Rallies, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil Sands Emissions – Even Greater than we Thought

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

From researchers at the University of Toronto, a paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on February 3 finds that emissions of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) from tar sands operations may be two or three times higher than previously reported in official estimates if fumes coming from tailings ponds are included in

measurements. A summary of the study is at the CBC website at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/oilsands-air-pollutants-underestimated-researchers-find-1.2521134>. The full article, "Evaluating Officially Reported Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon Emissions In The Athabasca Oil Sands Region With A Multimedia Fate Model" is available at: <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2014/01/29/1319780111>.

A second article published in *Environmental Science and Technology*, the journal of the American Chemical Society, uses new technology to measure and differentiate between naturally occurring pollution from bitumen deposits and pollution from oil sands processing. The authors conclude that "oil sands process-affected water (OSPW)" from tailings ponds is reaching the Athabasca River system. The research was conducted under Environment Canada's regular research program – and not surprisingly, Environment Canada told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation that it was unable to provide an interview with the report's main author, Richard Frank.

"Profiling Oil Sands Mixtures from Industrial Developments and Natural Groundwaters for Source Identification" appears in *Environmental Science and Technology* Article ASAP (Jan. 21, 2014); an abstract is available at: <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/es500131k> (full text available for a \$35 fee). The *Edmonton Journal* summary is at: <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/health/Federal+study+confirms+oilsands+tailings+found/9530481/story.html>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Environment Canada, Oil Sands Emissions, Water pollution** | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy East Pipeline Could Increase Canada's Emissions More than Keystone

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A new report from the Pembina Institute says that TransCanada's Energy East pipeline could increase Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by 32 million tonnes per year, surpassing estimates for Keystone XL. The new pipeline would have the capacity to transport 1.1 million barrels of crude oil per day from Alberta to New Brunswick. Terminals near Rivière-du-Loup and in Saint John would likely export crude by tanker. *Climate Implications of the Proposed Energy East Pipeline* argues that because the oil sands are "land-locked", pipelines are a vital component of accessing international markets and are therefore directly linked to rising oil sands emissions. Pembina asserts that the National Energy Board should consider those "upstream" effects as part of Energy East's environmental impact assessment, though it has neglected to do so for past pipelines.

See *Climate Implications of the Proposed Energy East Pipeline* and the media release at: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2519>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Energy East pipeline, Greenhouse gas emissions, Oil Sands Emissions, Pembina Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

Industry Estimates of the Economic Impact of the Oil Sands

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

From the industry point of view, a study by consultants IHS CERA was published in January reporting focus group discussions by the oil sands multinationals in Calgary in summer 2013. The report projects that the oil sands' contribution to Canadian GDP could reach \$171 billion in 2025, with total contribution to employment in Canada reaching 753,000 jobs by 2025.

See *Oil Sands Economic Benefits: Today and in the Future* (Jan. 2014) at: <http://www.ihs.com/pdfs/OSD-2013-Economic-Benefits-Jan-2-2014.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian GDP, Economic impacts, Job Creation, Oil Sands** | [Leave a reply](#)

Concerns over Spills if Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline Allowed to Triple Volume

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

Applications to participate in hearings on the proposed twinning of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline have flooded the National Energy Board. The expansion would triple the amount of oil shipped through the pipeline from Strathcona County, Alberta to Burnaby, B.C. Over 40 First Nations, including some coastal nations in the U.S., cite concerns over the impact of potential spills on the salmon and shellfish stocks they depend upon for their livelihoods. The city of Vancouver has filed a submission that identifies increased tanker traffic and potential spills as threats to its \$3.6-billion a year tourism industry and the port's massive contribution to the overall Canadian economy. The province of BC has filed for status as an intervener, which Environment Minister Mary Polak says will ensure the province has a say in environmental and public health protection standards.

See "First Nations Sign Up For Kinder Morgan Pipeline Hearing" in *The Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/first-nations-sign-up-for-kinder-morgan-pipeline-hearing/article16888886/>; "Vancouver Cites Environmental Impact, Tanker Traffic Concerns In Trans Mountain Submission" in *The Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancouver-cites-environmental-impact-tanker-traffic-concerns-in-trans-mountain-submission/article16820452/>; and a National Energy Board press release listing issues surrounding the pipeline is available at: <http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/clf-nsi/rthnb/nws/nwsrls/2013/nwsrls22-eng.html>, with more information at: <http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/clf-nsi/rthnb/pplctnsbfrthnb/trnsmntnxpnsn/trnsmntnxpnsn-eng.html>.
Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Kinder Morgan, National Energy Board, Oil Spills, Trans Mountain Pipeline, Vancouver** | [Leave a reply](#)

'Intense' Government Audits Threaten Canadian Environmental Groups

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

CBC reported on February 6th that since 2012 the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) "has conducted additional review activities focused on political activities. Audits are being conducted in addition to our regular audit activities, and will include charities from across the entire spectrum of charitable activity". Chief among the targets are environmental groups, including Environmental Defence, the David Suzuki Foundation, Tides Canada, West Coast Environmental Law, the Pembina Foundation, and Equiterre and the Ecology Action Centre. If the CRA determines that an organization has directed more than 10% of its resources to political activities, the organization loses its status as a "non-profit", and would be subject to taxation, and its donors would lose the ability to claim tax exemptions for their donations. According to Inside Climate News, the audits were triggered by complaints from a group called Ethical Oil, which was co-founded in 2011 by Alykhan Velshi after he left a job in the government of Stephen Harper. Mr. Velshi has since left Ethical Oil and is now the director of issues management for Prime Minister Harper.

See the CBC report at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/7-environmental-charities-face-canada-revenue-agency-audits-1.2526330>.

Mark Winfield of York University has written a thoughtful blog, pointing out the dangers of these CRA audits, at:marksw.blog.yorku.ca/2014/02/11/five-functions-of-non-governmental-organizations-in-a-democratic-society/

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canadian Revenue Agency, ENGOs, Environmental Science, Government Auditing** | [Leave a reply](#)

World Cities Filling the Gap with Climate Change Initiatives

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

A February 2014 report from C40, a leading climate action group that links megacities around the world, captures the importance of cities as climate actors. The report highlights the unique potential held by cities where innovations in efficiency and technology are more forthcoming, threats to economic and public wellbeing are often felt more immediately, and leaders have enough local power to respond effectively. The report indicates that mayors worldwide are already doing twice as much to build resilience and reduce emissions than they were in 2011. Nearly half of the 63 major cities surveyed used local green development funds to finance climate action commonly furnished through property, municipal, and local business taxation. Cities that reported addressing climate change as part of economic development commonly did so through the green manufacturing, green infrastructure, and clean technology sectors. The full report is available at:http://www.c40.org/blog_posts/CAM2.

The report was accompanied by the appointment of former mayor of New York and President of the C40 Board of Directors to the position of UN envoy for Cities and Climate Change. Michael Bloomberg pledged to harness the global mayoral power to raise political will and bring “concrete solutions” to the 2014 Climate Summit. Bloomberg, whose contributions in New York included rebuilding aging water mains and creating energy-efficient buildings, asserted that cities are “forging ahead” as progress at international levels stalls. The UN news release on the appointment is available at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47055&Cr=climate+change&Cr1#.UwaSNIXPkW>. *The Guardian* coverage including Bloomberg’s reaction is available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/feb/05/michael-bloomberg-world-leaders-climate-deal>.

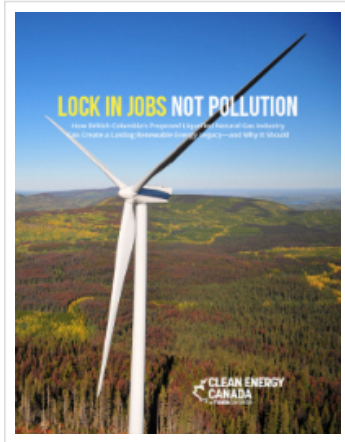
According to a new report from the National Municipal Adaptation Project (NMAP) large Canadian cities are keeping pace with the global trend and have climate action plans. However, 65% of smaller communities have no plan in place despite the fact that many have already faced damage from flooding or extreme rainfall in the last ten years. The report is available at: <http://www.localadaptation.ca/results-of-the-nmap-survey-of-local-governments.php>. An online library of climate change adaptation policies from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is available at: <http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/partners-for-climate-protection/program-resources/municipal-reports.htm>.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has launched an initiative called “Urban Solutions” to help American cities become cleaner and more resilient by tackling food systems and clean energy, transportation, and storm-water infrastructure. Mayors from 10 major American cities also announced their participation in the City Energy Project, a partnership between the NRDC and the Institute for Market Transformation. The cities are expected to save a combined \$1 billion in energy bills, cut 5 million to 7 million tons of annual carbon emissions, and create jobs in architecture, engineering, construction, and more. Read more about Urban Solutions at: http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/spoticha/reconnecting_america_legacy_co.html. The NRDC press release regarding the City Energy Project is available at: <http://www.nrdc.org/media/2014/140129a.asp>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Adaptation, C40, Cities and Climate Change, City Energy Project, Climate Resilience, Michael R. Bloomberg, Municipal Government, National Municipal Adaptation Project, National Resources Defense Council** | [Leave a reply](#)

LNG Production Powered by Renewables would Create More Jobs, Less Pollution, without Sacrificing Competitiveness

Posted on January 28, 2014 by elizabethperry493



On January 15, CleanEnergy Canada released the latest in its reports regarding the production of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in British Columbia. *Lock in Jobs, Not Pollution* urges the government of British Columbia to use renewable electricity to power the LNG facilities. The report explains that the heart of LNG facilities are their compressors, which can be powered by the traditional technology of gas turbine drives (also called direct drives or D-drives), or by the more innovative electric motor drives (E-drives), now in use in Norway. The report contends that, in comparison to the use of fossil fuels, the use of renewable energy to power e-drives would “increase regional permanent employment by 45 percent, decrease carbon pollution by 33 percent, reduce smog, and build the foundations of a renewable energy economy in Northwestern British Columbia.” The report contains detailed appendices of the methodology by which job projections and estimates of cost and competitiveness were calculated.

The report quotes numerous government statements that claim that the LNG initiatives will be the “cleanest in the world”; notably, Premier Clark stated at the World Economic Forum in China in 2012, “We want our LNG plants to be principally fuelled by renewables.” Yet in a radio interview in response to the report’s release, the B.C. Minister of Energy stated, “If we were to introduce a brand new condition, at this stage of our discussions with these LNG proponents, it would first of all be foolhardy, it would be unprofessional.” Two government-industry agreements for LNG development were announced in January, one for Kitimat and one for Prince Rupert.

For a broader discussion of the many potential sources of carbon emissions from LNG production (including the extraction of shale oil gas and transportation to the LNG processing facilities), see a recent OpEd by Alison Bailie. According to Pembina Institute estimates, if LNG development is to achieve the revenue claims made by the B.C. government, B.C.’s LNG sector would produce three-quarters as much carbon pollution as the oil sands, by 2020. The author contends that the government could reduce the carbon footprint by limiting the growth of the LNG sector, prioritizing low-carbon job creation, and setting high standards for emissions reductions technology for any projects that are allowed to proceed.

LINKS:

Lock in Jobs, Not Pollution is at CleanEnergy Canada at: <http://cleanenergycanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Lock-in-Jobs-Not-Pollution.pdf>, with links to previous CleanEnergy Canada reports about LNG at: <http://cleanenergycanada.org/category/news-coverage/>

Carbon Footprint of B.C. LNG Boom Could Rival Alberta’s Oilsands, OpEd by Alison Bailie, from Pembina Institute, originally posted at *The Tyee*, (Jan. 13), at: <http://www.pembina.org/op-ed/2515>

B.C. Government press releases re industry agreements for LNG facilities are at:

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/01/major-lng-contract-awarded.html> (Jan. 13, Kitimat) and

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/01/second-lng-agreement-reached-for-grassy-point-with-woodside.html> (Jan. 16, Grassy Narrows, Prince Rupert).

Radio interview with Energy Minister Bennett in response to the CleanEnergy report is at:

<http://www.cknw.com/2014/01/16/energy-minister-says-no-to-electricity-powered-lng-plants/>, with response from CleanEnergy Canada at: <http://cleanenergycanada.org/2014/01/16/media-statement-re-minister-bennett-remarks-powering-lng-plants/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, Canada, Clean Energy, Liquefied Natural Gas, LNG** | [Leave a reply](#)

Unifor Condemns Northern Gateway & Keystone XL, Supports Line 9, and Establishes a New Energy Council within the Union

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

In December, Unifor released a “primer” explaining its opposition to the Northern Gateway and Keystone XL pipelines, and support for the smaller Line 9 pipeline. The national union condemns all recent major export pipelines on both economic and environmental grounds, asserting that export pipelines do not prioritize Canadian consumers or maximize Canadian jobs. It also fears massive exports will harm other sectors, such as manufacturing, as the Canadian dollar rises.

Unifor asserts that the smaller Line 9 pipeline does not suffer from the same problems as the enormous export pipelines. Provided Line 9 oil is not shipped to Maine, and pending strict environmental and safety measures and First Nations approval, the union backs the Line 9 promise of energy independence and value-added manufacturing jobs, especially in Quebec. Unifor’s position echoes a statement issued by the Alberta Federation of Labour in October, which also contraposed Line 9 and major export pipelines.

In contrast to the Unifor and AFL positions, some labour activists continue to dismiss Line 9 benefits as “myths”, instead emphasizing the magnitude of safety, environmental, and economic threats. January revelations regarding an influx of Enbridge maintenance notices filed with the NEB has reinforced concerns regarding the age and fragility of the pipeline.

Delegates to Unifor’s Ontario Regional Council meeting in December approved recommendations for a long-term national energy strategy, including emissions targets and a climate action plan, energy independence, and a national energy grid. They also endorsed the National Executive Board’s call for a moratorium on unconventional fracking, until environmental and First Nations concerns have been addressed. Arriving at a national energy and environmental strategy for Unifor will be the task of its new Energy Council, soon to be constituted by delegates from all energy-related locals in the union.

LINKS:

Debating Pipelines: A Primer is available at the Unifor website at:

http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/documents/document/pipeline_primer_dec_2013.pdf

Press release regarding Unifor Ontario Council Recommendation for a National Energy and Environmental Policy is at:

<http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/news/unifor-ontario-council-calls-national-energy-and-environmental-strategy>.

The official statement of Recommendations is available at:

http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/ont_council_energy_recommendation.pdf

The Alberta Federation of Labour statement is available at: <http://www.afl.org/index.php/Press-Release/afl-makes-final-argument-in-favour-of-enbridge-line-9-pipeline.html>.

“Six reasons why some labour is rallying against Line 9”, a Rabble.ca blog (Nov. 2013) is available at: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/jesse/2013/11/six-reasons-why-some-labour-rallying-against-line-9>

Enbridge launches hundreds of digs for cracks in Line 9 (Jan. 21, 2013) at CBC Hamilton website at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/enbridge-launches-hundreds-of-digs-for-cracks-in-line-9-1.2504175>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Fracking, Keystone XL, Line 9, Northern Gateway, Unifor** | [Leave a reply](#)

Coalition for Infrastructure Investment Adopts Framework with Community Labour Standards

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

The West Coast Infrastructure Exchange (WCX) is a partnership between Oregon, California, Washington state, and British Columbia. It's goal is “to promote near-term job creation and long-term economic competitiveness by improving and accelerating infrastructure development, as we look to make \$1 trillion in infrastructure investments along the West Coast in the next 30 years in a time of fiscal uncertainty and climate change.” On January 2nd, WCX released the final version of its Framework document to define the types of public infrastructure projects they will seek and how they will structure investments. WCX states that it has chosen to use the terms “Infrastructure Investment Partnership (IIPS)” and “Performance-Based Infrastructure Solution (PBIS)”, on the grounds that the traditional term, Public Private Partnership (P3), is misunderstood and misinterpreted. The Framework document uses these terms in Section 1.6.7 relating to Community Labor Standards: “Projects executed through IIPs or PBISs should adopt labor standards as would be afforded under the traditional public procurement and operations model, providing comparable wages, benefits, and worker protections, including the right to organize and collectively bargain, as well as ensuring that contractors have a history of compliance with community health and safety, wage and working hour standards. All projects should follow the relevant labor requirements of the sponsoring jurisdiction, including working with labor representatives to provide continued employment opportunities for the existing workforce and to maintain wages and benefits where relevant.”

LINKS:

West Coast Infrastructure Exchange website is at: <http://westcoastx.com/Infrastructure Project Certification – Principles and Framework> is at:<http://westcoastx.com/home/discussion-forum.html>

An explanatory press release is at: <http://westcoastx.com/news/wcx-releases-final-project-standards.html>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, Community Labor Standards, Infrastructure, International cooperation, Job Creation, Labour Standards, West Coast Infrastructure Exchange** | [Leave a reply](#)

Disputing Oil and Gas Industry Claims for Job Creation in the U.S. and in California

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

The Center for American Progress has taken issue with the claims made by the American Petroleum Institute (API) in its 2013 testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The API stated that the natural gas and oil industry supports 9.2 million U.S. jobs and accounts for 7.7 % of the U.S. economy, based on two studies which

estimated direct, indirect, and induced job effects in the oil and gas industry. The studies were conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and commissioned by API. The Center for American Progress disputes these claims, basing their own analysis on Bureau of Labor Statistics data for employment in upstream activities (oil and gas extraction, well drilling, and operation support), and downstream activities (petroleum refining, product sales through dealers and gas stations, and pipeline construction and transportation). CAP did not include indirect jobs. CAP estimates that there are less than 2 million direct jobs in the oil and gas industry, and nearly 50% of those jobs occur in gas stations. Their analysis also shows that BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Shell have shed a net total of nearly 12,000 U.S. jobs since 2007.

Another U.S. research centre, NextGeneration, has waded into California's political discussion about the Monterey Shale development by publishing a series of six articles. In one of these articles, *Too Big to Believe*, five prominent economists from California universities critique the methodology and results of an influential study published in March 2013, *Powering California*. *Powering California*, conducted at the University of Southern California and sponsored by Western States Petroleum Association (WSPA), included optimistic and widely publicized estimates of an increase of 512,000 net new jobs by 2015 and 2.8 million net new jobs by 2020. Yet *Too Big to Believe* states: "Each of the economists said the study's findings were unreliable and inflated. They cast doubt on its methodology, which did not base its estimates on any projections for oil production or capital investment in California oil; instead, the study's authors said they extrapolated from the effects of economic growth in North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming."

In *Keeping the Story Straight*, the final article in the NextGeneration series, the results of *Powering California* are contrasted with two other economic impact studies done by industry-related organizations: one by IHS Consultants, and another commissioned by the Western States Petroleum Association and conducted by California State University at Fresno. In both cases, estimated job impacts were "negligible" or modest.

LINKS:

Big Oil, Small Jobs: A Look at the Oil Industry's Dubious Job Claims is at the Center for American Progress at: <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/news/2014/01/22/82571/big-oil-small-jobs-a-look-at-the-oil-industrys-dubious-job-claims/>

Too Big to Believe: Top Economists Doubt California Oil Industry's Jobs Figures at: <http://thenextgeneration.org/blog/post/top-economists-doubt-california-oil-industrys-jobs-figures>, and *Keeping the Story Straight: Industry Reports at Odds in California Oil* at: <http://thenextgeneration.org/blog/post/industry-reports-at-odds-on-california-oil>

Powering California: The Monterey Shale and California's Economic Future is at: <http://wms.communicationsinstitute.org/energy/powering-california-project/powering-california-the-monterey-shale-californias-economic-future/>

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **American Petroleum Institute, Center for American Progress, Economic impacts, Fracking, Job Creation, Oil and Gas** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Business Case for a Circular Economy: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle as a Solution to Coming Shortages of Raw Materials

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

On January 24 at the the World Economic Forum, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation launched Project Mainstream, a collaborative project involving large enterprises capable of bringing the circular economy from small-scale pilot projects to the mainstream of business. The press release states: "With commodity prices almost tripling in the last 10 years, businesses and governments are now recognizing this as an opportunity to manage input cost volatility, as this approach decouples economic growth from finite supplies of primary resources." *Towards the Circular Economy*, the report which

accompanied the launch, finds that “over US\$1 trillion a year could be generated by 2025 for the global economy and 100,000 new jobs created for the next five years if companies focused on encouraging the build-up of circular supply chains to increase the rate of recycling, reuse and rem



anufacture.” As an article in *The Guardian* points out, this initiative intends to tackle the scale and complexity of global supply chains—as well as a crucial stumbling block in recycling – the toxic contents of some products. Canadian readers will be familiar with these concepts from the 2013 report, *Closing the Loop: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Zero Waste in BC*, which focused on the benefits to consumers and the environment. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation has published reports on the Circular Economy since 2010.

LINKS:

Towards the Circular Economy Vol.3: Accelerating the Scale-up Across Global Supply Chains is available from a link at: <http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/business/reports/ce2014>, and previous reports are available at: <http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/business/reports>

“Circular Economy offers Business Transformation and \$1tn of Savings” (Jan. 24) in *The Guardian* at: <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/circular-economy-business-transformation-one-trillion-savings>

Closing the Loop: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Zero Waste in BC, published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Climate Justice Project (March 2013) is available at: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/closing-loop>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Circular Economy, Davos, Ellen McArthur Foundation, Green Manufacturing Processes, Job Creation, Recycling, Supply chains, toxic chemicals, World Economic Forum** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Reports Climate Progress: 2020 Targets Further out of Reach as Oil Sands Emissions Rise

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In late December, Canada quietly submitted its sixth report to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), opting not to accompany the submission with an announcement or press release. The government reported a trend of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, largely attributable to the rapidly expanding oil sands, and admits that Canada is on track to miss the 2020 emissions reduction targets committed to in Copenhagen. The report emphasizes the “sector-by-sector” approach to emissions reduction programs, but also indicates that a lack of policy intervention in the oil

and gas industry could mean Canada's emissions will exceed the 2020 target by 20%, and continue to grow another 33% by 2030. Canada has not indicated how it plans to address its difficulties with meeting its targets, and in December, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the long-awaited release of oil and gas regulations could be delayed for another two years. The issue may be a factor in President Obama's Keystone XL pipeline decision, which he has said would be influenced by Canada's climate plan.

By contrast, the US submission to the UNFCCC contains specific goals associated with the Climate Action Plan implemented by President Obama last summer. The submission was further substantiated by the January 16th release of a progress report on the Plan, outlining US federal initiatives to reduce carbon pollution and increase energy efficiency.

LINKS:

Canada's Sixth National Communication and First Biennial Report on Climate Change (January 2014): The Executive Summary is available at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/Publications/default.asp?lang=En&xml=109109A8-6636-418C-B743-94CD3459FB6B>, and the full report is available at: http://www.unfccc.int/files/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/submitted_natcom/application/pdf/final_nc_br_dec20_2013%5B1%5D.pdf.

"Emissions will Soar after 2020 without Oil-sector Regulation, Federal Report Says" in the *Globe and Mail* (Jan. 8, 2014) at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/emissions-will-soar-after-2020-without-oil-sands-regulation-federal-report-says/article16250220/>.

"Canada's New Emission Rules on Hold Again, Harper Says" in the *Globe and Mail* (Dec. 19, 2013) is at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canadas-new-emissions-rules-on-hold-again-harper-says/article16065033/>.

2014 U.S. Climate Action Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is available at: <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/rls/rpts/car6/index.htm>.

January 2014 Progress Report: President Obama's Climate Action Plan is at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/fact_sheet_-_cap_progress_report_2014-01-16.pdf.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Emissions, Climate change policy, Emissions reduction targets, Greenhouse gas emissions, Oil Sands Emissions, UNFCC** | [Leave a reply](#)

Was the Oil and Gas Lobby Behind Bill C-38?

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

A report released in December 2013 by ForestEthics alleges that recent changes to Canada's *Environmental Assessment Act* under Bill C-38 were drawn from a report from the Energy Policy Institute (EPIC), an organization whose members include all the major oil and gas companies. EPIC's recommendations, written in August 2012 but only recently uncovered, included eliminating external costs including climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, and upstream and downstream effects from energy project analysis, completing assessments early and only asking for details later, and excluding effects that are common to other projects. *Who Writes the Rules? A Report on Oil Industry Influence, Government Laws and the Corrosion of Public Process* asserts that Bill C-38 violates the public right to voice opinions during project review processes. The bill granted the National Energy Board (NEB) the authority to select hearing participants from those who submitted a newly-required nine-page application. Further, all concerns regarding external costs, such as downstream health effects, can no longer be included in project analysis.

Similar concerns were voiced in a December 2012 report from the Polaris Institute, which said federal cabinet ministers met six major oil industry players 53 times during the year Bill-38 was being developed. During the same period, a minister met an environmental group only once.

Read the backgrounder for *Who Writes the Rules? A Report on Oil Industry Influence, Government Laws and the Corrosion of Public Process* at:

http://www.forestethics.org/sites/forestethics.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/ForestEthicsAdvocacy_Who-Writes-The-Rules-BACKGROUND.pdf, and the full report at:
http://forestethics.org/sites/forestethics.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/Who_writes_the_rules.pdf.

Big Oil's Oily Grasp (2012) by the Polaris Institute is available at: <http://polarisinstitute.org/bigoilsoilygrasp>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Bill C-38, Energy Policy Institute, Environmental Assessment Act, National Energy Board, Oil and Gas Lobby** | [Leave a reply](#)

Rail Transport of Oil and Gas is an Issue for Worker Safety as well as Public Safety

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

In a communique released on January 23, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) and the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) jointly issued recommendations to improve the safe transportation of crude oil by rail. The recommendations – described as strong, urgent, and unprecedented – spring from their investigations into the Lac-Mégantic disaster, which identified critical weaknesses in the North American rail system. “Today we are making three recommendations calling for tougher standards for Class 111 tank cars; route planning and analysis; and emergency response assistance plans.” Transport Minister Raitt committed only to review the recommendations, and highlighted the steps already taken, including to hire more rail inspectors and “to set the groundwork for creating whistleblower protection for employees who raise safety concerns.” Transport Canada already issued new regulations for Class 111 tank cars on January 10th and appointed a Railway Safety Advisory Committee, composed of railway companies, Transport Canada, the Railway Association of Canada, provinces, shippers, suppliers and municipalities. The Advisory Committee is tasked to look at issues including operator fatigue and crew sizes, yet there is no inclusion of labour unions, even though the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) and their Maintenance of Way Employees Division (TCRC-MWED) represent 12,000 workers who operate the trains and repair the tracks, and Unifor Rail Division represents another 9,000 rail workers in Canada. The Teamsters have launched their own rail safety campaign, *Things are Falling off the Rails*, at: <http://teamstersrail.ca/background.htm>.

Read the Canadian Transportation Safety Board communique at: <http://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/medias-media/communiqués/rail/2014/r13d0054-20140123.asp>. The response by Transport Canada Minister Lisa Raitt to the CTSB communique is at: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=811029>. See also the January 10 press release re: rail car regulations at: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=advSrch&ctr.page=2&ctr.dpt1D=6695&nid=808769> and the appointment of the Rail Safety Advisory Committee (Oct. 2013) at: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?ctr.sj1D=&ctr.mnthndVI=1&mthd=advSrch&ctr.dpt1D=&nid=783579>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Transportation Safety Board, Lac Megantic, Occupational Health and Safety, Oil and Gas, Oil Transport, Public Safety, Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, Transport Canada** | [Leave a reply](#)

WikiLeaks Releases Environmental Chapter in the Transpacific Trade Talks, Labelling it a “Public Relations Exercise”

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

On January 15th, Wikileaks released the draft Environmental Chapter of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. The Chapter was written on Nov. 24, 2013, in advance of the December 10th Singapore meetings of the participant

countries: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam. Wikileaks had this to say about the proposed environmental provisions of the trade deal: “The dispute settlement mechanisms it creates are cooperative instead of binding; there are no required penalties and no proposed criminal sanctions. With the exception of fisheries, trade in ‘environmental’ goods and the disputed inclusion of other multilateral agreements, the Chapter appears to function as a public relations exercise.” (see <http://wikileaks.org/tpp-enviro/pressrelease.html>). Wikileaks also posted an analysis of the Environment Chapter from a New Zealand perspective, by Professor Jane Kelsey, at: <http://wikileaks.org/tppa-environment-chapter.html>.

In a blog by Stuart Trew of the Council of Canadians, the provisions in the TPP draft chapter are likened to the current environmental protections under NAFTA (see <http://www.canadians.org/blog/climate-change-safeguarded-tpp-environment-chapter>). This is a point of view also expressed in a 2013 report by the Sierra Club, which reviewed all chapters of the TPP (see *Raw Deal: How the Trans-Pacific Partnership threatens our Climate* at: <http://sc.org/RawDealReport>).

The more recent response to the leaked Environment chapter from the Sierra Club, in conjunction with Natural Resources Defence Council and the WWF, describes the dispute resolution process as a “vastly insufficient process” “...an unacceptable rollback of previous commitments and renders the obligations in this chapter virtually meaningless.” (see <http://sc.org/TPPEnvironment>). Even before the Wikileaks revelations, BlueGreen Alliance, like many others in the U.S., was protesting the attempt to “fast-track” the TPP approval process through the U.S. Congress; see <http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/news/latest/bluegreen-alliance-statement-fast-track-bill-strips-transparency-restricts-democratic-process>. The Council of Canadians is one of more than 30 organizations participating in a January 31 Intercontinental Day of Action against the TPP and Corporate Globalization. (see <http://www.flushthetpp.org/inter-continental-day-of-action-against-the-tpp-corporate-globalization/>).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BlueGreen Alliance, NAFTA, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Trans-Pacific Partnership, Wikileaks** | [Leave a reply](#)

EU Proposes New Emissions Targets for 2030, Weak Regulation of Fracking, and No Extension to the European Fuel Quality Directive

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

After hard-fought negotiations, the members of the European Union finally agreed on January 22 to a compromise Framework proposal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030, compared with 1990 levels, and a goal of producing 27% of all energy from renewable sources by 2030. The European carbon emissions trading system (EUTS) will be reformed, and the goal of improving energy efficiency by 25% by 2030 will be an “indicative target”, not legally binding. Fracking will also be governed by non-binding recommendations rather than regulation. Most significantly for Canada, the Fuel Quality Directive will not be renewed after its expiry in 2020 – a move away from the support of biofuels, and which might allow for Alberta oil to enter the European fuel supply chain. The Canadian government has lobbied actively for such a change.

See “EU May Scrap Green Fuel Law in Boon for Tar Sands Industry” at *Inside Climate News* <http://insideclimatenews.org/content/eu-may-scrap-green-fuel-law-boon-tar-sands-industry>, and for background, the Natural Resources Defense Council blog, *Canadian Tar Sands Exports to Europe could Grow from a Trickle to a Flood Undermining Europe’s Climate Goals* (Jan. 2014) at: http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/aswift/canadian_tar_sands_exports_to.html

The European Council will consider the framework proposals at its spring meeting in March.

From the EU Commissioner on Climate Action: "...The details of the framework will now have to be agreed, but the direction for Europe has been set. If all other regions were equally ambitious about tackling climate change, the world would be in significantly better shape." Read the analysis from *The Guardian* (U.K.)(Jan.22) at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jan/22/eu-carbon-emissions-climate-deal-2030> and the *New York Times* (Jan. 22) at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/23/business/international/european-union-lowers-ambitions-on-renewable-energy.html?hp>. The press release, with links to official documents, is at the European Commission website at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-54_en.htm.

Environmental groups disagree with the positive spin: according to the Friends of the Earth Europe, the negotiators "... seem to have fallen for the old-think industry spin that there must be a trade-off between climate action and economic recovery. This position completely ignores the huge financial cost of dealing with the impacts of climate change and the €500 billion the EU is spending every year on oil and gas imports". (at: https://www.foeeurope.org/2030_climate_energy_plan_220114). About fracking, the FOE had this to say: "... attempts to regulate the fracking industry have been undermined by heavy corporate lobbying and pressure from certain member states intent on fracking their lands." ... "With the heavy support from José Manuel Barroso, the United Kingdom, Poland, and Romania have all played a leading role in undermining shale gas legislation, with allies Hungary, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Slovakia." See https://www.foeeurope.org/shale_gas_framework_220114. An article in *The Guardian* (Jan. 14) offers a detailed analysis of the significant role played by the U.K. to weaken the fracking regulations (see at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jan/14/uk-defeats-european-bid-fracking-regulations>).

Posted in **Energy Policy, Government Policy** | Tagged **Biofuels, Cap and Trade, Emissions Trading, EU, EU Emissions Trading Scheme, EUTS, Fracking Regulations, Friends of the Earth, Fuel Quality Directive, Natural Resources Defense Council** | [Leave a reply](#)

UN Climate Chief Urges Institutional Investors to Move to Low-Carbon Assets

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

According to CERES, a non-profit advocacy coalition, "Since 2003, the biennial *Investor Summit on Climate Risk* at the United Nations has been the pre-eminent forum for leading institutional investors in North America, Europe and the rest of the world to discuss the implications of climate change for capital markets and their portfolios." At this year's summit on January 15, Christine Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), told the audience of 500 global leaders: "The pensions, life insurances and nest eggs of billions of ordinary people depend on the long-term security and stability of institutional investment funds. Climate change increasingly poses one of the biggest long-term threats to those investments and the wealth of the global economy." She urged investors to move out of high-carbon assets and into assets built on renewable energy, energy efficiency and more sustainable ways of business that green global supply chains.

A related report by CERES, *Investing in the Clean Trillion: Closing the Clean Energy Investment Gap*, was released at the Summit. It provides recommendations for investors, companies and policymakers to increase annual global investment in clean energy to at least \$1 trillion by 2030- up from a current investment level of approximately \$300 billion. A related report by Cleantech Group pegs the level of worldwide global investment in cleantech venture companies at \$6.8 billion in 2013.

LINKS:

2014 Investor Summit on Climate Risk website is at <http://www.ceres.org/investor-network/investor-summit>

UNFCCC press release regarding Christine Figueres' statement is at: http://unfccc.int/files/press/press_releases_advisories/application/pdf/pr20140115_ceres_final1.pdf. Watch a 2-minute video of an interview with Ms. Figueres' at: <http://climatedesk.org/2014/01/un-climate-chief-calls-for-tripling-of-clean-energy-investment/>

To download the CERES Report: *Investing in the Clean Trillion: Closing the Clean Energy Investment Gap*, or the Executive Summary go to: <http://www.ceres.org/resources/reports/investing-in-the-clean-trillion-closing-the-clean-energy-investment-gap/view> – registration required.

Summary of the Cleantech Groups Investment report is at <http://www.cleantech.com/2014/01/08/i3-quarterly-investment-monitor-reports-6-8-billion-cleantech-venture-investment-2013/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **CERES, Clean Technology, Cleantech Group, Fossil Fuel Divestment, Investor Summit on Climate Risk, Low-Carbon Investment, UNFCC** | [Leave a reply](#)

Davos World Economic Forum has Leaders Talking Climate Investment

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **elizabethperry493**

Climate change and the green economy represented major issues at the 2014 World Economic Forum at Davos, from January 22nd to 25th. UNFCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres and World Bank president Jim Yong Kim called for strong climate action, and Figueres warned that failure to establish a binding international agreement on climate change by 2015 would place the global economy at risk. Talks that addressed global finance and the green economy noted the potential of green bonds to fund adaptive and mitigative efforts while stimulating the economy. Kim suggested doubling the size of the green bond market to \$20 billion before the next Climate Summit, and doubling it again before the following summit in December 2015.

In early January, WEF released *Climate Adaptation: Seizing the Challenge* that similarly emphasized the role of investment and the private sector in addressing climate change. According to the report, investing in adaptation measures could help avert up to 65% of the projected increase in losses due to climate change. The report presents a framework developed by Economics of Climate Adaptation (ECA) to assist the public and private sector to quantify possible losses and the cost of adaptation projects, as well as attract private investors to fund those projects. The final day of Davos focussed on discussion of the circular economy – the use of circular supply chains, and increased re-use, recycling, and remanufacture. (See the feature item above for more).

For highlights of speeches, blogs and press releases related to climate change and sustainability at the WEF, see: <http://forumblog.org/topic/sustainability/>

Climate Adaptation: Seizing the Challenge is available at: <http://www.weforum.org/reports/climate-adaptation-seizing-challenge>

For coverage by the Globe and Mail, see “Davos summit Aims to Press Reset Button” (Jan 20) at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/davos-summit-aims-to-press-reset-button/article16419504/>; “Davos summit calls for cleaner energy, focus on climate change” (Jan. 22) at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/davos-summit-calls-for-cleaner-energy-focus-on-climate-change/article16457713/>; “Sovereignty is Canada’s top priority in the North, Baird tells Davos forum” (Jan. 23) at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/sovereignty-is-canadas-top-priority-in-the-north-baird-tells-davis-forum/article16470142/>.

Live Coverage by *The Guardian* (U.K.) is at: <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2014/jan/24/davos-2014-climate-change-resource-security-sustainability-day-three-live?INTCMP=ILCNETTX3487> and <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2014/jan/25/davos-2014-climate-change-resource-scarcity-sustainability-day-four-live>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Fossil Fuel Divestment, Green Bonds, World Bank** | [Leave a reply](#)

Northern Gateway Headed to Court as NEB Approval Provokes Criticism of Review Process

Posted on **January 28, 2014** by **Ava Lightbody**

On December 19th, the National Energy Board granted conditional approval to the controversial Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, citing 209 conditions. The federal NDP and Green parties criticized the decision, while some opponents of the pipeline allege the joint review panel itself has been “undemocratic” and has undermined the integrity of the environmental review process in general, echoing an August 2013 lawsuit in which NGO ForestEthics claimed NEB public participation rules were unconstitutional. A series of at least 10 lawsuits has been launched in response to the NEB approval, notably one by B.C. Nature and one by a coalition of NGOs including EcoJustice, ForestEthics, Living Oceans Society, and Rainforest Conservation Foundation. The environmental groups allege the Joint Review Panel (JRP) final report contains serious legal and scientific gaps, such as uncertainty regarding geohazards along the pipeline route and the behaviour of spilled bitumen in marine environments. They claim the JRP also failed to address legal obligations to the humpback whale and caribou populations whose habitats lie in the pipeline path, both of which are protected under the Species at Risk Act.

Three First Nations, Gitxaala, Git'gat, and Haisla, have launched lawsuits of their own calling for federal review of the NEB decision. They claim their unique constitutional rights regarding development on their lands were also neglected during the review process.

Read the press release from EcoJustice on their lawsuit at: <http://www.ecojustice.ca/media-centre/press-releases/environmental-groups-launch-lawsuit-over-flawed-northern-gateway-report>. CBC coverage of lawsuits from environmental groups is available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/northern-gateway-pipeline-report-draws-lawsuit-1.2501051>; coverage of First Nations lawsuits is available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/gitga-at-northern-gateway-lawsuit-joins-9-other-challenges-1.2507155>.

According to West Coast Environmental Law, Enbridge may be experiencing difficulty attracting investment to the project in light of persistent opposition. See: NEB's Thumbs Up Ignores Wall of Opposition that will Stop Enbridge (Jan. 16) is at: <http://wcel.org/resources/environmental-law-alert/neb%E2%80%99s-thumbs-ignores-wall-opposition-will-stop-enbridge>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **B.C. Nature, EcoJustice, Enbridge, First Nations, ForestEthics, Gitga'at Nation, Gitxaala Nation, Green Party, Haisla Nation, Indigenous Peoples, Living Oceans Society, National Energy Board, NDP, Northern Gateway, Pipelines, Species at Risk Act (SARA), West Coast Environmental Law** | [Leave a reply](#)

International Meeting Addresses the Role of Labour in Reducing Climate Change

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Labour, Climate Change, and Social Struggle was the theme of the international conference in Toronto from November 29 to December 1, organized and hosted by the Work in a Warming World project at York University. The presentations at the 3-day event reflected the participants: trade unionists, academics, and representatives of social justice organizations from Canada, U.S., U.K., EU, Sweden, India, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and Asia. Keynote addresses made by David Miller, former Mayor of Toronto and now CEO and President of the World Wildlife Fund Canada, and Philip Jennings, General Secretary of UNI Global Union, the international union federation which includes 20 million members. The plenary speakers were Hassan Yussuff, Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress and Chris Tollefson, Professor and Executive Director of the Environmental Law Centre in Victoria, British Columbia. Other union speakers and panellists included representatives from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Public Service Alliance of Canada, British Columbia Federation of Labour, and the Labour Network for Sustainability (U.S.).

Speakers and workshops throughout the conference reflected a healthy balance and respect for both academic research and practical experience in striving for a worker-led strategic response to climate change. A broad range of topics were covered – to name a few: the role of worker capital and pensions funds, greening the built environment, the energy sector, power relationships between the global south and north, the emerging model of climate change law, gender and climate change, and greening the healthcare sector. A constant theme throughout the conference was the crucial leadership role

that organized labour can play in the struggle for a sustainable, just economy, and the need for understanding and relationship-building with allies in the environmental movement.

A strategy meeting in Toronto in November brought together just such a gathering of like-minded union and environmental groups of the Green Economy Network: participants included the Council of Canadians, the Polaris Institute, the Climate Action Network, KAIROS, and unions including the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Unifor and the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE).

LINK

Labour, Climate Change, and Social Struggle (W3 international conference): full list of speakers and topics is now available at: <http://www.workinawarmingworld.yorku.ca/w3conference/program/program-details/>; Papers will be available online in 2014.

Activists Rally around Green Jobs press release (summarizing the Green Economy Network Strategy Meeting) is at the CUPE website at: <http://cupe.ca/green-jobs/Rally-green-jobs>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [International cooperation](#), [Labour Unions](#), [Work in a Warming World](#), [Work in a Warming World Conference](#), [York University](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

On the Eve of the NEB Decision Re Northern Gateway Pipeline: Eyford Report Addresses First Nations and Energy Development

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On December 5th, Prime Minister Harper's Special Representative, Douglas Eyford, presented his report about how to engage with First Nations communities and governments in British Columbia and Alberta on future energy infrastructure development. The recommendations of *Forging Partnerships, Building Relationships*, are summarized in the Executive summary as:

"Building Trust: identifies the efforts needed to establish constructive dialogue about energy development, to demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability, and to enhance understanding of and participation in pipeline and marine safety.

Fostering Inclusion: proposes focused efforts to realize Aboriginal employment and business opportunities, to establish collaborations among Aboriginal communities that allow for better outcomes, and to facilitate the financial participation of Aboriginal communities in energy projects.

Advancing Reconciliation: recommends targeted efforts to build effective relationships including refinements to Canada's current approach to consultation and engagement, to explore mutually beneficial initiatives that support reconciliation, and to encourage Aboriginal communities to resolve shared territory issues.

Taking Action: recommends the establishment of a Crown-First Nations tripartite energy working group to create an open and sustained dialogue and action on energy projects."

The official response to the Eyford report from Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn Atleo states: "First Nations are not anti-development but if any project is going to proceed it must be responsible, sustainable, we must be involved, our rights must be respected and there must be meaningful engagement consistent with the principles of free, prior and informed consent as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." The official response of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs is more strongly worded. Grand Chief Stewart Phillip states: "It is clear that Mr. Eyford listened to our communities as many, if not all, of his recommendations reflect the public positions and statements of many First Nations standing against Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline and Kinder Morgan's

proposed expansion of their Trans Mountain pipeline. Unfortunately, many of his recommendations will be ignored. The Harper Government has time and time again demonstrated their jobs agenda trumps, ignores and arrogantly dismissed our constitutionally-enshrined, judicially-recognized inherent Title, Rights and Treaty Rights.”

Almost 1,000 delegates met in Gatineau, Quebec for the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly, from December 10-12, coinciding with the first anniversary of the Idle No More protests. Their press release states that they discussed and made progress on a policy towards a First Nations Energy Policy, although their first priority was the recent government proposals regarding aboriginal education. An article in the Globe and Mail Report on Business on December 14th is an on-the-ground profile of “a community in conflict”, the Fort McKay First Nation in Alberta, as it tries to balance the economic benefits of oil sands development with the resulting environmental damage.

LINKS

Forging Partnerships Building Relationships: Aboriginal Canadians and Energy Development. A Report to the Prime Minister. (The Eyford Report) is at: <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/sites/www.nrcan.gc.ca/files/www/pdf/publications/ForPart-Online-e.pdf>

“First Nations Leaders Cool to Blueprint for Garnering their Support on Energy Projects” in *Globe and Mail* (December 5, updated Dec. 6) at:
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/first-nations-support-for-energy-projects-hinges-on-ottawa-changing-its-ways-pm-told/article15784461/>

Assembly of First Nations Chief Welcomes Eyford Report and calls for Action... is at: <http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/news-media/latest-news/assembly-of-first-nations-national-chief-welcomes-eyford-report-and-ca>

UBCIC Responds to Forging Partnerships Building Relationships is at:
http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/News_Releases/UBCICNews12061301.html#axzz2nNjdoHsH

Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly Concludes press release is at: <http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/news-media/latest-news/assembly-of-first-nations-special-chiefs-assembly-concludes-reaffirmed>

“A Line in the Oil Sands: the Dispute the entire Oil Industry is Watching” in the *Globe and Mail* (Dec. 14th) at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/the-fort-mckay-first-nation-a-line-in-the-oil-sands/article15968340/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal people, Alberta, Assembly of First Nations, British Columbia, Energy policy, First Nations, National Energy Board, Northern Gateway** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Jobs Argument and the Costs of Energy Development: Two Views

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A December study by the right-wing Fraser Institute starts from two foundations: “every proposed oil and gas project in Canada affects at least one First Nation’s community and secondly, these young and highly unemployed communities are sorely in need of jobs. Oil and gas development can provide those jobs and a way out of poverty and into prosperity.” To bolster its arguments, the study states that “In 2010, more than 1,700 aboriginal people were directly employed in oilsands operations. Over the past 12 years aboriginal-owned companies have secured more than \$5 billion worth of contracts from oilsands developers in the region.”

The David Suzuki Foundation has released an alternative view in a report about industrial development in the Peace River Region. *Passages from the Peace* states that there are 16,267 oil and gas wells, 28,587 kilometres of pipeline, 45,293 kilometres of roads and 116,725 kilometres of seismic lines packed into the region, and the lives and well-being of local

First Nations and non-aboriginal farming communities is being adversely affected. Suzuki will present the report during the public consultation period (December and January) of a 3-person joint federal and provincial Environmental Assessment Panel which is touring the Peace River Region in Northern British Columbia. The Site C Dam proposed by B.C. Hydro is a \$7.9-billion hydroelectric dam proposed to be built seven kilometres downstream from Fort St. John, and would flood an 83-kilometre stretch of the Peace River upstream, as well as the mouth of the Moberly and Halfway Rivers. Opponents are also concerned about the impact downstream, on Wood Buffalo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. As yet there is no First Nations consensus position, and B.C. Hydro is arguing that the project is expected to produce 10,000 direct jobs and employment for thousands more indirectly.

LINKS

Opportunities for First Nation Prosperity through Oil and Gas Development is at:

<http://www.fraserinstitute.org/uploadedFiles/fraser-ca/Content/research-news/research/publications/opportunities-for-first-nation-prosperity-through-oil-and-gas-development.pdf>

Passages from the Peace, is at the David Suzuki Foundation website at:

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/reports/2013/passages-from-the-peace-community-reflections-on-changing-peace-region/>

"First Nations welcome Site C review panel" (Dec. 9) in the *Globe and Mail* at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/first-nations-welcome-site-c-review-panel/article15835573/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal employment, British Columbia, David Suzuki Foundation, First Nations, Fraser Institute, Peace River Region, Site C Dam** | [Leave a reply](#)

A Strategy for the U.S. to Lead the Global Green Industrial Revolution

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On December 10th, the BlueGreen Alliance, the Institute for America's Future, and the Center for American Progress released *The Green Industrial Revolution and the United States: In the Clean Energy Race, Is the United States a Leader or a Luddite?* The report acknowledges and summarizes the strong U.S. position in clean energy development, and proposes to exert a competitive advantage over its closest rivals, China and Germany, by innovating from the state and local levels "up", combining regional policies that work into a national energy strategy that is based on "an integrated set of regional energy strategies." Citing the examples of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), and the currently uncertain Production Tax Credit program for wind energy projects, the report charges that "U.S. clean energy policies have been time limited, underfunded, and politically charged." The strategy argues that the relatively small U.S. Department of Commerce should take the lead: "With solid leadership and increased capacity, Commerce could be the central department ensuring that energy programs out of the Department of Energy, environmental programs out of the Environmental Protection Agency, and workforce training and standards programs out of the Department of Labor, all work together to support regionally specific economic development plans that will help America consolidate global leadership in the green industrial revolution." BlueGreen earlier released a Policy Statement calling for a state-level Clean Energy Transition Fund, to first and foremost, "ensure that displaced workers from closing power plants and affected fossil fuel extraction sites receive transition support, including wages, benefits, and retraining."

BlueGreen has also launched a Repair America campaign, urging investment in infrastructure building and repair; a report about job creation potential in Minnesota was released on December 11th to launch the campaign. The Repair America theme will also be reflected in the Good Jobs Green Jobs 2014 conference in Washington, D.C. in February 2014.

LINKS

The Green Industrial Revolution and the United States: In the Clean Energy Race, Is the United States a Leader or a Luddite? is available at: <http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/news/publications/document/GreenIndustrialRev.pdf>

BlueGreen Policy Statement for a Clean Energy Transition Fund is at:
<http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/news/publications/Clean-Energy-Transition-vFINAL.pdf>

Repair Minnesota: Creating Good Jobs While Preparing Our Systems for Climate Change is available at:
<http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/news/publications/repair-minnesota>. For Good Jobs Green Jobs 2014 conference information, see: <http://www.greenjobsconference.org/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BlueGreen Alliance, Labour Rights, Low-Carbon Transition** | [Leave a reply](#)

Trades Union Congress Issues New Green Policy Statement

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.K.'s Trades Union Congress has posted *Green Growth – No Turning Back*. This consolidation and updating of TUC policies about climate change and energy was prompted by the latest scientific evidence, as well as Britain's current concerns with energy security and the affordability of energy for citizens. Recommendations include: parliament should adopt the Committee on Climate Change's Fourth Carbon budget as a framework for carbon emissions action; move to fund energy subsidies through income and corporate tax and eliminate regressive consumer taxes; make significant reforms to the existing Energy Bill, including a 2030 decarbonisation target to attract investment in low carbon technologies; and further encourage investment through a "properly funded" Green Investment Bank, state support for strategically important low-carbon sectors such as renewables, electric vehicles and carbon capture and storage, and a skills strategy for a low carbon economy. The policy also calls for no further investment in fracking or "unabated fossil fuels".

LINKS

Green Growth – No Turning Back is available at:
http://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/EC%20Green%20Growth%20No%20Turning%20Back%20-%20pdf_0.pdf. The Summary of Recommendations is at: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/node/119323>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Fracking, labour union policies, Trades Union Congress, United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Jobs Argument of the Keystone Pipeline

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A newly-released report by the Labor Network for Sustainability and Economics for Equity and Environment compares the jobs that would be created by the proposed Keystone pipeline to the jobs that could be created if investment was placed in water, sewer, and gas infrastructure projects in the five states the pipeline crosses. The report concludes that the infrastructure investment would create more than 300,000 total jobs across all sectors: five times more jobs, and better jobs.

LINK

The Keystone Pipeline Debate: an Alternative Jobs Strategy is available at:

http://www.labor4sustainability.org/files/___kxl_main3_11052013.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Economics for Equity, Infrastructure Investment, Keystone XL, Labour Network for Sustainability** | [Leave a reply](#)

OECD Analysis of Innovation for Clean Energy Emphasizes the Importance of Human Capital

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A recent OECD working paper reviews case studies of renewable energy initiatives in Australia, Brazil, China, Mongolia, Spain and the United Kingdom, and emphasizes the importance of local governments in the transition to low-carbon economies. "What sets a region on a path to innovation is openness to new ideas of business...their ability to source and absorb new ideas; in effect, a region's ability to learn. This is also strongly related to the training and skills ecosystem present in the region. A region's capacity to innovate relates to the stock and quality of human capital embodied in its workforce. The successful transition to a low-carbon economy will only be possible by ensuring that the labour force is able to transfer from areas of decreasing employment to other industries, and if adequate human capital exists to develop new industries that will grow as a result of climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. Skills development activities will play a major role in each of these transitions."

LINKS

Improving the Effectiveness of Green Local Development: The role and Impact of Public Sector-led Initiatives in Renewable is available from a link at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment-and-sustainable-development/improving-the-effectiveness-of-green-local-development_5k3w6ljtrj0q-en

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Human Capital, Low-Carbon Transition, OECD, Renewables** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Updates its Long-Term Energy Plan

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On December 2, the Ontario government waded into the highly-politicized and controversial field of energy in the province, with the release of *Achieving Balance*, its updated long-term energy plan which emphasizes energy conservation, maintains the policy of ending coal-generated electricity, and holds the line on investment in new nuclear power facilities. The plan acknowledges Ontario's reduced energy demands and sets a target of about half of Ontario's installed generating capacity to come from renewable sources by 2025. See the Ontario government news release, with links to supporting backgrounders at: <http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2013/12/ontario-releases-long-term-energy-plan-1.html>

The Plan, *Achieving Balance* is at: http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/docs/LTEP_2013_English_WEB.pdf

A series of Backgrounders focusing on topics such as Conservation initiatives at:

<http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2013/12/conservation-and-demand-management.html>, First Nations and Metis initiatives at: <http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2013/12/first-nation-and-metis-communities.html>, and Northwestern Ontario programs (to support mining projects and First Nations) at: <http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2013/12/meeting-northwestern-ontarios-energy-needs.html>.

Reaction from Environmental Defence is at: <http://environmentaldefence.ca/articles/statement-gillian-mceachern-environmental-defence-regarding-ontario%E2%80%99s-new-long-term-energy->; From the Pembina Institute at: <http://www.pembina.org/media-release/2508>, and from the Society of Energy Professionals at: <http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/1272509/long-term-energy-plan-is-low-voltage-say-energy-professionals>: "The Society of Energy Professionals supports the government's decisions to continue with plans for nuclear refurbishment at Darlington and Bruce Power, maintain Pickering until 2020, and move forward with the conversion of the Thunder Bay Generating Station from coal to advanced biomass."

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Achieving Balance](#), [energy conservation](#), [Ontario Coal Phase-Out](#), [Ontario Long-term Energy Plan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Quebec Government gives Conditional Support to Enbridge Line 9B

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the first week of December, a Quebec parliamentary committee came out in favour of Enbridge's proposal to reverse the flow of the Line 9B pipeline, allowing crude oil and bitumen to flow across Quebec to refineries in Montreal. The committee stipulated 18 conditions, including: the creation of an oversight committee composed of federal, provincial and Enbridge representatives; Enbridge must provide Quebec's environment department with its inspection data and its inspection and maintenance practices, so that an independent expert can evaluate the integrity of the pipeline; Enbridge must conduct hydrostatic studies on the integrity of the pipeline; Enbridge must provide a sufficient financial guarantee to pay for any damage in the event of a disaster, including after the pipeline is no longer in operation; and Enbridge must develop an emergency plan for drinking water. See the summary at Equiterre website at: <http://www.equiterre.org/en/news/quebec-parliamentary-committee-approves-line-9b-reversal>, with a link to the full report of the Committee (French only). For background to the controversy, see "6 Reasons why some Labour is Rallying against Line 9" at Rabble.ca at: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/jesse/2013/11/six-reasons-why-some-labour-rallying-against-line-9>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Line 9](#), [Montreal Refineries](#), [Pipelines](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green Awards for Cities: Vancouver for Green Building Practices

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 20, the World Green Building Council (WGBC) gave its Government Leadership Award for Best Green Building Policy to the City of Vancouver, recognizing international best practice for green building initiatives at the city level. Under Vancouver's Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, existing buildings must reduce their energy use and GHG emissions by 20% from 2007 levels, by 2020. New buildings constructed after 2020 must be carbon neutral. Read the press release, with links to the Action Plan and supporting documents at: <http://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/greenest-city-2020-action-plan.aspx>. And on Dec. 20, new energy efficiency requirements will come into effect under the B.C. Building Code. Developers will have a choice of energy efficiency standards for "complex buildings" (this includes large residential, industrial, commercial and institutional buildings, but not houses or small buildings). Developers can choose to use either the 2011 National Energy Code for Buildings or ASHRAE 90.1 (2010), creating greater flexibility for the construction industry.

Press release at:

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/12/new-energy-efficiency-requirements-for-the-bc-building-code.html>.

European Green Capital Award for 2013: Nantes, France

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Nantes was chosen for the 2013 Award on the strength of its public transport policy. It was the first city in France to successfully re-introduce electric tramways, and plans to encourage bicycle and public bus infrastructure. The Award, begun in 2010 by the European Commission, recognizes a consistent record and a commitment to future goals and ambitions for environmental improvement and sustainable development.

See: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/winning-cities/2013-nantes/index.html>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cities and Climate Change](#), [European Green Capital Award](#), [Nantes](#), [Public Transportation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Another Assessment of Canada's Energy Gridlock from Business, Environmentalists, and First Nations

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report released on December 13 is the result of five meetings of a unique gathering of perspectives: business, government, environmental groups, and First Nations. Each of the 21 participants was said to speak as an individual, not representing their constituencies. The project, the Charrette on Energy, Environment and Aboriginal Energy Resource Development in Canada, defined both the problems and the opportunities of Canada's energy and electricity systems, and concludes that we are in a state of "energy development gridlock." The path forward, they state, must build on a respect for First Nations concerns and the environment. The report recommends that First Nations be included early in project consultations, that assessments should address cumulative impacts of resource development on traditional lands, (not just project-specific impacts); that First Nations are entitled to greater benefits from resource development, including some form of revenue sharing; that government and industry should monitor the impacts of resource development; all energy companies should be incorporating the best environmental technology to minimize impacts, and that there is a "pressing need for a credible and substantive commitment to reduce Canada's carbon footprint."

LINK

For *Responsible Energy Resource Development in Canada: Summary of the Dialogue of the Charrette on Energy, Environment and Aboriginal Issues* see

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/incoming/article15936361.ece/binary/Responsible%20Energy%20Resource%20Development%20in%20Canada%20-final.pdf>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal Energy Development](#), [First Nations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Environmental Prestige at a New Low

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new reports reflect the global dismay for Canada's environmental performance. *Climate Change Performance Index Results 2014*, released by the Climate Action Network Europe and Germanwatch, ranks Canada at 58th in their index, "the worst performer of all industrialised countries". Even China, the world's highest CO2 emitter, ranked 46th, thanks to its heavy investment in renewable energies. See *Climate Change Performance Index Results 2014* at: <http://germanwatch.org/en/download/8599.pdf> . And in *Race to the Bottom*, the 2014 report of the international Climate Action Tracker project, Japan, Australia and Canada are singled out for poor performance. See: <http://climateactiontracker.org/news/151/In-talks-for-a-new-climate-treaty-a-race-to-the-bottom.html> with the 8 page policy brief at:http://climateactiontracker.org/assets/publications/briefing_papers/CAT_Policy_brief_Race_to_the_bottom.pdf.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada, Canadian Emissions, Climate Change Performance Index** | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Pricing is Gaining Acceptance Among U.S. Businesses

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A *New York Times* article reports that at least 29 companies are incorporating a price on carbon into their long-term financial plans. The list of companies includes many with ties to the Republican Party: ExxonMobil, Walmart, American Electric Power, Microsoft, General Electric, Walt Disney, ConAgra Foods, Wells Fargo, DuPont, Duke Energy, Google and Delta Air Lines. The article focuses on the political divide that this development represents, and concludes that: "The divide, between conservative groups that are fighting against government regulation and oil companies that are planning for it as a practical business decision, echoes a deeper rift in the party, as business-friendly establishment Republicans clash with the Tea Party." The article is based on a report by environmental data company CDP. See "Large Companies Prepared to pay Price on Carbon" in the *New York Times* at: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/05/business/energy-environment/large-companies-prepared-to-pay-price-on-carbon.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20131205&r=0

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Business attitudes, Carbon Pricing, Carbon Tax, United States** | [Leave a reply](#)

90 Companies Account for Two-Thirds of Global Emissions: a New Look at who is Responsible

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A widely-cited article in the November issue of *Climatic Change* analyzed the greenhouse gas emissions produced by the largest investor-owned and state-owned companies, rather than the usual metric of national emissions. The results show that nearly two-thirds of carbon dioxide and methane emissions from 1854 to 2010 can be attributed to 90 companies, with almost 30% of emissions produced by the top 20 companies . Among state-owned companies, Russian enterprises produced 8.9% of the total emissions, with China accounting for 8.6% of total global emissions. Among investor-owned companies, ChevronTexaco was the leading emitter, causing 3.5% of global emissions, with Exxon causing 3.2% and BP causing 2.5%. The data in the article was constructed using public records and data for the period 1854 to 2010, from the U.S. Department of Energy's Carbon Dioxide Information and Analysis Centre. Author Richard Heede states, "the present analysis...invites consideration of the suggestion that some degree of responsibility for both cause and remedy for climate change rests with those entities that have extracted, refined, and marketed the preponderance of the historic carbon fuels." Read "Tracing anthropogenic carbon dioxide and methane emissions to fossil fuel and cement producers, 1854-2010" in *Climatic Change* (November 2013) at: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-013-0986-y>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BP, ChevronTexaco, China, Exxon, Greenhouse gas emissions, responsibility for climate change, Russia** | [Leave a reply](#)

James Hansen Challenges the 2 Degrees Target

Posted on **December 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new paper by James Hansen and Jeffrey Sachs was published in the Open Access journal *PLOS One*, arguing that a global warming target of 2 degrees Celsius is not acceptable and will lead to disastrous consequences. According to a summary at *The Climate Desk*, Hansen has said that the paper is intended as “a tool for the courthouse, rather than the scientific debate hall”...“We started this paper to provide a basis for legal actions against governments in not doing their jobs in protecting the rights of young people and future generations.” See: <http://climatedesk.org/2013/12/scientists-current-international-warming-target-is-disastrous/>. The full article, “Assessing Dangerous Climate Change: Required Reduction of Carbon Emissions to Protect Young People, Future Generations, and Nature” is at *PlosOne* at:<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/876989-hansen-plos-one.html>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **2 Degree Target, James Hansen, responsibility for climate change** | [Leave a reply](#)

A Strategy for Growth for Human Resources and Training in Renewable Electricity Sectors

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Renewing Futures research project aims to assess the capacity of Canada’s skilled workforce to meet the labour needs of the electricity-related renewable energy systems. The research project is a collaboration of Electricity Human Resources Canada (formerly the Electricity Sector Council), Employment and Social Development Canada, and industry stakeholders. Several documents from the project were released in November – the documents listed below are all free, but are mostly Executive summaries of priced reports.

A *Technology Review* report creates a profile of the seven technologies – wind, solar, bioenergy, geothermal, marine/tidal, small and large hydro, and transmission, storage and distribution. It also includes provincial energy market assessments that project renewable electricity capacity from 2011 to 2022.

The *Labour Market Information System* is based on a synthesis of 5 different models; it focuses on eighteen key occupations, grouped in three broad groups; leaders and managers, engineers and technologists, and skilled trades. In 2012, approximately 41,000 employees are estimated to work in renewable electricity jobs. The LMIS forecasts 3 different scenarios of growth: Utility case, Reference case (based on the National Energy Board 2011 Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2035), and the most optimistic, the “Vision” case. The Vision case projects the creation of 620,000 person years of short term employment in manufacturing, construction and installation, and another 34,000 full time and long term operator jobs by 2022. Most of the jobs that are created are “good jobs” – high-skilled, well paid, with opportunities for advancement.

A *National Human Resources Strategy for Renewable Electricity*. Since even the Utility case rate of growth may result in labour shortages in the renewable electricity sector, the Human Resources Strategy proposes joint action by the employers, trainers, unions and governments to expand the breadth and depth of the skilled workforce. The strategy acknowledges that “Collaboration is not an obvious outcome”, noting the large number of small companies spread across the supply chain, many of whom are currently satisfied with their HR operations and who prefer to focus their attention on the challenges of government policy and business conditions. “The implementation of the any national strategy faces a significant challenge in convincing many employers that there is a problem to solve.”

The project also reviews post-secondary training and certification across Canada and makes recommendations for general and sector-specific initiatives. The *Strategy* document suggests changes to the education of professional engineers, including curriculum changes and increased co-op programs. The report identified 95 community colleges programs for engineering technicians and technologists, and commends this as an important beginning, but recommends bringing together unions, provincial labour market planners, college faculty and employers to consider new objectives, such as “new curriculum, registration targets, specializations related to sectors and to occupations. The latter content might target

training in preparation for sales, design, project and cost management, construction estimation and other non-technical jobs.” Noting that there are no apprenticeship programs targeted to renewable electricity, the Strategy recommends a long-term goal of creating Red Seal trades specializing in Renewable Electricity, as well as national occupational standards, and certification to improve mobility across provinces.

LINKS:

Trends and Technology Review: Executive Summary is at: <http://renewingfutures.ca/CMFiles//EHRCrfttr.pdf>

Renewing Futures Labour Market Information System is at: <http://renewingfutures.ca/CMFiles//EHRCrflmis.pdf>

A National Human Resources Strategy for Renewable Electricity is at:
<http://www.renewingfutures.ca/CMFiles//EHRCrfs.pdf>

Analysis of the Renewing Futures Employer Survey is at: <http://www.renewingfutures.ca/CMFiles//RFES.pdf>

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Electricity](#) [Human Resources Canada](#), [Employment and Social Development Canada](#), [Good Jobs](#), [Renewables](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Québec’s New Job Creation Strategy Capitalizes on Surplus Electricity

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 7, the government of Quebec released a new job creation statement: “Economic Policy – Putting Jobs First”. The strategy includes an “investment-job pricing offer”, which offers reduced electricity rates to industries related to natural resource processing, renewable energy component manufacturing, green technologies and transportation electrification, and information technology. This initiative is projected to attract investments of \$1.6 billion and create 10, 300 jobs in the short term. The program will remain in effect as long as Hydro Quebec has surplus electric capacity, which the government estimates is until 2027. In addition, \$111.5 billion was announced to stimulate green renovation through EcoRenov, a refundable tax credit program which will be offered to individuals for residential green renovations done by October 31, 2014, up to a maximum tax credit of \$10,000. In addition, funding for the existing Rénoclimat program will be increased by \$37 million to add a component for the replacement of fossil fuel-burning heating systems.

LINKS:

“Quebec to invest \$2 billion in jobs to stimulate sluggish economy” in the *Globe and Mail* (Oct. 7) at:
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/quebec-to-invest-2-billion-in-jobs-plan/article14725423/>

Press releases are at: http://www.finances.gouv.qc.ca/documents/Communiqués/en/COMEN_20131007-1.pdf and
http://www.finances.gouv.qc.ca/documents/Communiqués/en/COMEN_20131007-2.pdf

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Electricity](#), [Job Creation](#), [Quebec](#), [Surplus Energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil Sands Economics: The Latest Facts and Some New Recommendations

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report released by the Pembina Institute and Equiterre focuses on economic debate surrounding the oil sands, updating *In the Shadow of the Boom*, published by Pembina in May 2012. The new report, *Booms, Busts, and Bitumen* examines several economic risks associated with natural resource booms, including the decline of the manufacturing sector, known as Dutch disease, and GDP instability caused by Alberta's overreliance on the oil sands. The report questions the benefits accrued outside of Alberta, stating that only 14% of the employment opportunities created by oil sands development will be outside Alberta, and citing a CERI analysis that indicates the U.S. may stand to gain more than the rest of Canada. It also points to increasing worldwide pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the uncertainty of future oil sands markets. Finally, the report calls for better government management to ensure long-term gain from the one-time exploitation of non-renewable resources, for example through capital investment that focuses on reducing fossil fuel dependency in Canada, elimination of preferential tax treatment for the fossil fuel industry, and a mandate for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology to study the current restructuring of the Canadian economy, and the associated regional disparities, with an aim to identify a course of action to diversify economic growth and aid competitiveness across the whole country.

LINK

Booms, Busts, And Bitumen: The Economic Implications of Canadian Oilsands Development is available in French and English versions from: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2494>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Canadian GDP](#), [Dutch Disease](#), [Oil Markets](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Pembina Institute](#), [Resource Dependence](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Is Emissions Intensity, not Green Job Creation, the Best Metric of Greening Economies?

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A research paper released in October by the University of Calgary provides yet another discussion of the difficulties of defining "green jobs". The authors provide an up to date summary of studies which define or measure green jobs, and the cost of green job creation in Canada and the U.S., with special attention to Ontario's Green Energy Act. The authors propose an alternative in the green job discussion: "We avoid the issue of "what is a green job" by considering dirty inputs (energy) and dirty outputs (greenhouse gas emissions) to evaluate the relative "greenness" of Canadian industries." Their calculations rank the three most energy-intensive industries as 1) "Utilities", 2) "Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting", and 3) "Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction". They conclude that, given the decrease in emission-intensity of these highly polluting industries, "it is highly likely that the utilities sector created far more green jobs than many of the other Canadian sectors." It follows, in their analysis, that measuring and monitoring the greening of economies can be best accomplished by using the metric of greenhouse gas emission intensity.

LINK

Green Jobs Fantasy: Why the Economic and Environmental Reality can Never Live up to the Political Promise (Volume 6, Issue 31 of the University of Calgary School of Public Policy Research Paper Series) is at: <http://www.policyschool.ucalgary.ca/?q=content/green-jobs-fantasy-why-economic-and-environmental-reality-can-never-live-political-promise>

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Emissions Intensity](#), [Job Creation](#), [Ontario Green Energy Act](#) | [2 Replies](#)

Canadians are as Concerned about the Environment as the Economy

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 6th, the results of a new public opinion poll about climate change, carbon taxes, and the relationship between the environment and the economy were showcased at a series of events titled *The Politics of Climate and the Climate of Politics* in Ottawa. The poll, conducted by think-tank Canada 2020 and the Université de Montréal, measured Canadian and American opinions, and showed that 71% of Canadians believe that climate change should be a top priority for the Conservative federal government – while only 16% of Canadians believe it actually is. 26% of Canadians believe that the Conservative government is doing a good job at addressing economic and employment issues, only 19% think the government is adequately addressing environmental issues, and only 16% believe Canada is showing international leadership on climate change.

LINK

The Canada 2020/Université de Montréal National Survey of Canadian Opinions on Climate Change is available at: http://www.canada2020.ca/climatepoll/docs/Cross_Tabs-Canada_2020_U_of_M_Climate_Poll.pdf, with Highlights and links to interactive maps at: <http://canada2020.ca/latestnews/new-poll-canadians-want-federal-leadership-on-climate-change/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada 2020, Public Opinion Poll** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Estimates Economic and Jobs Impact of Wilderness and Ecotourism

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services says visitors to federal wildlife refuges generate more than \$2 billion a year in economic activity, helping to employ more than 35,000 people and produce about \$343 million in local, state and federal taxes. Recreational activities such as birding, hiking and picnicking account for nearly 75 % of total expenditures at wildlife refuges across the country, the report says, while fishing and hunting account for about 28 % of expenditures.

LINK

Banking on Nature is available at: <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/about/RefugeReports/index1.html>

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Eco-Jobs, Eco-tourism** | [Leave a reply](#)

ILO Statisticians Adopt New Guidelines to Measure the Greening Economy

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in Geneva in early October, labour statisticians discussed and adopted new guidelines for the statistical definition of employment in the environmental sector. The guidelines define the environmental sector as consisting of “all economic units producing, designing and manufacturing goods and services for the purposes of environmental protection and resource management”. The discussion identified as two distinct concepts: 1) employment in production of environmental output, and 2) environmental processes. While both are aspects of greening of employment, the report states that they are different targets for policy-making, and should be measured separately using different methods.

LINK:

Green jobs: Draft guidelines for the Statistical Definition and Measurement of Employment in Environmental Sector is available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—dgreports/—stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_223914.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Economic Measures, Green Jobs, International Conference of Labour Statisticians, International Labour Organization, Labour and Greens, Labour Statistics** | [Leave a reply](#)

Western Climate Pact Seen as an International Model

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 29, the Pacific Coast Action Plan on Climate and Energy was announced by its signatories: California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. The Preamble of the official document: affirms “our shared vision of Pacific North America as a model of innovation that sustains our communities and creates jobs and new economic opportunities for our combined population of 53 million”... and recalls “the findings of the 2012 West Coast Clean Economy report which projected 1.03 million new jobs could be created in key sectors, such as energy efficiency and advanced transportation, assuming the right policy environment”. The Plan is voluntary, but pledges the parties: to account for the cost of carbon (with B.C. and California retaining their existing carbon pricing programs and clean fuel standards, and Oregon and Washington pledging to follow suit); harmonize 2050 targets for greenhouse gas reductions and develop mid-term targets needed to support long-term reduction goals; to inform policy with findings from climate science, including the IPCC 5th Assessment Reports of 2013; to co-operate to press for international agreement on climate change policy in 2015; to ensure support for research, and take action on, ocean acidification,. An article in *Quartz* appraises the group as “the new Pacific Rim Environmental Superpower”. The Action Plan will be administered by an organization called the Pacific Coast Collaborative.

See the Plan document at:

<http://www.pacificcoastcollaborative.org/Documents/Pacific%20Coast%20Climate%20Action%20Plan.pdf>. For reaction, see the Clean Energy blog at: <http://cleanenergycanada.org/2013/10/28/west-coast-economies-sign-landmark-action-plan-climate-clean-energy/>; Pembina Institute blog at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/759>; Blue Green Alliance US at: <http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/news/publications/david-fosters-remarks-at-pacific-collaborative-climate-pact-event>; *Quartz* at: <http://qz.com/141148/meet-the-pacific-rims-new-environmental-superpower/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, California, Cap and Trade, Carbon Pricing, International cooperation, Pacific Coast Action Plan on Climate and Energy, Pacific Coast Collaborative** | [Leave a reply](#)

CBC Provides First Public Access to Pipeline Safety Data

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Through an access-to-information request, CBC News obtained a data set of every pipeline safety incident reported to the National Energy Board between 2000 and 2012. The NEB only oversees 71,000 pipelines that cross provincial or international borders (about a tenth of the overall network. The remaining 760,000 kilometres are monitored by the provinces). The NEB data is based on the requirement that companies must report safety issues including the death or serious injury of a worker, fires, explosions, liquid product spills over 1,500 litres and every gas leak, but it is clear from the discussion of the data that Canada lacks a transparent and accurate reporting system, despite the recommendation for improvements from a Senate committee. The data provided to the CBC show that there were 142 pipelines safety incidents

in 2011, and that the rate of pipeline incidents has doubled in the past decade. Most incidents have occurred in B.C., followed by Alberta, followed by Ontario.

The interactive map at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/pipeline-incidents/> and allows you to specify the category of “serious accidents” or “fatalities” to see brief summaries of incidents, usually relating to worker safety.

For an explanation of the limitations of Canadian data see: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/pipeline-safety-canada-lags-u-s-on-making-data-public-1.2254793> and <http://www.cbc.ca/news/pipeline-safety-incidents-how-we-organized-the-data-1.2251835>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta, British Columbia, National Energy Board, Occupational Health and Safety, Oil Sands, Oil Spills, Ontario, Pipelines** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Proposes Green Bonds for Transportation

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

An October 30 announcement from Ontario’s Premier states that Ontario will become the first Canadian province to implement a “green bonds” program to help fund environmentally-friendly transportation. According to the government, the bonds would help address critical infrastructure needs, create jobs, and strengthen the economy while keeping funding interest rates low and minimizing costs for consumers. The bonds would also be internationally certified, so they could be officially recognized as investments in sustainability. Green bonds are securities that raise capital for specific projects with environmental benefits. According to think-tank Clean Energy Canada, green bonds are in high demand which, combined with Ontario’s attractive credit rating, may result in substantial benefit to Ontario’s sustainable transportation sector.

See the government press release at: http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/10/province-proposes-new-way-to-fund-infrastructure.html?utm_source=ondemand&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=p, and see the Clean Energy response at “Green Bonds: an Investment to Write Home About” at: <http://cleanenergycanada.org/2013/11/01/green-bonds-investment-write-home/>.

For background on green bonds in Canada, see the articles at the Initiative Climate Bonds website at: <http://www.climatebonds.net/category/canada/>

Posted in **Energy Policy, Government Policy** | Tagged **Green Bonds, Green Infrastructure, Infrastructure, Infrastructure Investment, Ontario, Public Transportation, Transit, Transit Policy, Transportation, Transportation Investment** | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal Government Weakens Environmental Assessment Rules Further

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Environmentalists are up in arms after the federal government amended the rules dictating which natural resource extraction projects require federal environmental assessments in late October. According to Greenpeace, many activities associated with oil sands expansion are absent from the new list, notably *in situ* oil extraction, which uses steam to pump up oil from reservoirs that are deep underground. The method is expected to comprise 80% of oil sands extraction.

See the very brief government announcement of the changes at the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency website at: <http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en&xml=0DDF9560-6A8A-4403-B33A-B906AC6A1D93>, and the National

Energy Board summary at: <http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/clf-nsi/rthnb/nws/nwsr/s/2013/ceaa-acee2013-10-25-eng.html>.

"New environmental review rules anger oilsands critics" at the CBC website at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/new-environmental-review-rules-anger-oilsands-critics-1.2252074> summarizes reaction and history.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Environmental Assessment Act, Environmental Impact Assessment, Environmental Science, Greenpeace, In Situ Oil Extraction, National Energy Board, Oil Sands, Stephen Harper** | [Leave a reply](#)

UN COP-19 underway in Warsaw from November 11-22

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The first week of the UN COP19 proceeded with a sombre air following the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Despite this, talks faced significant difficulties as Japan announced a reduction to its emission targets and Australia declared its decision to axe the country's carbon tax.

Canada has come under criticism for applauding Australia and encouraging other countries to follow suit. The WWF condemned Canada for undermining progress at the talks, while NDP Environment Critic Megan Leslie asserted that "the Conservatives are still asleep at the wheel" in a statement issued November 13th.

Delegates from Warsaw have indicated that the new accord will likely abandon the international treaty model of past agreements and instead resemble a "patchwork" of national emissions reduction targets that are governed by domestic law. COP19 is seen as a precursor to the more important international conference in Paris in 2015.

See the speeches and documentation from COP19 at the UNFCCC website at: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>; See WWF condemns Canada at: <http://www.wwf.eu/index.cfm?212403/WWF-condemns-Japan-Australia-Canada-undermining-progress-climate-talks>, and the NDP statement on Canada at COP19 at: <http://www.ndp.ca/news/statement-ndp-cop19-united-nations-framework-convention-climate-change>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Australia, Carbon Tax, COP19, International Climate Summit, UNFCCC, Warsaw, WWF** | [Leave a reply](#)

Pipeline Politics from Ontario's Point of View

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Politics of Pipelines: Ontario's Stake in Canada's Pipeline Debate, was released on November 12 by University of Toronto-based Mowat Centre, taking a climate change policy perspective on the issue of pipeline development and its impact on Ontario. It says that provinces who don't necessarily receive adequate economic benefit from the oil sands are obligated to contribute to the nationwide effort to reduce greenhouse gases, and recommends either a national carbon tax or a cap and trade policy to satisfy the "polluter pays" principle. The report does note that local and First Nations communities across Canada will likely benefit from an increase in construction, maintenance, and management jobs, as well spin-off projects near pipeline routes. However, manufacturing sectors may suffer from inflated exchange rates and Dutch Disease. In Ontario, the conversion of the Line 9 gas pipeline to oil sands bitumen would decrease the capacity of the natural gas sector and may increase the consumer cost, while taxpayers would be forced to fund equalization payments.

LINK

The Politics of Pipelines: Ontario's Stake in Canada's Pipeline Debate is at: <http://mowatcentre.ca/research-topic-mowat.php?mowatResearchID=96>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal Peoples, Cap and Trade, Carbon Markets, Dutch Disease, Emissions Trading, First Nations, Job Creation, Line 9, Ontario, Pipelines** | [Leave a reply](#)

No Carbon Leakage in Europe as a Result of Cap and Trade Policies

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A study commissioned by the European Commission has concluded that Europe's cap-and-trade program has not caused industry to relocate to countries without greenhouse gas regulation in a process known as "carbon leakage". In a series of sectoral "factsheets", the report presents historical data on the structure, performance, and competitiveness of sectors (including iron and steel, chemicals, paper, cement, refined petroleum) and assess the degree to which carbon leakage may have occurred. Although the study found that no companies left Europe for unregulated territory between 2005 and 2012, the authors indicate they suspect this may change.

Read *Carbon Leakage Evidence Project Report* by Ecorys Consultants, Netherlands at: http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/ets/cap/leakage/docs/cl_evidence_factsheets_en.pdf, or read a summary at Bloomberg news at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-10-31/carbon-curbs-haven-t-spurred-production-exodus-eu-study-shows.html>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cap and Trade, Carbon Leakage, EU** | [Leave a reply](#)

GHG Emissions around the World: the Latest Statistics

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 6, the World Meteorological Organization released the 2013 edition of its annual *Greenhouse Gas Bulletin*, showing that "between 1990 and 2012 there was a 32% increase in radiative forcing – the warming effect on our climate – because of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other heat-trapping long-lived gases such as methane and nitrous oxide." The volume of CO₂ grew faster in 2012 than in the previous decade, reaching 393.1 parts per million (ppm), 41 % above the pre-industrial level. Read the WMO press release, with links to related documents in English and French, at: http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/press_releases/pr_980_en.html

Posted in **Energy Policy, Government Policy** | Tagged **Emissions reduction targets, WMO, World Meteorological Organization** | [Leave a reply](#)

GHG Emissions in Canada

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In releasing the *2013 Emissions Trends* report in October, the Canadian government stated: "as a result of the combined efforts of federal, provincial and territorial governments, consumers and businesses, GHG emissions in 2020 will be 734 megatonnes (Mt). This is 128 Mt lower than where emissions would be in 2020 if no action were taken to reduce GHGs since 2005." (The report did not state that it is also 122 Mt above Canada's target level of 612 Mt.) The government will

maintain its current course of regulating emissions on a sector-by-sector basis- in other words, no improvement, no national leadership. Canada's *Emissions Trends 2013* report (and those from 2011 and 2012) are at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/ges-ghg/default.asp?lang=En&n=985F05FB-1>. See the Pembina reaction to the government report at: <http://www.pembina.org/media-release/2488>; and the Pembina October backgrounder concerning how the oil sands contribute to Canadian emissions, at: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2486>.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Emissions](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

GHG Emissions in United States

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 23, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released greenhouse gas data from its Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program, which provides information from over 8,000 facilities in the largest emitting industries, including power plants, oil and gas production and refining, iron and steel mills, and landfills. It provides carbon pollution emissions and trends broken down by industrial sector, greenhouse gas, geographic region, and individual facility. It also measures production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) predominantly used in refrigeration and air-conditioning. See the program homepage at: <http://www.epa.gov/ghgreporting/>; a press release at: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d0cf6618525a9efb85257359003fb69d/ee6b62db73ee67b485257c0d0058936b!OpenDocument>. Note that the more comprehensive U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory data was released in April 2013; see: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/usinventoryreport.html>.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Emissions reduction targets](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [EPA](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International GHG Emissions

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The *Emissions Gap Report 2013* released on Nov. 5 by the United Nations Environment Program is the fourth produced. It reviews the latest estimates of current global greenhouse gas emissions; national emission levels, both current (2010) and projected (2020), and global emission levels consistent with the 2°C target for emissions in 2020, 2030 and 2050. New to this report is an assessment of the extent to which countries are on track to meet their national pledges, and also a description of the many cooperative climate initiatives being undertaken internationally. Also, noting that agriculture accounts for approximately 11% of GHG emissions, the report includes a chapter on the agricultural sector, including policies for reducing emissions. Read the press release at: <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentId=2755&ArticleId=9683>

With the full report at: <http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEPemissionsGapReport2013.pdf>.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Agriculture](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Emissions Gap Report](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Overseas Development Institute Urges Phasing out of Fossil Fuel Subsidies

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Citing the latest estimates by the International Energy Association that subsidies to fossil fuel producers totaled \$523 billion worldwide in 2011, the Overseas Development Institute urges the phase-out of such subsidies (by 2020 for G20 countries). This “would eliminate the perverse incentives that drive up carbon emissions, create price signals for investment in a low-carbon transition and reduce pressure on public finances.” See *Time to Change the Game: Fossil Fuel Subsidies and Climate Executive Summary* at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8669.pdf>; full report is available from: <http://www.odi.org.uk/subsidies-change-the-game>. A similar message was contained in related report by the International Monetary Fund, *Energy Subsidy Reform: Lessons and Implications*, published in Spring 2013, and summarized at the WCR archive at: <http://workandclimatechangereport.org/2013/04/23/the-imf-decries-the-distortions-of-fossil-fuel-subsidies-working-at-a-cross-purpose-with-climate-compatible-investment/>.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [International Energy Association](#), [Overseas Development Institute](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Council of Canadians focus on Fracking

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Council of Canadians has published its Fall 2013 issue of *Perspectives*, which focused on fracking at: <http://www.canadians.org/canadian-perspectives-fall-2013>.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Council of Canadians](#), [Fracking](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Protests Continue in New Brunswick; UNIFOR Supports First Nations with a Call for a National Moratorium

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The government of New Brunswick continues to support fracking despite First Nations protests, according to New Brunswick’s Energy Minister, quoted in the *Globe and Mail*. Read “Anti-fracking protests shouldn’t hinder shale-gas sector, N.B. Energy Minister says” (Nov. 14) in the *Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/anti-fracking-protests-shouldnt-hinder-shale-gas-sector-nb-energy-minister-says/article15447462/>. But UNIFOR, the union which represents energy workers, expressed support for the First Nations protests and called for a national moratorium on fracking. Read the press release at: <http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/news/unifor-calls-national-moratorium-fracking> and the full statement by the National Executive Board (November 12) at: http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/neb_resolution_on_fracking_nov2013_e.pdf.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal Peoples](#), [Elsipogtog](#), [First Nations](#), [Fracking](#), [Fracking Moratorium](#), [labour union policies](#), [New Brunswick](#), [Protests & Rallies](#), [Shale gas](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Newfoundland says No to Fracking, for now

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Newfoundland Minister of Natural Resources announced on November 4th that the government “will not be accepting applications for onshore and onshore to offshore petroleum exploration using hydraulic fracturing”. The suspension will

allow the government time to review fracking rules in other jurisdictions, fully assess potential environmental impacts, and allow for public comments. See the press release at: <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/nr/1104n06.htm>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Fracking, Fracking Moratorium, Natural Gas, Newfoundland** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's New Voluntary Fracking Code of Conduct

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Petroleum Services Association of Canada has unveiled a new voluntary fracking code of conduct, signed by 11 companies. The code, which covers technical and environmental standard practice and guidelines for company engagement with stakeholders, comes after six months of nation-wide meetings with environmental and community groups, local governments and land owners. Industry representatives claim that most companies already follow the standards in the code, and that compared to other jurisdictions, Canada has long had stricter regulations on fracking. Read the press release by the Petroleum Services Association of Canada at: http://www.pfac.ca/wp-content/uploads/PSAC_Media_Release_October_30.pdf and the Statement of Principles and full Code of Conduct from a link at: <http://www.oilandgasinfo.ca/working-energy-commitment/hydraulic-fracturing-code-of-conduct/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Fracking, Fracking Regulations, Oil and Gas Regulations, Petroleum Services Association of Canada, Professional Codes and Guidelines** | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Court Challenge to Water Use in Fracking

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

EcoJustice, Sierra Club B.C., and The Wilderness Committee announced on November 13th that they have launched a lawsuit in the B.C. Supreme Court. The suit aims to stop the British Columbia Oil and Gas Commission from granting repeated short-term water use approvals to oil and gas companies. This practice allows the gas industry to exploit fresh water for fracking operations (among other things). See the EcoJustice press release at: <http://www.ecojustice.ca/media-centre/press-releases/water-usage-by-fracking-operations-challenged-in-b.c.-supreme-court>.

Posted in **Environmental Policy, Government Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia, British Columbia Oil and Gas Commission, EcoJustice, Fracking, Sierra Club, Wilderness Committee** | [Leave a reply](#)

Fracking Company Suing for Lost Profits in Québec

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

On September 6, 2013 Lone Pine Resources quietly submitted its formal request for arbitration against Canada, arguing that Québec's moratorium against fracking deprives Lone Pine of its right to profit in the Saint Lawrence Valley. Under NAFTA rules, the case will be argued in front of a panel of 3 judges. The Notice of Arbitration is available at: <http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/assets/pdfs/disp-diff/lone-02.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Fracking, Fracking Moratorium, Lone Pine Resources, NAFTA, Quebec** | [Leave a reply](#)

Anti-Fracking Regulations in California

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

California Governor Jerry Brown signed the State's first fracking bill on September 20th, and released proposed regulations on November 15, launching a 60-day public comment period. The regulations, effective January 1, 2015, will require companies to obtain a permit before fracking, notify neighbours, disclose chemicals used, and monitor air and water quality; they also require independent scientific studies. Industry calls the new rules "extensive" while environmental groups have criticized the law for being too weak.

"Proposed Oil Well Fracking Regulations Released" from the *Los Angeles Times* (Nov.15) at:

[http://www.latimes.com/business/money/la-fi-mo-oil-well-fracking-regulations-released-](http://www.latimes.com/business/money/la-fi-mo-oil-well-fracking-regulations-released-20131115,0,1871535.story#axzz2klA1sM4A)

[20131115,0,1871535.story#axzz2klA1sM4A](http://www.latimes.com/business/money/la-fi-mo-oil-well-fracking-regulations-released-20131115,0,1871535.story#axzz2klA1sM4A). Background and a link to the regulations are at the Department of Conservation website at: <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/Index/Pages/Index.aspx>.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **California, Fracking, Fracking Regulations, Jerry Brown** | [Leave a reply](#)

Presidential Executive Order Follows Up on U.S. Climate Action Plan

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 1, U.S. President Obama signed an Executive Order to implement the goals announced in his Climate Action Plan. The Executive Order establishes an inter-agency Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, chaired by the White House and including more than 25 agencies, to develop, coordinate, and implement priority Federal actions related to climate preparedness. It will supervise a new Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, to be composed of state, local, and tribal leaders, who will advise on how the Federal Government can respond at the community level. In an initiative that Canadians can only dream of, the Executive Order also instructs Federal agencies "to work together and with information users to develop new climate preparedness tools and information that state, local, and private-sector leaders need to make smart decisions. In keeping with the President's Open Data initiative, agencies will also make extensive Federal climate data accessible to the public through an easy-to-use online portal."

Read the full Executive Order at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/01/executive-order-preparing-united-states-impacts-climate-change>, or the Fact Sheet at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/01/fact-sheet-executive-order-climate-preparedness>.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Adaptation, Barack Obama, Climate change policy, Climate Preparedness, Climate Resilience, U.S. Climate Action Plan** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Trades Union Congress Holds its Climate Change Conference

Posted on **November 22, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Over 200 delegates took part in the TUC's climate change conference, *Green Growth: No Turning Back*, on 21 October 2013. Videos of speeches and workshops are available at: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/node/118958>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Green Growth, Labour Unions, Trades Union Congress, TUC** | [Leave a reply](#)

Safety for Pipeline Workers Raised as Part of the Pipeline Debate

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The recent oil spills in Alberta and Lac Megantic have raised the public profile of rail transport of oil and gas products in Canada. The Fraser Institute, apparently in response to the worsening prospects of U.S. approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline, released a report on *Intermodal Safety in the Transport of Oil* on October 15. Although the paper cites summary data from the National Energy Board about oil spills and injuries in Canada, the conclusions are based on data from the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) for the period 2005-2009. The paper compares injury statistics amongst workers in the pipeline, rail, and road modes of transport and finds that the rate of injury requiring hospitalization among oil pipeline workers was 30 times lower than that of rail workers, and 37 times lower than trucking workers. The paper concludes, "The evidence is clear: transporting oil by pipeline is safe and environmentally friendly. Furthermore, pipeline transportation is safer than transportation by road, rail, or barge, as measured by incidents, injuries, and fatalities- even though more road and rail incidents go unreported." The paper does NOT address the environmental damage caused by spills, or injury to citizens.

LINKS

Intermodal Safety in the Transport of Oil is available at the Fraser Institute at:<http://www.fraserinstitute.org/uploadedFiles/fraser-ca/Content/research-news/research/publications/intermodal-safety-in-the-transport-of-oil.pdf>

U.S. Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) website provides data and statistics at: <http://phmsa.dot.gov/pipeline/library/data-stats>

Canada's National Energy Board Pipeline Spills information is available at:<http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/clf-nsi/rsftyndthnvrnmnt/sfty/pplnncdntgrprtng/pplnncdntshydrcribnsplls/pplnncdntshydrcribnsplls-eng.html>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Keystone XL, Lac Megantic, National Energy Board, NEB, Occupational Health and Safety, Oil Spills, Oil Transport, Pipelines** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario's Fit 3.0 Program Lowers Domestic Content Requirements for Renewable Energy, Discourages Wind Projects

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The final version 3.0 of Ontario's Feed-in Tariff Rules, posted on October 9th, includes reductions to the minimum domestic content requirement levels (MDCR) in order to move towards compliance with the World Trade Organization ruling of May 2013. The levels of domestic content have been lowered from 50% to 28 – 19%, depending on the solar (PV) technology used. For on-shore wind projects, the MDCR has been lowered from 60% to 20%. Furthermore, minimum domestic content levels will no longer be required throughout the entire project, but only during the development and construction phases. According to the Minister's letter of direction, further changes will follow.

An article in *North American Wind Power* discusses the new FIT program and concludes that wind power projects will suffer. He notes, "As long as the Small FIT cap remains at 500 kW, the FIT program is no longer accessible to wind developers, except for those using small-scale turbines", and "The greater latitude given to municipalities in the location and siting of wind farms may make permitting more difficult for developers and preclude the siting of wind farms in municipalities that have a strong anti-wind bias."

LINKS

Ontario Power Authority FIT 3.0 documents are available at:<http://fit.powerauthority.on.ca/newsroom/october-9-2013-FIT-3-final-documents>, with an August 16, 2013 background document about Domestic Content Regulations at:<http://fit.powerauthority.on.ca/newsroom/august-16-2013-program-update>, and the Minister's Letter of Direction at:<http://powerauthority.on.ca/sites/default/files/page/DirectionAdministrativeMatters-renewables-Aug16-2013.pdf>

"Political Football: Ontario Sacks Large-scale Wind" in *North American Wind Power* (October 2013)

at: http://nawindpower.com/issues/NAW1310/FEAT_01_Political-Football-Ontario-Sacks-Large-Scale-Wind.html

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Feed-in Tariffs, FIT 3.0, Local Content Requirements, Ontario, Renewables, Wind Farms** | [Leave a reply](#)

How Green are Solar Jobs? Solar Scorecard Ranks Manufacturers on Working Conditions and Health and Safety

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition Annual Scorecard measures and ranks how solar manufacturing companies around the world perform on sustainability and social justice benchmarks, including extended producer responsibility, emissions transparency, chemical reduction policies, use of prison labour and conflict minerals, water policies, and the presence of internal policies for worker health and safety. In 2013, despite low survey response levels, the Scorecard ranked 40 companies, representing over 80% of the market share in the photovoltaic industry. Of those 40, only 7 have comprehensive internal policies that address worker rights and health and safety. These were: Astronergy (China), Sharp (Japan), SolarWorld (U.S.), SunPower (U.S.), Suntech (Japan), Trina (China), and Yingli (China). Solar Valley Toxics Coalition is a San Francisco-based advocacy group with the stated goals of reducing the use of toxic chemicals in the photovoltaic solar manufacturing industry, developing responsible recycling systems, and protecting workers throughout the global PV supply chain.

Another source of information may soon be available. In May 2013, the U.S.-based Solar Energy Industry Association finalized a Solar Commitment – a voluntary agreement which sets out “solar-specific and general best practice provisions regarding the environment, labor, ethics, health and safety, and management practices of the company.” Labour guidelines include freedom of association, hours and wages, and protection from sexual harassment. Health and safety standards include machine protection, training, protection from toxic substances, and protection from discipline for raising safety concerns. Companies that sign on to the Solar Commitment must provide an annual report on key performance indicators – no reports have been released yet. Signatories to date are: Dow Solar, Gerhlicher Solar America, PV Recycling, SunEdison, SunPower, Suntech, Trina, and Yingli Solar.

LINKS

Solar Valley Toxics Coalition Solar Scorecard is available at <http://www.solarscorecard.com/2013/2013-SVTC-Solar-Scorecard.pdf>

Background discussion, and links to solar companies featured in the SVTC Scorecard is at CleanTechnica at: <http://cleantechnica.com/2013/08/13/silicon-valley-toxics-coalitions-2013-solar-scorecard-just-release/>

SEIA Solar Commitment Factsheet is

at: http://www.seia.org/sites/default/files/Solar%20Commitment%20factsheet_2013.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Occupational Health and Safety, Renewables, Solar Energy, Solar Energy Industry Association, Working Conditions** | [Leave a reply](#)

TD Bank Report on Canada's Green Economy: Reconcile the Economy and Environment

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 2nd, one of Canada's Big Five banks, the TD Bank, released a report on "green economics" in Canada. TD found that environmental considerations have already become entrenched in corporate decision-making in Canada, and that reducing environmental impact often reduces costs, drives innovation, and stimulates growth. TD's preliminary analysis indicates a recent "decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation", wherein the percentage of GHG emissions per 1% GDP increase has fallen, while improved air and water quality, recycling rates and protected lands have accompanied strong overall growth. The report suggests that in order to better understand and encourage these trends, Canada needs a holistic focus on the "greening of the economy" in all sectors, rather than dichotomizing "green" and "brown" economics. To this end, TD calls for the development of environmental, economic, and government policy, and corporate responsibility indicators to help measure gains across industries and at all levels.

LINKS

The Greening of the Canadian Economy is

at:<http://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/TheGreeningOfTheCanadianEconomy.pdf>BlueGreen Canada response to the TD Report is at:<http://bluegreencanada.ca/blog/we%E2%80%99re-greener-we-think>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Business attitudes, Canadian Emissions, Canadian GDP, Climate change policy, Decoupling, Environment-Economy Dichotomy, Green Growth** | [Leave a reply](#)

York's Schulich School Tops New Survey of Global Green MBA Programs

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Corporate Knights survey for 2013 was released on September 23, ranking business schools for their integration of sustainability into the academic experience. This year, the survey expanded beyond its Canada-only focus to include MBA programs from 17 countries. The Schulich School of Business at York University (Toronto) ranked first, followed by John Molson School of Business at Concordia University (Montreal). Third place went to the University of Exeter Business School in the U.K., followed by the Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary, and the Nottingham University Business School in the U.K. 30 schools were ranked in the main survey, with a further 10 small schools in a separate ranking.

The Corporate Knights survey is based on the methodology of the pioneering Beyond Grey Pinstripes survey of the Aspen Institute (which ceased in 2012). The rankings follow three categories: faculty research, course content, and institutional support. Responses are from faculty and administrators, with the student perspective reflected in measures of student-led initiatives (e.g. student groups, consulting clubs, faculty groups, and student committees/task forces). Unlike many other surveys of MBA programs, the Corporate Knights survey does not include alumni salaries in their metrics, on the grounds that rankings could be skewed because students entering the non-profit sector typically earn less after graduating.

LINKS

Global Green MBA website is at: <http://ggmba.corporateknights.com/>

Beyond Grey Pinstripes website is at: <http://www.beyondgreypinstripes.org/>

New Strategy and Blueprint for European Forest Industries Considers Aging Workforce

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In late September, the European Union announced a new forest strategy which takes into account the effects of climate change on the forest ecosystem. Surprisingly, the EU press release states that “forests cover more than 42% of the EU's land area and forest biomass...supplies half the EU's total renewable energy. ” The new strategy calls for sustainable management of woodlands, and is accompanied by a “Blueprint” document to guide forest industries, (wood-processing, furniture, pulp and paper, and printing) to increase efficiency and create jobs. The Blueprint outlines the economic and technological state of the art for these four forest sub-industries, and discusses their challenges, including the aging demographic of the workforce, the need for training, and possible mechanisms for training delivery.

LINKS

European Commission Forest Strategy press release is at:http://ec.europa.eu/news/agriculture/130924_en.htm
EU Forest-based Industries: A Blueprint to Unleash their Economic and Societal Potential is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/_getdocument.cfm?doc_id=8129

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [EU](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [Forestry Management](#), [Labour Training](#), [Sustainable Forestry](#), [Workforce Aging](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy Efficiency in the U.K.: Has the Green New Deal Worked?

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Marking five years after the launch of Britain's Green New Deal, two recent reports examine the experience: First, from the Green New Deal Group, a report which states that government support for renewable energy has melted away in the face of austerity programs and the lingering uncertainty in the global financial system. The authors propose a systematic programme of investment in green infrastructure of at least £50 billion a year, beginning with a nationwide effort to retrofit existing buildings and to build new, affordable, sustainably-sited, energy-efficient homes. The authors contend that thousands of jobs will be created by their proposals, and support that contention by citing numerous sectoral employment impact studies in Appendix 1 and in their bibliography.

A second report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment was released on October 8, reflecting the hearings and submissions to the government inquiry into sustainable construction and the Green Deal. The report found that the Green Deal provisions are over-complicated and uncompetitive, with little financial incentive for participation. “Without regulation and financial incentives in place, households and businesses retain the status quo...Hand in hand with this, the integration of construction skills, knowledge and work practices are of concern in the construction industry.” One of the key stakeholders in the process, the UK Green Building Council, welcomed the report as a credible voice urging improvements to the existing program, and also commended its expansion to social housing.

LINKS

A National Plan for the UK: From Austerity to the Age of the Green New Deal by the Green New Deal Group, published by the New Weather Institute, is at:<http://www.greennewdealgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Green-New-Deal-5th->

[Anniversary.pdf](#)

Re-energizing the Green Agenda, Report of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment is at: <http://www.cic.org.uk/admin/resources/sustainable-construction-and-the-green-deal-report.pdf>

All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment website is at:<http://www.appgebe.org.uk/>; Information about their Inquiry into Sustainable Construction and the Green Deal is at: <http://www.appgebe.org.uk/inquiry.shtml>, with submissions at:<http://www.appgebe.org.uk/submissions-into-Sustainable-Construction-and-the-Green-Deal.shtml>

UK Green Building Council response is at:<http://www.ukgbc.org/press-centre/press-releases/uk-gbc-welcomes-all-party-group-report-green-deal>

Details of the U.K. Green Deal are at:<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-households-to-cut-their-energy-bills/supporting-pages/green-deal>

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Austerity, energy efficiency, Energy policy, Green New Deal, Infrastructure, Job Creation, retrofitting, United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

Will the IPCC 5th Assessment Report Inspire Change?

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was released on September 27. Dealing with the physical sciences, the report projects future weather, ocean levels, global warming and carbon dioxide levels. According to U.K.'s *Guardian* newspaper, the report provided the first "carbon budget" – how much carbon dioxide we can emit before global temperature increase exceeds 2°C and the planet overheats. The bad news? We'd already used half of it by 2011, and could now be approaching two-thirds. Thomas Stocker, co-chair of the IPCC working group, points out that more fossil fuels exist than can be burned if we are to remain within the budget. In other words, some valuable reserves will need to remain untapped.

The *Globe and Mail* summarized early Canadian reactions to the IPCC report, and cited the absence of comment from Prime Minister Stephen Harper's office. Provincial premiers have been similarly silent. The David Suzuki Foundation is one of the few Canadian organizations to have commented, highlighting provincial successes and calling for the federal government "to prioritize clean energy and eliminate the billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies." The Climate Justice Project at the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis analyzed the IPCC report in relation to British Columbia, and asks, "will LNG development blow B.C.'s carbon budget?". The Pembina Institute released a brief statement. A call to arms can be found in the Opinion piece by Andrew Weaver in the *Globe and Mail*, which states, "While the U.S., the E.U. and even China are making a profound shift to address the root causes of climate change, the Canadian government continues to focus our economy predominantly around the extraction, transportation and combustion of fossil fuels. Even British Columbia, which used to be considered a leader in the development of climate policies, is now moving in the opposite direction with its focus on the development of a Liquefied Natural Gas industry. The IPCC report could and should inspire us to take a different approach."

LINKS

IPCC 5th Assessment Report documentation is available at: <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

"IPCC: 30 Years to Climate Calamity If We Carry on Blowing the Carbon Budget" in *The Guardian* (Sept 27) at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/sep/27/ipcc-world-dangerous-climate-change>
"Around the World: Strong Reactions To Climate Change Report" (Sept. 27) in the *Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/around-the-world-strong-reactions-to-climate-change-report/article14566793/>

David Suzuki Foundation media backgrounder on the IPCC 5th Report is at:http://www.davidsuzuki.org/media/news/downloads/DSF_IPCC_WG1_Backgrounder.pdf

"Will LNG Development Blow BC's Carbon Budget?" is at the Climate Justice Project at:<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/will-Ing-development-blow-bcs-carbon-budget>

Pembina Institute response is at: <http://www.pembina.org/media-release/2483>

"Now That Climate Change is Beyond Doubt, Focus on Fixing It" (September 28) at the *Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/now-that-climate-change-is-beyond-doubt-lets-focus-on-solving-it/article14588647/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, Carbon Budget, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC Reports, Pembina Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

Quebec and California Link Carbon Markets

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 1, the governments of Quebec and California announced an agreement outlining the steps and procedures to fully harmonize and integrate the cap-and-trade programs of their two jurisdictions, effective January 1, 2014. It is hoped that this will be a model for more such partnerships. "The sale of emission allowances will generate at least \$ 2.5 billion in revenue by 2020 in Quebec. These funds will be fully reinvested in initiatives to fight climate change, including facilitating the conversion to renewable energy, promoting energy efficiency, improving industrial processes and preparing Quebec society to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The electrification of transportation is another major project on which our government will labour over the coming months", said Minister Yves-François Blanchet. See the Quebec government press release at: <http://communiqués.gouv.qc.ca/gouvqc/communiqués/GPQE/Octobre2013/01/c6398.html>, and "Carbon Market: Quebec and California Link Their Respective Cap And Trade Programs" (Oct. 1) in *GlobeAdvisor* at:<https://secure.globeadvisor.com/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CNW/20131001/C6398>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **California, Cap and Trade, Emissions Trading, International cooperation, Quebec** | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Markets the Best Route to Low-Carbon Global Economies

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a new report, *Climate and Carbon: Aligning Prices and Policies*, the OECD condemns fossil fuel subsidies and tax exemptions, and posits carbon markets as most effective mechanism for transitioning to a low-carbon economy and tackling climate change. The report, drawing on evidence from 15 countries (but not including Canada), points out that "carbon markets are more than 16 times cheaper at cutting greenhouse gases than renewable subsidies paid to power producers". However, carbon markets worldwide are being undermined by a lack of coherence in government approaches to carbon pricing and financial support for fossil fuels. According to OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría, limiting global temperature increase to 2°C requires sending consistent carbon price signals to consumers, producers and investors alike. *Climate and Carbon: Aligning Prices and Policies* is available at:<http://www.oecd.org/environment/climate-carbon.htm>

Quebec Energy Review Aims to Encourage Renewables and Develop Hydrocarbons

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A review of Quebec's energy strategy is underway, with public consultations from September to October 11, and the final strategy document promised in 2014. The six strategic objectives to the energy review are: "to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; promote the electrification of transportation and develop the industry; promote energy efficiency in all sectors ; rely on the production of renewable energies (hydroelectricity and wind energy) and develop alternative renewable energies (underwater generators, passive solar energy, geothermal energy, and so on) and foster development and innovation; responsibly explore and exploit Québec's hydrocarbon reserves; and ensure the long-term security and diversity of Québec's energy supplies." The Public Consultation on Energy Issues in Quebec website is at:

<http://consultationenergie.gouv.qc.ca/english/> (English) and <http://consultationenergie.gouv.qc.ca/> (French language).

The Consultation paper *From Greenhouse Gas Reduction to Québec's Energy Self-Sufficiency – Consultation Paper*, is at: <http://consultationenergie.gouv.qc.ca/pdf/energy-issues-consultation-paper.pdf>. An archive of all written briefs submitted to the Commission is available at the French language section of the website only, at:

<http://consultationenergie.gouv.qc.ca/documents/memoires.asp>

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Emissions reduction targets](#), [Energy Independence](#), [Public Transportation](#), [Quebec](#), [Quebec Energy Strategy](#), [Renewables](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Wind Energy Update

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A special edition of British *reNews* was released on September 26, focussing on Canadian wind energy development. The report summarizes the policy environment for each province, with detailed tables showing the existing and planned wind energy installations for 2013 and 2014. Ontario remains the leader in wind energy in Canada. The president of the Canadian Wind Energy Association predicts "an average over the next three years of 1500MW of wind power installed per annum", but with an uncertainty after 2016, given that Ontario, Quebec, B.C. and Alberta are reviewing and redrafting their energy policies. The "Canada Special Report 2013" by reNews is at: <http://renews.biz/wp-content/assets/reNewsCanada2013.pdf>

Where are wind energy technicians being trained? In the Summer 2013 edition of *Windsight*, the Canadian Wind Energy Association magazine, there is a feature article about training at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario – see http://www.canwea.ca/media/windsight_e.php. CanWEA also maintains a list (last updated in 2012) of wind training courses at colleges and universities at: <http://www.canwea.ca/pdf/Education-and-Training-Programs.pdf>.

On September 19th, wind turbine manufacturer Siemens opened a 40,000-square-foot, \$7 million training centre for technicians in Orlando Florida. The facility is one of four in the world operated by Siemens (the others are in Brande, Denmark; Bremen, Germany; and Newcastle, U.K.), and is intended to serve North and South America, training more than 2,400 wind service technicians annually. See: <http://theenergycollective.com/timholt/277131/siemens-inaugurates-new-state-art-wind-service-training-center-us>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [CanWEA](#), [Education and Training](#), [Labour Training](#), [Renewables](#), [Wind Farms](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change Initiatives of Canadian Companies

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 2013 Canadian report of the CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project), was released on October 1, ranking the Canadian companies doing the best job of investing to cut greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change. The report was prepared by Accenture on behalf of the non-profit CDP, and is based on questionnaires sent to the 200 largest Canadian companies by market capitalization (the "Canada 200"), as listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX). Key results: 85% of respondents say that climate change is integrated into their business strategy (an increase from 77% in 2012); 64% of respondents offer incentives for "climate performance" (from 14% from 2012). The five top Climate Performance Leadership companies are: ARC Resources Ltd., Thomson Reuters, Bank of Montreal, Suncor Energy, and TD Bank.

See the *Canadian Report* at: <https://www.cdproject.net/CDPResults/CDP-Canada-200-Climate-Change-Report-2013.pdf>. The U.S. version of this report is based on the 500 S & P-listed companies and is available at: <https://www.cdproject.net/CDPResults/CDP-SP500-climate-report-2013.pdf>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Business attitudes, Canada, Carbon Disclosure Project, Corporate Climate Policy, Low-Carbon Investment** | [Leave a reply](#)

Global Aviation Industry Agrees to Develop Emissions Curbs

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the meetings of the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal on October 4, the ICAO approved what they called an historic framework agreement, authorizing the development of global market-based measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions over the next three years, for implementation in 2020. The resolution encourages nations to develop new aircraft technology, adopt carbon-dioxide standards and use sustainable alternatives to jet fuels. By rejecting a European Union proposal to include aviation in the EU emissions trading system immediately, the ICAO drew criticism from green groups who criticize the slowness of the 2020 start date.

See the Bloomberg news summary at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-10-04/first-global-emissions-market-for-airlines-wins-support.html> and <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-10-04/carbon-cuts-loom-for-airlines-as-icao-eyes-global-market.html>.

Canada's position is set out in *Canada's Action Plan on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Aviation*, at: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/policy/aviation-emissions-3005.htm>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aviation Industry, Corporate Climate Policy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Public Donations Save the Australian Climate Commission

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 23, the former head of Australia's Climate Commission announced that the axed organization would rise again as the Climate Council, a non-profit body funded by public donations. As of October 15th, the Council had raised \$1 million Australian to continue its mission "to provide authoritative, expert advice to the Australian public on climate change". See the Council website at: <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/> and read a report in *The Guardian* at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/sep/23/climate-commission-resurrected-as-private-body>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Australia, Australia Climate Council** | [Leave a reply](#)

New Research Initiatives Underway

Posted on **October 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

1) In the U.S., a new research initiative led by hedge fund billionaire Tom Steyer, former U.S. Treasury secretary Henry Paulson, and outgoing mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg aims to calculate the true financial cost of climate change. In a report expected in summer 2014, "Risky Business" will "combine existing data on the current and potential impacts of climate change with original research to reveal the most vulnerable sectors and assist with preparation". According to *Bloomberg Markets Magazine*, the team also hopes to show that the eventual consequences of "business as usual" will outweigh its short-term benefits. See <http://riskybusiness.org/about> or <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-10-01/climate-change-rescue-in-u-s-makes-steyer-converge-with-paulson.html>

2) Launched on September 24, the new Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, co-chaired by Nicholas Stern, will conduct a "year-long, \$9 million study to analyze the economic costs and benefits of acting against climate change". The study will use macroeconomic modeling techniques to analyze possible outcomes, factoring in potential policy mechanisms, economic growth, investment, employment, poverty reduction, income distribution, and the need for improved health, energy, and food security. The commission hopes to uncover pathways to a resilient, resource-efficient, low-carbon economy. See <http://newclimateeconomy.net/>

3) Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario will launch a Centre for Sustainable Food Systems on November 14, to bring together researchers from the departments of Geography and Environmental Studies, Psychology, Biology, Global Studies, Religion and Culture as well as the School of Business and Economics. From their website at: https://www.wlu.ca/homepage.php?grp_id=13686: "Our vision is to conduct research that is both grounded in practice and theoretically informed, and to disseminate this co-generated knowledge through local, national and global networks to advance opportunities for and educate about more sustainable food systems."

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Adaptation, Agriculture, Climate Risk, Corporate Climate Policy, Economic Risk, Michael R. Bloomberg, Risky Business, Tom Steyer** | [Leave a reply](#)

Professional Associations have a Role to Play in Climate Change

Posted on **October 22, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A report published by West Coast Environmental Law starts from the position that climate change is a cross-cutting issue that affects advice and decision-making in many different professions, including architects and engineers, professional foresters, biologists, insurance professionals, accountants, and city planners. The report calls for an enhanced role for professional associations using the existing tools, such as codes of conduct and ethics, standards of practice, requirements for continuing professional development, and policy statements. In one example, the author suggests a statement of ethical responsibility to "act in the public interest (including promoting sustainability); not speak beyond one's expertise or competence; not make misleading statements or falsify data; and act with due diligence". The report describes exemplary

climate change initiatives underway by such groups as the Canadian Institute of Planners, Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC), and Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI).

LINKS

Professionals and Climate Change: How professional associations can get serious about global warming, written by Andrew Gage and published by West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL), a British Columbia “non-profit group of environmental law strategists and analysts dedicated to safeguarding the environment through law”. Available at: http://wcel.org/sites/default/files/publications/Professionals%20and%20Climate%20Change_0.pdf

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [APEGBC](#), [Engineers](#), [Professional Associations](#), [Professional Codes and Guidelines](#), [Professional Ethics](#), [West Coast Environmental Law](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Unifor Founding Convention Hears a Call for a Green Labour Revolution

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada’s newest and biggest private sector union, Unifor, held its founding convention on August 31 and September 1, making official the merger of the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) and the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union (CEP). These two unions together represent approximately 300,000 workers, in almost all sectors of the economy, including auto and aerospace manufacturing, rail, energy, communications, forestry, fisheries, and mining – sectors which are on the front lines of climate change.

In her speech to the convention, Naomi Klein stated that the labour movement is needed to take the lead in the fight against climate change – environmentalists and political parties cannot do it alone. In outlining her own “genuine climate action plan”, she called for a democratically-controlled energy system and massive investment in public infrastructure. “I am not suggesting some half-assed token ‘green jobs’ program. This is a green labour revolution I’m talking about. An epic vision of healing our country from the ravages of the last 30 years of neoliberalism and healing the planet in the process.”... “Climate change – when its full economic and moral implications are understood – is the most powerful weapon progressives have ever had in the fight for equality and social justice.”

Environmental goals figure in some of the important official documents of the new union. Note Article 2.10 of the new Unifor Constitution: “Our goal is transformative. To reassert common interest over private interest. Our goal is to change our workplaces and our world. Our vision is compelling. It is to fundamentally change the economy, with equality and social justice, restore and strengthen our democracy and achieve an environmentally sustainable future. This is the basis of social unionism -a strong and progressive union culture and a commitment to work in common cause with other progressives in Canada and around the world.”

The Unifor Vision and Plan document strikes a more pragmatic note. The union promises to oppose the export of raw bitumen and the construction of massive pipelines, advocating for more “made in Canada” inputs and processing. It pledges to work with environmental allies to advocate for a Canadian energy policy which reduces GHG emissions, ensures a sustainable development of the oil sands and promotes value-added jobs in upgrading and refining petroleum products.

LINKS

Why Unions Need to Join the Climate Fight, Naomi Klein’s speech is at her website at: <http://www.naomiklein.org/articles/2013/09/why-unions-need-join-climate-fight>

Unifor website is at: <http://www.unifor.org/en> (English) and <http://www.unifor.org/fr> (French), including the Constitution at: <http://www.unifor.org/en/about-unifor/constitution> (English version) and <http://www.unifor.org/fr/a-propos-unifor/statuts>

(French version).

A New Union for a Challenging World: Unifor's Vision and Plan is available at: the convention website at:
<http://www.newunionconvention.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/682-New-Union-Vision-web-ENG.pdf> (English version) and
<http://www.nouveausyndicatendirect.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/682-New-Union-Vision-FR-web.pdf> (French version).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **CAW, CEP, Labour and Greens, Labour Unions, Naomi Klein, Oil Sands, Pipelines, Unifor** | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy Conservation Can Deliver Jobs in Ontario

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**



In a report released on August 22, BlueGreen Canada calls on the Ontario government to cut energy use by 25 per cent by 2025 ("25 by 25"). According to the economic analysis commissioned by BlueGreen and conducted by Stokes Economic Consulting, reducing consumption by 25% would result in 25,000 new jobs, \$3.7 billion more in GDP, lower deficits for both the federal and provincial governments, and a 9% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025. BlueGreen Canada states that a more aggressive conservation approach is supported by environmental groups, and by Enbridge and Union Gas companies, and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.

The release of the BlueGreen report coincides with a formal review of the provincial government's long term energy plan, begun in July, with the results promised by Fall 2013. In announcing the review, Energy Minister Chiarelli wrote: "this government believes conservation must play a more prominent role in our energy planning. Conservation is the most efficient way to help ratepayers reduce their costs."

A related report released by Pembina Institute on September 13, *Renewable is Doable*, shows that past forecasts have overestimated Ontario's demand for electricity, resulting in plans for more unnecessary nuclear reactors. The authors argue that investing in conservation and green energy options is a more cost-effective way to meet Ontario's energy needs.

LINKS

More Jobs, Less Pollution: Why Energy Conservation is Common Sense for Ontario is available on the BlueGreen Canada website at: http://www.bluegreencanada.ca/sites/default/files/resources/BLUEgreen_engRPT-FINAL-web.pdf

The Economic Impacts of Reducing Natural Gas and Electricity Use in Ontario (Supporting Economic Analysis report by Stokes Economic Consulting) is available at:

<http://www.bluegreencanada.ca/sites/default/files/Energy%20Efficiency%20Impact%20Study.pdf>

Ontario government Long term Energy Plan Review website is at: <http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/en/ltep/>; the Minister's remarks are at: <http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/en/ltep/making-choices/#conservation>

Renewable is Doable: Affordable and Flexible Options for Ontario's Long-Term Energy Plan is at:

<http://www.pembina.org/pub/2479>

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **BlueGreen Canada, energy conservation, Ontario** | [Leave a reply](#)

British Columbia Liquefied Natural Gas Strategy: Workforce Estimates Released, but Question Keep Coming

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report released on July 23 by the government of British Columbia estimates that 60,000 workers will be needed to build five LNG plants and pipelines throughout 2016 and 2017, with a further 75,000 permanent skilled workers needed once the projects are operational. The B.C. *Natural Gas Workforce Strategy and Action Plan* is based on information from the *LNG Employment Impact Review*, conducted for the government by consultants Grant Thornton. However, on August 1, the Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria sent a 63-page letter to the federal and provincial Ministers of the Environment, stating, "On behalf of Northwest Institute for Bioregional Research, we hereby request that you direct that a Strategic Economic and Environmental Assessment be conducted of proposed massive new LNG developments in British Columbia." The economic questions from the Environmental Law Centre do not specifically relate to workforce impact, but rather to the costs to the taxpayer and the consumer, especially in light of the volatility of the high Asian price for natural gas. The letter also raises the issues of the GHG emissions associated with LNG production, along with other environmental concerns.

LINKS

LNG Workforce Strategy and Action Plan full report is at:

<http://www.rto.bc.ca/Assets/RTO+Assets/About+RTO/BC+NG+Strategy+2013JUL.pdf> (the government press release is available at: <http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/07/action-plan-released-for-bcs-lng-sector.html>).

Grant Thornton *Employment Impact Review* is at:

http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/downloads/Grant_Thornton_LNG_Employment_Impacts.pdf

Letter from the Environmental Law Centre, requesting a Strategic Economic and Environmental Assessment of LNG developments in B.C. is available at: <http://www.elc.uvic.ca/documents/2013Aug1-Aglukkaq-Polak-Letter-ELC2013-02-01.pdf>

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Labour Market Planning](#), [Liquefied Natural Gas](#), [LNG](#), [Natural Gas Employment](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Energy East Pipeline: Job Creation Projections Provided by TransCanada

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

TransCanada Pipelines released an economic analysis of their Energy East pipeline project on September 9, providing detailed estimates of direct, indirect and induced job creation, as well as the impact on tax revenues and Canadian GDP. The report was prepared by Deloitte and Touche LLP, using a Statistics Canada input/output model. It forecasts more than 10,000 full-time jobs will be directly supported during the development and construction phase (2013 to 2018), with approximately half of the jobs in construction, engineering, architectural, and oil and gas support services industries. In the operational phase, approximately 1,000 full-time jobs are forecast.

Despite the enthusiasm of federal politicians and New Brunswick Premier David Alward, CBC and the Globe and Mail have reported skepticism about the job creation numbers by New Brunswickers. There is also serious opposition from Ontario and Quebec, based on environmental and safety concerns.

LINKS

Energy East: The Economic Benefits of TransCanada's Canadian Mainline Conversion Project at the Deloitte website at: <http://www.energyeastpipeline.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Energy-East-Deloitte-Economic-Benefits-Report.pdf>; A briefer (2-page) Backgrounder is available at: <http://www.energyeastpipeline.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Energy-East-Economic-Analysis-Backgrounder.pdf>.

"TransCanada Touts National Benefits of Energy East Plan" (Sept. 10) in the *Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/energy-east-pipeline-will-create-2000-jobs-transcanada/article14213238/>

Energy East Pipeline may create 10,000 Jobs, Study Says (Sept. 10) is at the CBC website at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/energy-east-pipeline-may-create-10-000-jobs-study-says-1.1699614>

"N.B. Mayor adds to Chorus of Dissent against Energy East Pipeline Plan" (Sept. 12) in the *Globe and Mail* at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/nb-mayor-adds-to-chorus-of-dissent-against-energy-east-pipeline-plan/article14298359/>

"TransCanada's Eastern Path hits Snag in Ontario"(Aug. 22) in the *Globe and Mail* is at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/transcanadas-eastern-path-hits-roadblock-in-ontario/article13909022/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Deloitte, Energy East pipeline, Job Creation, New Brunswick, Oil Spills, Pipelines, Quebec, TransCanada Corporation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Job Analysis of U.S. Energy Legislation

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) released a September White Paper which assesses the job creation potential of the *U.S. Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act (Bill S. 1392)* – also known as the Shaheen-Portman Bill. The bi-partisan bill includes provisions to strengthen building codes and train workers in energy efficient building technologies, and has the support of the U.S. National Association of Manufacturers. The ACEEE report finds that increased energy efficiency would create savings for industrial, commercial and residential users, which would translate into increased consumer spending. The authors forecast that the economy would be stimulated to support over 152,000 new jobs in 2025, increasing to 174,000 jobs by 2030. Unfortunately, debate on the bill during the week of September 16th was stalemated by Republican manoeuvres to delay implementation of ObamaCare, and passage is threatened.

LINKS

Economic Impacts of the Energy Efficiency Provisions in the Energy Savings & Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2013 and Select Amendments is at: <http://aceee.org/files/pdf/white-paper/shaheen-portman-2013.pdf>

Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act (Bill S. 1392) is available at:

<http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th/senate-bill/1392>

Posted in **Energy Policy, United States** | Tagged **ACEEE, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, Building Codes, employment impacts, Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act (Bill S. 1392), Green Building, Shaheen-Portman Bill, United States** | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour and Environmentalists in the U.S. – Recent Developments

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

On the eve of the AFL-CIO 2013 Convention in September, the Climate Justice Alliance sent an open letter to AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, to “implore Labor to join us in the fight against climate change.” (See <http://www.ourpowercampaign.org/an-open-letter-to-the-afl-cio/>).

Appealing for collaboration, the letter acknowledges the debt of all working people to the labour movement, and credits it for its skills in grassroots activism. Thus, “the environmental justice movement cannot halt climate change without organized labor. We need each other to win.” The letter concludes, “We request a meeting with the AFL-CIO leadership to discuss the Federation’s response to climate change and how to strengthen our collective struggles.” The AFL-CIO Convention website is at: <http://www.aflcio.org/About/Exec-Council/Conventions/2013>; their most recent Executive Council Statement on *Energy and Jobs* (Feb. 26, 2013) is at: <http://www.aflcio.org/About/Exec-Council/EC-Statements/Statement-on-Energy-and-Jobs>, with context and analysis about that statement by the Labor Network for Sustainability at: <http://www.labor4sustainability.org/articles/labor-climate-and-the-kxl-interpreting-the-new-afl-cio-statement-on-energy-and-jobs/>.

For more context, see “Will closer Partnership between Labor and Greens Help Build Both Movements?” at the Sierra Club website at: <http://sierraclub.typepad.com/compass/2013/09/will-closer-partnership-between-labor-and-greens-help-build-both-movements.html>, and also “When Fighting for Coal Plants is absolutely the Right Thing to Do”, at the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy website at: <http://energydemocracyinitiative.org/when-fighting-to-save-a-coal-plant-is-absolutely-the-right-thing-to-do/>

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **AFL–CIO, Climate Justice Alliance, Coal Industry, Environmental Groups, Just Transition, Labor Network for Sustainability, Labour and Greens, labour union policies, Sierra Club, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadians Take to the Courts to Fight for Freedom of Speech and Protest

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

In mid-August, ForestEthics Advocacy and activist Donna Sinclair filed a constitutional challenge in the Federal Court of Canada, seeking to overturn the amendments to the *National Energy Board Act* which were passed in the 2012 omnibus budget bill C-238, and which make it more difficult for citizens to speak out in regulatory hearings. Clayton Ruby, Chair of the Board of ForestEthics, is also seeking an injunction to prevent the National Energy Board from making a recommendation to cabinet on Enbridge’s Line 9B application until the constitutional challenge has been dealt with.

See the *Globe and Mail* report of August 13th at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/activists-launch-suit-in-federal-court-over-ability-to-oppose-proposed-pipeline-projects/article13721850/>. The ForestEthics press release is at: <http://www.forestethics.org/blog/press-release-forestethics-advocacy-challenges-harper-government-energy-rules-court>, the 4-page Backgrounder is at: <http://www.forestethics.org/sites/forestethics.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/Backgrounder-ForestEthics-Advocacy-Lawsuit.pdf>.

In Alberta, the Pembina Institute appeared in court on September 5, appealing a Government of Alberta decision which denied the Institute a voice in the 2009 regulatory review of the Southern Pacific Resource Corporation’s proposed oil sands project on the MacKay River near Fort McMurray. See the Pembina news report at: <http://www.pembina.org/media-release/2477>.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Bill C-238](#), [Clayton Ruby](#), [Enbridge](#), [ForestEthics](#), [Freedom of speech](#), [Line 9B](#), [National Energy Board](#), [Pembina Institute](#), [Pipelines](#), [Protests & Rallies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Obama Announces a Climate Action Plan – and EPA Announces New Limits for Coal and Gas-Fired Power Plants

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 25, U.S. President Obama laid out a comprehensive plan to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, prepare for the impacts of climate change, and lead global efforts to fight it. He based his arguments on moral, health, and economic grounds, and emphasized his personal commitment by announcing steps that he could authorize, without Congressional approval. Read the plan at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/energy/climate-change>. The first major step in this plan came on September 20, when the Environmental Protection Agency proposed limits on carbon dioxide emissions from existing coal- and gas-fired power plants. The rules are not likely to be finalized until Fall of 2014 and will face aggressive opposition from the U.S. coal industry.

See the *New York Times* article at: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/20/us/politics/obama-administration-announces-limits-on-emissions-from-power-plants.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130920 and also “Challenges Await Plan to reduce Emissions” at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/21/business/energy-environment/challenges-await-plan-to-reduce-emissions.html?src=un&feedurl=http%3A%2F%2Fjson8.nytimes.com%2Fpages%2Fpolitics%2Findex.jsonp>

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Barack Obama](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Electric power generation](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [U.S. Climate Action Plan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

What does the New Obama Climate Change Plan Mean for Keystone – and what is Stephen Harper Doing about it?

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On what has become the defining issue of his climate policy, President Obama stated that he would approve the Keystone XL pipeline, only if it “does not significantly exacerbate the climate problem.” In a *New York Times* interview in July, the President downplayed the job creation impact of Keystone XL, saying that, after construction, “we’re talking about somewhere between 50 and 100 jobs in an economy of 150 million working people.” See “Obama Says He’ll Evaluate Pipeline Project Depending on Pollution” (*NY Times*, July 28) at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/28/us/politics/obama-says-hell-evaluate-pipeline-project-depending-on-pollution.html?ref=politics>

On July 23, a Natural Resources Defence Council White Paper on the Keystone’s impact calls for the denial of approval on the grounds that the pipeline would exacerbate global carbon pollution. Further, the paper states, “Canada is not pursuing climate policy that would effectively counteract significant growth in greenhouse gas emissions, or meet its international climate target. ... Current regulations in Alberta are inadequate, and despite promises from the last four Canadian federal environmental ministers, the Canadian federal government has not yet introduced rules to effectively limit greenhouse gas pollution from Canada’s oil and gas sector.” (See the White Paper at: http://docs.nrdc.org/energy/files/ene_13072301b.pdf).

Until now, the Canadian government has used the job creation and energy security arguments to promote oil sands development and the Keystone XL pipeline (as exemplified in its [Go with Canada Website](#)). But on September 6th, CBC reporter Chris Hall reported that Prime Minister Harper sent a letter to Obama in August, “formally proposing ‘joint action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas sector’”. See *Harper offers Obama climate plan to win Keystone approval* (Sept. 6) at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2013/09/06/pol-harper-canada-us-climate-change-strategy-letter-keystone.html>.

So far, Obama has not responded to Harper’s proposal, and the Canadian government has not announced any new policies or regulations for GHG emissions. The Keystone XL decision is now deferred till 2014, after the U.S. State Department’s Inspector General confirmed a delay in the inquiry about potential conflict of interest in the environmental review process.

Meanwhile, the drumbeat of protest against Keystone XL goes on: a report released on August 29 by the Sierra Club and Oil Change International compiles data and



commentary “from oil industry experts, Wall Street analysts, and Canadian politicians who say on the record that without Keystone XL the industry cannot expand production of tar sands crude”. Sources for the report include Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Royal Bank of Canada, International Energy Agency, Standard & Poor, TransCanada, Government of Alberta, Scientific American, Financial Post, and others. Read the report: *FAIL: How the Keystone XL Tar Sands Pipeline Flunks the Climate Test* at:

<https://content.sierraclub.org/beyondoil/sites/content.sierraclub.org/beyondoil/files/documents/kxl-climate-report.pdf>

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#), [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Job Creation](#), [Keystone XL](#), [Natural Resources Defence Council](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Pipelines](#), [Sierra Club](#), [Stephen Harper](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Chamber of Commerce Weighs in on the Economic Need for More “Energy Infrastructure”

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a report released in September, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce “highlights how Canada’s lack of infrastructure to get its oil and gas to tidewater and overseas is preventing Canadians from maximizing their potential benefits in energy markets and is costing Canada as much as \$50 million a day in lost jobs, tax revenues and other economic benefits.” The title of the report is based on a quotation from Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver, and its economic arguments rely on secondary sources. It does not specifically address the issue of job creation or employment impacts. Importantly, the major sponsors of the report are Enbridge, Nexen, Shell, Suncor, and TransCanada corporations. *\$50 Million Dollars a Day* is available at: http://www.chamber.ca/media/blog/130917-50-Million-a-Day/1309_50_Million_a_Day.pdf

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Chamber of Commerce](#), [Pipelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Carbon Footprint of Food Production – and How to Reduce it – with an Example from the U.S.

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report released by U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on September 10 estimated that the carbon footprint of wasted food was equivalent to 3.3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, with a direct economic cost estimated at \$750 billion U.S. In this global survey, the world is divided into 7 regions, and 8 major commodity groups. The survey considers the entire life cycle – land use, water use, transportation, storage, loss and wastage. *The Food Wastage Footprint: Impacts on Natural Resources Summary Report* is at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3347e/i3347e.pdf>; An accompanying document, *Toolkit: Reducing the Food Wastage Footprint*, is at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3342e/i3342e.pdf> and urges improvement in food harvest, storage, processing, transport and retailing processes, some of which can be accomplished by better training for farmers, farmer co-operatives, infrastructure investment, and technological improvements.

In related news, the U.S. Energy Department proposed in August two major energy efficiency rules for new commercial refrigeration equipment, walk-in coolers and freezers, estimated to cut emissions by over 350 million metric tons of carbon dioxide over 30 years. See the official Department of Energy website for the rule change at: http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/appliance_standards/rulemaking.aspx/ruleid/27, or the NRDC commentary about it at: http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/mwaltner/more_cooling_with_less_global.html.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Agriculture, Consumer Behaviour, Energy Efficiency Standards, FAO, Farmers, Food Retail Industry, Food Wastage, Life Cycle, Refrigeration** | [Leave a reply](#)

Call for Protection of the Boreal Forest

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report released in July by the International Boreal Conservation Science Panel emphasizes the importance of the Boreal forest, stating that scientific guidance dictates that no less than 50 percent of a region should be forever protected from development. Industrial activities taking place in the remaining unprotected areas should be carried out with the highest global sustainability standards. A network of large protected areas should be established before industrial development proceeds. Furthermore, both protected areas and industrial activities should only see development after free, prior, and informed consent of the affected Aboriginal communities. See *Conserving the World's Last Great Forest is Possible* at:

<http://borealscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/conserving-last-great-forests1.pdf>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal Peoples, Boreal Forest, Conservation, Environmental Protection, Forest Management, Forestry Industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Case Studies of Forest Management Practices, Both Good and Bad

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Greenpeace International published six case studies in August: “exposing controversial operations that are posing the greatest risk to the FSC’s integrity...(and)...highlighting best practice operations that are meeting and/or exceeding the FSC’s principles and criteria. These case studies will show the standards that must be consistently met if the FSC is to maintain its credibility.” Topics include the operations of Resolute Forest Products in Canada (the bad) and Ecotrust

Canada (the good), as well as operations in Finland, Indonesia, Africa (re palm oil plantations), and REDD. Go to: <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/Campaign-reports/Forests-Reports/FSC-Case-Studies/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Ecotrust Canada, Forest Management, Forestry Industry, REDD, Resolute Forest Products** | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Tax a Casualty of Australian Election

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Public dislike for the carbon tax was a key issue in the recent Australian election, which saw the victory of the Liberal Party under Tony Abbott. A key plank in Abbott's platform was to scrap the carbon tax, which has become his first order of business. He has also announced the abolition of the country's independent climate change commission, and scrapping of a fund to support green technology. See *Abbott Government begins Process to Repeal Carbon Tax* at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation website at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-09/abbott-carbon-tax/4945330>, and *Tony Abbott sworn in as Australia Prime Minister* at the BBC-Asia website at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24121938>

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Australia, Carbon Tax, Tony Abbott** | [Leave a reply](#)

British Columbia Carbon Tax Held Up as a Model for Canada

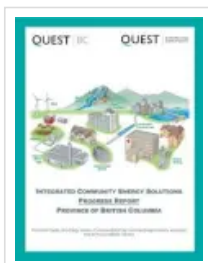
Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

After four years of experience with a carbon tax, British Columbia's per capita consumption of fuels subject to the tax has declined by 19% compared to the rest of Canada, while its economy has kept pace, according to analysis by Stuart Elgie and Jessica McClay at the University of Ottawa. The authors credit its success to the tax shift design – that is, the increase in carbon taxes is matched by an equivalent reduction in personal and business income taxes. Read "B.C.'s Carbon Tax is working Well after Four Years (Attention Ottawa)" in *Canadian Public Policy* (August 2013) at: <http://economics.ca/cgi/jab?journal=cpp&view=v39s2/CPpv39s2p001.pdf>.

Posted in **Energy Policy, Environmental Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia, Carbon Tax** | [Leave a reply](#)

Progress Report on Energy Efficiency Initiatives in B.C. Municipalities and First Nations Communities

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**



An August report by QUEST B.C. shows that “BC’s 190 local governments are demonstrating remarkable momentum on ICES as are many First Nations”. Integrated Community Energy Solutions (ICES), are defined as initiatives “to meet energy needs at the community level by taking an integrated approach across the historical silos of Land Use and Community; Housing and Buildings; Local Community Services, Transportation, Energy Supply and Distribution and Industry.” The report provides details and case studies of energy efficiency initiatives in B.C. in areas including infrastructure, waste management, building codes, and vehicle emissions, and lists the legislative, regulatory, and policy tools that have enabled them. Although many metrics are well-developed, the report recommends improved measures for the economic development impacts of the energy efficiency initiatives. Read *Integrated Community Energy Solutions Progress Report Province of British Columbia* at: <http://questcanada.org/sites/default/files/publications/ICES%20Progress%20Report%20-%20Province%20of%20BC.pdf>.

Quality Urban Energy Solutions for Tomorrow (QUEST) is a national non-profit organization with provincial caucuses; its mission is to advocate for ICES; see <http://www.questcanada.org/>. For more on this theme, see Ellen Pond’s September 13 blog, *British Columbia Needs local Government Innovation to Meet its Climate Targets* at Pembina Institute at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/749>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal Peoples, British Columbia, Building Codes, Community benefits, Community Integrated Solutions, First Nations, ICES, Municipal Government, Transit, Waste management** | [Leave a reply](#)

Coastal Cities at Risk from Climate Change: Vancouver, New York

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

According to an article published in *Nature Climate Change* online in mid-August, Vancouver ranks 11th amongst the world’s 136 large coastal cities at risk of flooding, as measured by annual average losses of people or “assets”. Most at risk: Guangzhou, Miami, New York, New Orleans, and Mumbai. The article is part of an ongoing OECD project to explore the policy implications of flood risks due to climate change and economic development. *Future Flood Losses in Major Coastal Cities* is available for purchase (with a brief free preview) at the *Nature Climate Change* website at: <http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1979.html#access>. Also see a summary at the OECD website at: <http://www.oecd.org/env/resources/future-flood-losses-in-major-coastal-cities.htm>

Vancouver adopted a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in July 2012 to guide building and maintenance of streets, sewers, building infrastructure, parks and greenspaces. See <http://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/climate-change-adaptation-strategy.aspx> for links to *the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan*, plus implementation reports for 2011-2012, and 2012-2013.

In June 2013, New York unveiled a plan in response to Superstorm Sandy, which proposes more than 250 initiatives, costed at \$19.5 billion – most of which would be spent to repair homes and streets damaged by Sandy, retrofit hospitals and nursing homes, elevate electrical infrastructure, improve ferry and subway systems and fix drinking water systems. See *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/sirr/html/report/report.shtml>

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Adaptation, Coastal Cities, Disasters, Flooding, Infrastructure, Municipal Government, New York, OECD, Risk Management, Vancouver** | [Leave a reply](#)

Engineers Consider Sustainable Infrastructure

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A recent article in the journal of the Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy discusses sustainable infrastructure as a social and technical system, arguing that sustainable infrastructure requires consideration of the broader social and political context, in addition to the more traditional economic and physical aspects. See "Climate Change, Sustainable Infrastructure and the Challenges Facing Engineers" in *Policy Engagement* (Sept/Oct 2013) at: http://members.peo.on.ca/index.cfm/document/1/ci_id/93318/la_id/1

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Engineers, Green Infrastructure, Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy, Professional Ethics** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Business Case for Adaptation

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A report published by WWF and the Carbon Disclosure Project of New York is directed to the business community, and argues that a 2020 "science-based" emissions reduction target can be reached profitably in steps of 3% per year reductions. The report strikes an urgent note, emphasizing the benefits of the "latent cost savings" of energy efficiency, and quantifying the costs of extreme weather and the necessity of pricing of carbon emissions. *The 3% Solution: Driving Profits through Carbon Reduction* is at: <https://www.cdproject.net/CDPResults/3-percent-solution-report.pdf>

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Adaptation, Carbon Footprint, Carbon Tax, Disasters, Green Business, Risk Management** | [Leave a reply](#)

Official IPCC 5th Report Releases Begin Sept. 27

Posted on **September 27, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Fifth Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will be released soon, starting with the Working Group I report on the Physical Sciences, on September 27, and concluding in October 2014 with the Synthesis Report. See <http://www.ipcc.ch/> for a schedule and for links to the official documentation and background information. A draft of the report, leaked in August, prompted a flurry of news coverage: for example, see the *New York Times* at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/20/science/earth/extremely-likely-that-human-activity-is-driving-climate-change-panel-finds.html?pagewanted=all>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC** | [Leave a reply](#)

Union Positions on Northern Gateway and Line 9 Pipelines

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Joint Review Panel for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project, mandated by the Minister of the Environment and the National Energy Board, is reaching the final stages, with a report expected by the end of 2013. The written process was completed on May 31; final oral arguments will be heard in Terrace, B.C., beginning June 17 and lasting approximately two weeks. On May 31, the Government of British Columbia submitted a written statement opposing the current proposal and setting five conditions, including that First Nations treaty rights must be respected, and B.C. must receive its "fair share" of the fiscal and economic benefits of the pipeline construction and operation, as they first demanded in 2012.

Receiving less coverage were the May 31 written submissions by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP), the Alberta Federation of Labour, and the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union (UFAWU). All three unions oppose approval of the pipeline, arguing that refining jobs in Canada will be lost by shipping raw bitumen to Asia.

The CEP position in support of Enbridge's West-to-East Line 9 pipeline project is more controversial. As reported by the Toronto Globe and Mail and the Montreal Gazette, the CEP in Quebec is part of a campaign by the Coalition in Support of Line 9 Reversal, which includes the Quebec Employers Council, Montreal Board of Trade, and the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec. Representatives launched the coalition in Montreal on May 29, stating, "This project is essential for Montreal and the whole Quebec economy and has broad support from the Ontario and Quebec governments ... If refining does not remain competitive in Montreal East, then ultimately, there will be more closures and the specialized petrochemical plants will have to import their feedstocks or face closure."

LINKS:

Full Joint Review Panel for Northern Gateway website is at: <http://gatewaypanel.review-examen.gc.ca/clf-nsi/hm-eng.html> (English) and <http://gatewaypanel.review-examen.gc.ca/clf-nsi/hm-fra.html> (French); all submitted documents are available under Section D: Intervenors/Intervenants.

B.C. Officially Opposes Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline (May 31), and multiple links to related stories, at the CBC website at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2013/05/31/bc-northern-gateway-rejected.html>

Written submissions to Northern Gateway hearings: by CEP is at: https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/ll-eng/livelihood.exe/fetch/2000/90464/90552/384192/620327/624910/785392/959884/D39-13-1_CEP_-_Final_Argument_of_CEP_%2800519679%29_-_A311H1.pdf?nodeid=959885&vernum=0 ; by Alberta Federation of Labour at (and see further details of their position in a separate *Submission to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future on The Study of the BRIK (Bitumen Royalty in Kind) Program* (March 2013) at: http://www.afl.org/index.php/component/option,com_sectionex/Itemid,118/id,7/view/category/.

Submission by the United Fishermen is at: https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/ll-eng/livelihood.exe/fetch/2000/90464/90552/384192/620327/624910/697824/960959/D203-14-1_United_Fishermen_and_Allied_Workers%27_Union_-_CAW_-_Final_Arg_May_31.13_-_A312A8?nodeid=960822&vernum=0

RE LINE 9:

"Refinery union warns against TransCanada exports of crude through Quebec " in *Globe and Mail* (May 29,2013) by Nathan Vanderklippe at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/refinery-union-warns-against-transcanada-exports-of-crude-through-quebec/article12244539/>

"Line 9 pipeline reversal last chance to save 2,000 jobs: lobby group" in the *Montreal Gazette* (May 29) at:<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Line+pipeline+reversal+last+chance+save+jobs+lobby+group/8451769/story.html>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta Federation of Labour, British Columbia, CEP, Job Creation, labour union policies, Northern Gateway, Pipelines, United Fisherman and Allied Workers Union** | [Leave a reply](#)

Job Creation Benefits of Ontario's Proposed Waste Management Strategy

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

On June 5, the new Liberal government in Ontario proposed a new waste management strategy, launched with a public consultation period that runs from June 6 to September 4. Among the highlights: a proposed *Waste Reduction Act* which makes individual producers responsible for the end-of-life management of their products and packaging; creation of the Waste Reduction Authority to oversee activities and enforce compliance; phase-in of individual producer responsibility for paper and packaging supplied into the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sectors; expanded use of disposal bans to encourage recycling. The government press release emphasizes the job creation advantages of waste reduction, stating that "Recycling generates ten times more jobs than disposal", and "Every additional 1,000 tonnes of recycled waste generates seven new jobs." These estimates are drawn from *The Economic Benefits of Recycling in Ontario*, a report prepared for the Ministry of the Environment by consulting group AECOM in 2009, but not publicly released.

LINKS

Waste Reduction Strategy notice in the Environmental Register is at:<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTE5NzM1&statusId=MTC5MTM2&language=en>; Waste Management Strategy Document is at: http://www.downloads.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/er/documents/2013/011-9262.pdf;

Text and debates concerning Bill 91, the proposed *Waste Reduction Act, 2013* are at:
http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&Intranet=&BillID=2818

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Extended Producer Responsibility, Job Creation, Ontario, Recycling, Waste management** | [Leave a reply](#)

Local Content Requirements Promoting Green Growth in China and Around the World

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A paper released on June 3rd by the International Centre on Trade and Sustainable Development "attempts to refocus the LCR debate around the ultimate question of whether this measure can play a role in achieving green industrial growth in general, and RE deployment and innovation in particular." The authors set out the arguments for and against the use of LCR's, examine their use by China in the wind energy industry, and describe (in less detail) examples in Ontario, Quebec, Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Croatia, the US, India, Brazil, South Africa and Turkey. A concluding section deals with the WTO role. Ultimately, the authors call for more rigorous research into the effect of local content requirement policies on the creation of jobs in the renewable energy industry.

LINK

Local Content Requirements and the Renewable Energy Industry – A Good Match? By Jan-Christoph Kuntze and Tom Moerenhout is available at: <http://ictsd.org/i/publications/165193/?view=details>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **China, Green Growth, Local Content Requirements, Ontario, Trade Policy, World Trade Organization** | [Leave a reply](#)

OECD Sees Job Benefits of Green Cities like Chicago

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

This report presents case studies of urban green growth policies, four at city level (Paris, Chicago, Stockholm, Kitakyushu) and two at the national level (China, Korea), with a framework for analysis for different types of cities. It demonstrates the

importance of urban policies for achieving national environmental policy goals and discusses policy goals and approaches – including the priorities of job creation and attracting business and workers. The case study of Chicago highlights that city's initiative to develop a regional specialty in green building and design, which in 2010 employed 45,000 people in direct and indirect jobs. Efficient public transport networks, such as in Paris, are valuable for their environmental contribution and to attract businesses and workers.

LINKS

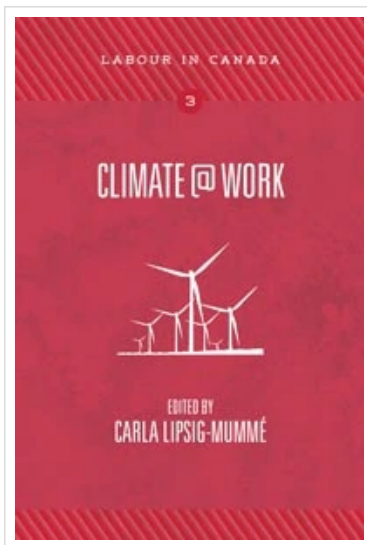
Green Growth and Cities is summarized, with ordering information, at: http://www.oecd.org/regional/green-growth-in-cities.htm#About_the_Publication

A working paper with more details about the Chicago labour market experience and green jobs is available from: <http://www.oecd.org/greengrowth/oecdworkongreengrowth.htm>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Chicago, Cities and Climate Change, Job Creation, Municipal Government, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Transit Policy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate@Work Released

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Released in May 2013, *Climate@Work*, edited by Carla Lipsig Mummé, presents research by members of the Work in a Warming World project (W3). The focus of the book is on the Canadian scene and the current and potential role for workers and unions to contribute to a growing, green economy with good, green jobs. It examines six sectors in detail – construction, energy, transportation equipment, forestry, tourism, and the postal sector. Yet because of the global nature of the climate change struggle, the introductory section sets Canada in international context, looking at the role of international agreements, public policy, and the puzzling silence of English-language scholarly research on climate change and work. See the Fernwood Press website for a summary, list of chapters, and ordering information, at: <http://www.fernwoodpublishing.ca/Climate-at-Work/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Green Jobs, Labour Unions, Work in a Warming World** | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations from Ontario's Environmental Commissioner

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the 2013 annual report of Ontario Environmental Commissioner, released on June 5, statistics are provided for GHG emissions on a sectoral basis, for transportation, industry, buildings, electricity, agriculture and waste. Transportation remains the biggest emitter of GHGs in Ontario, and passenger vehicles remain the greatest contributor. The Commissioner found that the government is likely to achieve only 60% of the reductions necessary to meet its own 2020 target for a 15% reduction from 1990 levels. He criticizes the lack of coordination between the province's Long-term Energy Plan and its Climate Change Action Plan, and cites the upcoming review of the LTEP as "an excellent opportunity to further integrate government policy on these two interrelated issues". He also states that putting "a price on carbon is the best tool I can think of" for improvement.

Read *Failing our Future, Review of the Ontario Government's Climate Change Action Plan Results Report* at: <http://www.eco.on.ca/uploads/Reports-GHG/2013/2013GHG.pdf>, or the summary at: http://www.eco.on.ca/index.php/en_US/pubs/greenhouse-gas-reports/2013-ghg-failing-our-future

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Automobiles, Emissions reduction targets, Ontario, Ontario Climate Action Plan, Ontario Long-term Energy Plan, Transportation** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Effects of Carbon Tax, and an Upward Revision of the Social Cost of Carbon

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. Congressional Budget Office released a study on May 22 which reviews the existing literature on the economic impacts of a carbon tax, and explores three options for using the revenues from the tax: to reduce budget deficits, to decrease existing marginal tax rates, or to offset the costs to the most affected groups of people. Read: *Effects of a Carbon Tax on the Economy and the Environment* at: <http://www.cbo.gov/publication/44223> or for a more detailed study of the effects on employment, see the May 2010 CBO Briefing Report *How Policies to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions Could Affect Employment* at: http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/105xx/doc10564/05-05-capandtrade_brief.pdf. The 2013 CBO study discusses various studies which estimate the social cost of carbon – the value used by governments (including Canada's) to assess the benefits and costs of the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

An important new report released by the U.S. Government in June revises the "official" U.S. social cost of carbon substantially, by between 50 – 60%. The first regulation to use this new SCC will be the U.S. emission standard for microwaves; it has also been recommended for use by the State Department in its consideration of the impact of the Keystone Pipeline. Read: *Technical Update of the Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis – by the U.S. Interagency Working Group on the Social Cost of Carbon Under Executive Order 12866* at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/infoereg/social_cost_of_carbon_for_ria_2013_update.pdf, and for background, see the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency article at: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/EPAactivities/economics/scc.html>

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Carbon Tax, Congressional Budget Office, Keystone XL, Social Cost of Carbon** | [Leave a reply](#)

3rd Anniversary of Canada's Boreal Forest Agreement is not a Happy One

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Referring to the withdrawal of Canopy, a forest conservation group, from the Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA) in April 2013, Greenpeace Canada stated: "Their departure from the CBFA is a consequence of the Agreement's inability to deliver greater protection for the Boreal Forest and a failure of its structure. The CBFA is simply no longer a credible tool for conservation."

Read the Canopy press release at: <http://canopyplanet.org/canopy-boreal-withdrawal/>. And follow the continuing story about the expulsion of Resolute Forest Products in May with *Environmental groups suspend further work with Resolute under Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement* (May 21) at the CPAWS website at: <http://cpaws.org/news/environmental-groups-suspend-further-work-with-resolute-under-cbfa>.

Resolute was the subject of criticism by Greenpeace for its sustainability failings, for its treatment of workers, and disregard for Indigenous rights and communities. Read the report, *Resolute's False Promises: The (un)Sustainability Report 2013* at: <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/resolutefalsepromises/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal Peoples, Boreal Forest, Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement, Forestry Management, Greenpeace, Resolute Forest Products, Sustainable Forestry** | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Agricultural Industry

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A White Paper released in May by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, based at the University of Victoria, offers recommendations for public policy to support the agricultural industry in its necessary adaptation to climate change. The report builds on the findings of the BC Agriculture Climate Change Risk & Opportunity Assessment of 2012, published by the provincial government. Read: *Strengthening BC's Agricultural Sector in the Face of Climate Change* at: http://pics.uvic.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Strengthening%20BC%27s%20Agriculture%20Sector_0.pdf, and Climate Change Risk & Opportunity Assessment Reports (2012) for B.C. and its regions at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Climate Action Initiative website at: <http://www.bcagclimateaction.ca/about/document-library/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Adaptation, Agriculture, British Columbia** | [Leave a reply](#)

Telling the Tar Sands Story – An Alternate View

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new website by the Tar Sands Solutions Network offers a library of documents, videos, and news about Canada's oil sands and pipeline development from the point of view of its members: First Nations, environmental groups, landowners, farmers, scientists, community leaders, academics, and grass roots groups located throughout North America and in the U.K. See <http://tarsandsolutions.org/>. The network campaign website is at Oil Sands Reality Check at: <http://oilsandsrealitycheck.org/>.

While Harper Courts European Oil Markets, Oil Sands Monitoring Report Released, Zama Alberta Suffers Pipeline Spill

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the same week that Stephen Harper faced protests from British environmentalists over his attempts to promote Canadian oil for European markets, at home, Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board is reported to have released a report which states that from 2010 to 2012, not a single oilsands company was able to meet the tailings reductions targets set out in the ERCB Directive 074, and the volume of tailings has increased, not decreased. However, the regulator will waive any penalties, arguing that the targets were probably "overly optimistic". Read "ERCB waives tailings penalties" in *The Calgary Herald* (May 12) at:

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/ERCB+waives+tailings+penalties/8513087/story.html>.

The spill of industrial wastewater from oil production near the northern Alberta town of Zama has drawn criticism of the regulators, including the ERCB, for their slow response. See "Zama spill spurs questions on Alberta pipeline safety measures" at the CBC website at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/story/2013/06/14/north-apache-cleanup-zama.html>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta, Energy Resources Conservation Board, Oil Spills, Pollution, Stephen Harper** | [Leave a reply](#)

Engineering and Climate Change Conference

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 3rd Climate Change Technology Conference (CCTC 2013) was held in late May in Montreal, organized by the Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC) and ten of its member societies. Go to:

<http://www.cctc2013.ca/English/TechSessions.html> for a full list of all the papers, most of which are highly technical, but include some general interest items such as *Teaching Energy Industry at a University* at:

<http://www.cctc2013.ca/Papers/CCTC2013%20EDU1-1%20Donev.pdf>; *Assessment of a Carbon Tax as a Policy Instrument* at: <http://www.cctc2013.ca/Papers/CCTC2013%20EDU1-3%20Yildez.pdf>; and *Funding Clean Technology Development* at: <http://www.cctc2013.ca/Papers/CCTC2013%20EDU1-3%20Yildez.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Engineering Institute of Canada, Engineers** | [Leave a reply](#)

EU Reforms Target Overfishing

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In advance of World Ocean Day on June 8, and culminating a once-in-a decade reform process, the European Union announced on June 6th that it will implement major reforms to its Common Fisheries Policy. The goal is to end decades of overfishing, to rebuild dwindling fish stocks by 2020, preserve jobs in coastal areas, and make the industry more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable. See *EU Clinches Major Overhaul to Fisheries Policy* (June 6,

2013) at: <http://ictsd.org/i/news/bridgesweekly/165334/> and *Europe adopts new Policy on Fisheries* (Feb. 2013) at: <http://ictsd.org/i/environment/153765/>

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Common Fisheries Policy, EU, Fisheries** | [Leave a reply](#)

Scale of Canada's Environmental Goods and Services Industry

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

On June 5, Statistics Canada released the results of the Survey of Environmental Goods and Services, 2010, showing that the revenues derived by Canadian manufacturers from the sales of environmental goods totaled just under \$2.2 billion; sales of environmental services accounted for \$1.7 billion. The Agency cautions against comparing the 2010 numbers with the previous survey (2008) because of changes to the questionnaire. See the Statistics Canada *Daily* (June 5) at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/130605/dq130605c-eng.htm>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Environmental Services Industry, Statistics Canada** | [Leave a reply](#)

Sustainability or Sustainababble?

Posted on **June 19, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Worldwatch Institute State of the World Report for 2013 released in May 2013 warns that with so much labeled as "sustainable," the term has become essentially "sustainababble". Most of the book is dedicated to defining clear sustainability metrics, with a final section exploring "tools" to deal with the "long emergency" that is coming. The Report includes contributions by 50 writers, researchers and activists. See a blog summarizing the book at: <http://blogs.worldwatch.org/sustainabilitypossible/launching-state-of-the-world-2013-is-sustainability-still-possible/> or buy *Is Sustainability Still Possible? State of the World Report, 2013* at: <http://www.worldwatch.org/bookstore/publication/state-world-2013-sustainability-still-possible>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Sustainability Measures, Worldwatch Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

CEP & CAW Statements to the House of Commons Committee: Pipelines and Dutch Disease

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The federal House of Commons Committee on Natural Resources began hearings on "Market Diversification in the Energy Sector" on April 18th. (Previous hearings were on "Innovation in the Energy Sector"). On April 23, the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union submitted its position paper to the Committee, opposing pipeline development such as Northern Gateway and Keystone XL. However, "CEP endorses that decision (i.e. approval of Enbridge's Line 9A pipeline) and supports Enbridge's current application for Line 9A to extend supply to the Montreal Suncor and Quebec City Ultramar refineries. CEP supports Line 9B on the basis that its 300,000 bbl/d capacity will provide just 75% of the capacity of the two Quebec refineries. CEP does not support a further expansion or a revival of the "Trailblazer" project which would have transformed Line 9 into an export line to Portland, Maine."

In the Canadian Auto Workers submission by Jim Stanford, also submitted on April 23, the focus is on reviewing the economic debate about “Dutch disease”, or what Stanford calls “resource-driven deindustrialization”. The paper summarizes the arguments and reviews 7 previous studies, concluding that resource-driven deindustrialization *does* exist. He then raises (but does not answer) the questions: how large has the effect been, have the costs to manufacturing been offset by the benefits of resource expansion, and should the government and the Bank of Canada intervene?

Many others have appeared before the Committee, including representatives from the Fraser Institute, Conference Board of Canada, and Macdonald Laurier Institute. Unions have been represented by: Christopher Smillie (Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO) on April 25; Gil McGowan (President, Alberta Federation of Labour) on April 30.

LINKS

CEP submission is at <http://www.cep.ca/sites/cep.ca/files/docs/en/130424-Fred-NatResCmttee.pdf>

CAW submission, *Resource-driven Deindustrialization* is at <http://www.cep.ca/sites/cep.ca/files/docs/en/130424-Jim-NatResCmttee.pdf>

Transcripts are available at the Committee website, by date, (in English) at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/committeebusiness/CommitteeMeetings.aspx?Cmte=RNNR&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1>

and (in French) at

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/committeebusiness/CommitteeMeetings.aspx?Cmte=RNNR&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1&Language=F>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Auto Workers, CEP, Committee on Natural Resources (Canada) Pipeline, Dutch Disease, Keystone XL, Pipelines** | [Leave a reply](#)

Case Studies of Emissions Reductions in B.C. Small Businesses

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An April White Paper published by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions in B.C. presents case studies of 11 British Columbia small businesses which engaged in greenhouse gas emissions reduction projects in any or all of four areas: electricity, heating, transportation, and waste management. For each case, the report describes the initiatives taken and estimates the environmental benefits, financial costs, rate of return on the investment, and the projected payback time. The report also provides insights from a broader universe of 700 small businesses, including the observation that employees are more motivated to participate in emissions-reducing activities if they are offered a share in the savings achieved. Several recommendations are made to encourage small businesses to move to lower emissions practices.

LINKS

Are Small to Mid-sized Businesses the Catalyst to a Low Carbon Economy in B.C.? at

<http://pics.uvic.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Small%20Business%20White%20Paper%20April%202013.pdf>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, energy efficiency, Green Business** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Greenest Employers for 2013 Announced

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada's Top Employers project publishes an annual report which is often used by employment counselors and job seekers, to identify progressive and socially responsible potential employers. The list was announced in late April and includes winners of the environmental category. "Each employer was evaluated using the following criteria: 1) the unique environmental initiatives and programs they've developed; 2) how successful they've been in reducing their own environmental footprint; 3) the degree to which employees are involved and whether they contribute any unique skills; and 4) the extent that their initiatives have become linked to their public identity and whether they attract new people to their organization." Profiles of each of the companies, describing their green credentials, are available on the website.

LINKS

Canada's Greenest Employers 2013 website is at <http://www.canadastop100.com/environmental/>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Corporate Environment Policy](#), [Green Business](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Positions of B.C. Political Parties on Climate Change Issues and Green Jobs

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

British Columbia holds its provincial election on May 14th. The Pembina Institute has released a comparison of the positions of the political parties on four election issues related to climate change: liquefied natural gas (LNG), oil pipelines, the carbon tax and green jobs. They find that the Green Party is the only one who would take the province forward on all four issues, and goes the furthest in proposals for green job creation – with enhanced venture capital funding programs for the clean tech sector, as well as encouragement of energy efficiency and renewable energy. Only the Conservatives have no proposals re green job creation. The Conservatives, Liberals and NDP are all in support of significant LNG expansion, yet the Pembina authors state that "any necessary next steps in lowering emissions will be overwhelmed by the emissions from extracting, processing and liquefying natural gas if LNG development is allowed to significantly expand in B.C."

LINKS

Climate change and the 2013 British Columbia election by Matt Horne, Joshua MacNab & Kevin Sauvé is available at <http://www.pembina.org/media-release/2449> .

"B.C.'s political climate is shifting: Why talk of 'jobs vs. environment' no longer holds water" by Eric Doherty (May 10) at *Rabble.ca* at <http://rabble.ca/news/2013/05/bcs-political-climate-shifting-why-talk-jobs-vs-environment-no-longer-holds-water>

Party Platforms: Green Party: *Jobs in a New Economy* is at http://www.greenparty.bc.ca/jobs_in_new_economy ; NDP platform is at <http://www.bcndp.ca/plan> ; Liberals' at <http://www.bcliberals.com/news/in-the-news/ourPlan> ; Conservatives' at <http://www.bcconservative.ca/> .

The Tyee Election Hook (dedicated to election coverage) is at <http://thetyee.ca/Blogs/TheHook/>

For results: go to CBC B.C. Election 2013 website at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/bcvotes2013/>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Green Party](#), [LNG](#), [Pipelines](#), [Political parties and policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations for “High Road” Jobs in Green Infrastructure

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A report by Green For All, in partnership with American Rivers, focuses on occupations in green infrastructure programs across the U.S. It describes current U.S. green infrastructure activity, examines the occupations involved in operations and maintenance (including wage and unionization rates), and argues that the low entry barriers for these occupations have created “low road” jobs. The paper then profiles specific projects, particularly water utilities, where workforce development programs are leading to stable jobs with career prospects – “high road” jobs. The report makes 3 recommendations for green infrastructure projects, including that installation and maintenance contracts for publicly funded infrastructure should include community benefits strategies to generate work for local workers and businesses, and should include workforce development commitments.

LINKS

Staying Green and Growing Jobs: Green Infrastructure Operations and Maintenance as Career Pathway Stepping Stones is at <http://greenforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Staying-Green-and-Growing-Jobs-April-2013.pdf>

Related reports, including *Staying Green: Strategies to Improve Operations and Maintenance of Green Infrastructure in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*, and *High Road Agreements: A Best Practice Brief* are at the Green For All website at <http://greenforall.org/resources/reports-research/> .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Community benefits, Green Infrastructure, Green Job Creation, High Road Jobs, Infrastructure, Job Quality, Training** | [Leave a reply](#)

How Climate Change is Changing the Job of Professional Engineers

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A feature article in the March issue of *PE Magazine* discusses how professional engineers in the U.S. are coping with the impacts of climate change and extreme weather on public infrastructure. The article notes several local projects and describes the Climate Change Educational Partnership of the U.S. National Academy of Engineer’s Center for Engineering, Ethics, and Society, founded in 2011. David Lapp, who serves on Canada’s Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee, is quoted for his thoughts on the potential for liability for those engineers who fail to take climate change adaptation into account.

LINK

“Change in the Weather” by Matthew McLaughlin, in *PE Magazine* (published by the National Society of Professional Engineers) March 2013 at http://www.nspe.org/PEmagazine/13/pe_0313_Change.html?utm_source=Newsletter+Distribution+List&utm_campaign=dfdf19f1ac-Newsletter_Apr_25_2013&utm_medium=email

Canada Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee website of Engineers Canada is at http://www.pievca.ca/e/index_.cfm

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Adaptation, Climate Resilience, Climate Risk, Engineering, Engineers, Infrastructure, Professional Adaptation, Professional Associations** | [Leave a reply](#)

Future Green Jobs and Workplaces: The Need for Health and Safety Protection

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report released by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work identifies and forecasts the key new technologies that may be introduced in green jobs by 2020, and the possible risks they will bring to the workplace. The report constructs three scenarios (win-win; bonus world; and deep green), and for each scenario, forecasts the future of jobs in wind energy, green construction, waste management and recycling; green transport; green manufacturing; domestic and small-scale energy; energy storage and transmission. It concludes with wide-ranging and thoughtful observations about the likely changes to work processes and materials, and argues convincingly that there is “a need for a systematic, prior OSH assessment of any new technology, product and process at a very early development stage that considers the entire life cycle, from ‘cradle to cradle’ (i.e. including design, manufacture, transport, installation, operation and maintenance, decommissioning, treatment of waste and later reuse). Integrating prevention into the design is more efficient, as well as cheaper, than retrofitting OSH; this needs to start now for safe future green jobs.”

LINKS

Green jobs and occupational safety and health: Foresight on new and merging risks associated with new technologies by 2020 is at <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/green-jobs-foresight-new-emerging-risks-technologies>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Manufacturing Processes](#), [Job Design](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

NRTEE Documents are Accessible to the Public at W3 Website

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the end of March 2013, government-mandated cutbacks ended the life of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), which had provided independent research and analysis about climate change and environmental issues in Canada, and which had published reports monitoring Canada’s progress toward GHG reductions under the Kyoto Protocol. Despite government efforts to curtail access to the research output of the NRTEE, the W3 project has created an archive of all NRTEE documents since 1987. Go to <http://www.workinawarmingworld.yorku.ca/library/> for free access.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy](#), [NRTEE](#), [Work in a Warming World](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Green Energy Act Loses Final Appeal at WTO

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The World Trade Organization has upheld its original decision and ruled that the domestic content regulations of Ontario’s Green Energy Act violate international trade law. Existing contracts signed under the Act will continue, but the WTO decision calls for the Green Energy Act to be amended to remove the requirement for local production in future renewable energy contracts. “Ontario loses final WTO appeal on Green Energy Act” by Shawn McCarthy, *Globe and Mail* (May 6) is

at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/ontario-loses-final-wto-appeal-on-green-energy-act/article11731010/> .

A summary of the WTO proceedings, including a link to the review decision (file #WT/DS412), in English and French is available from the WTO at http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds412_e.htm . The Council of Canadians reaction is at “Ontario urged to defy unreasonable WTO ruling against Green Energy Act” at <http://www.canadians.org/media/trade/2013/06-May-13-2.html> , and the United Steelworkers union also urges Ontario to continue to fight, stating that “This is just the latest example of trade agreements being used to override our sovereignty and our freedom to implement environmental and economic development initiatives.” (see press release at <http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/1159683/wto-ruling-must-not-end-fight-for-green-jobs-steelworkers>).

The Ontario Ministry of Energy has not yet made a formal response to the decision; however, in a related announcement on May 6th, it announced a 6-month review of the regional energy planning process to be more inclusive of municipal and local input. (See <http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2013/05/new-ontario-government-strengthens-energy-planning.html>).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **International Trade, Local Content Requirements, Ontario, Ontario Green Energy Act, World Trade Organization** | [Leave a reply](#)

Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference in Washington

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Over 1,800 union workers, environmentalists, business and non-profit leaders gathered *from April 16 to 18 for the 2013 Good Jobs, Green Jobs National Conference*, sponsored by the BlueGreen Alliance Foundation. This year’s official theme was *Let’s Get to Work: Climate Change, Infrastructure and Innovation. In the opening panel, the message was the common cause in the fight for workers rights and environmental rights: speakers were CWA President Larry Cohen, Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune, USW President Leo Gerard, and SEIU Property Services Division Deputy Director Jon Barton. Videos, summaries and blogs from the proceedings are available at the conference website at* <http://www.greenjobsconference.org/>.

Posted in **Environmental Policy, United States** | Tagged **Labour and Greens, Service Employees International Union, Sierra Club, United Steelworkers** | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Management in Canada: Can we Revive a Civil Debate?

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

On April 17th in Ottawa, the think tank Canada 2020 convened a meeting “because of our concern over the disintegration of constructive debate about carbon management at a national level in Canada. The current deadlock is not good for our country, our democracy or for our planet.” With a goal “to begin to define a constructive and positive course of action”, presentations were made Jean Charest, (former Liberal Premier of Quebec), Elizabeth May (Leader of Canada’s Green Party), Kathryn Harrison (UBC professor), Eric Newell, (former CEO of Syncrude), and Bob Inglis, (former Republican member of the U.S. Congress).

The background paper on which discussion was based, *Why would Canadians Buy Carbon Pricing?* is at <http://canada2020.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Canada-2020-Background-Paper-Carbon-Pricing-April-2013.pdf>. It provides an overview of the current provincial mechanisms and concludes that the B.C. Carbon tax offers the best model

for a national policy. The event website at <http://canada2020.ca/event/the-canada-we-want-carbon-pricing/> provides links to all documents and to videos of each presenter.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Canada 2020](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Energy policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Should Alberta be the Model?

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A Policy Brief released by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in May summarizes the current proposals under negotiation for national GHG emission regulation in Canada, and then models the economic and emissions impacts of four scenarios for the year 2020.

The IISD judges that the negotiations are likely to use Alberta's Specified Gas Emitters Regulation (SGER) as the standard. The paper concludes that "While all proposals on the table will deliver emission reductions at costs that seem reasonable, a 40 per cent intensity standard with a two-tiered price ceiling could strike a good balance."

See *Regulating Carbon Emissions in Canada: Oil and Gas Greenhouse Gas Regulations: The Implications of Alternative Proposals* is at http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2013/oil_and_gas_ggr.pdf.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Canadian Emissions](#), [Emissions Intensity](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

European Emissions Trading System

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The European Emissions Trading System faces a future of conflict and further negotiation after April 16th, when the European Parliament rejected a Commission proposal to improve the system by removing the current oversupply of emissions permits. See coverage by Reuters at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/16/eu-ets-vote-idUSL5N0D337720130416> ; The Guardian at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/apr/17/europe-climate-chief-vow-save-emissions-trading> , and the *New York Times* OpEd (May 7) , "A Carbon System Worth Saving", at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/07/opinion/europes-carbon-trading-system.html> .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Emissions Trading](#), [EU](#), [EUTS](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Reform Proposals for Global Carbon Markets

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An April report from the Centre for American Progress acknowledges and describes the shortcomings of carbon markets, but argues that carbon markets have helped to fight climate change while providing billions of dollars for investment capital to spur economic growth. With much attention to the Clean Development Mechanism, and after a thorough description of the Chinese experience with CDM, the report makes several recommendations for reforms so that "With the right political commitment and much-needed reforms, global carbon markets have the potential to deliver outsized environmental and economic benefits in the coming years." See *Carbon Market Crossroads: New Ideas for Harnessing Global Markets to Confront Climate Change* is at <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/CarbonMarketCrossroads-3.pdf> .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [China](#), [Clean Development Mechanism](#), [Emissions Trading](#), [EU](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Global Clean Energy Status Report Includes a Call for Carbon-Pricing and a Phase-Out of Fossil Fuel Subsidies

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Energy Agency report for 2013 to the Clean Energy Ministerial provides a comprehensive overview of the global state of clean energy: extent of use, what is being done to encourage market penetration, and what technological advances have occurred for each form of clean energy. Canada is one of the 28 countries surveyed.

The report also introduced the Energy Sector Carbon Intensity Index (ESCI), which shows how much carbon dioxide is emitted, on average, to provide a given unit of energy. The index remains almost unchanged between 1990 and 2010.

The “positive” news for 2012 include sales of hybrid electric vehicles, which passed the 1 million mark, increased installation rate of solar photovoltaic systems, and falling costs of most clean energy technologies. The report gives policy recommendations for each technology type, but overall, it concludes: “the true cost of energy must be reflected in consumer prices, through carbon pricing and the phase-out of fossil-fuel subsidies. Technologies like electric vehicles, wind and solar will need support for several years more, but policies should be flexible and transparent. More stringent and broader energy performance standards, building codes and fuel economy standards can drive energy efficiency.”

The press release from April 17th, with links, is at <http://www.iea.org/newsroomandevents/pressreleases/2013/april/name,36789,en.html> .

Fulllest coverage is at the *Tracking Clean Energy Progress 2013* website at <http://www.iea.org/etp/tracking/>. The Report document is at http://www.iea.org/publications/TCEP_web.pdf .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing, Electric Vehicles, Energy Sector Carbon Intensity Index, Fossil Fuel Subsidies, International Energy Agency, Solar Energy** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Carbon Footprint

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Reducing the UK's Carbon Footprint and Managing Competitiveness Risks, was written at the request of the UK government by the independent Committee on Climate Change. It examines the role of consumption- based emissions, including imported emissions, and also considers lifecycle emissions of low-carbon technologies in order to understand how their deployment would impact the UK's carbon footprint.

See <http://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/carbon-footprint-and-competitiveness/> for links to summaries and the full report.

Response to the report by the Trades Union Congress is contained in a briefing, *Bring Industry Back Home* at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-22150-f0.cfm>.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Footprint, Low-Carbon Transition, Trades Union Congress, TUC, United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

The Biggest Roadblock to a Post Carbon World is Politics

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A new report by John Wiseman, Taegen Edwards and Kate Luckins has been released by the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute in Australia, arguing that the technological and economic knowledge we need to avoid catastrophic global warming is already available. Change is being impeded by many roadblocks, chiefly political but including: climate science denial, the power of the fossil fuel industry and its allies, political paralysis, unsustainable consumption of energy and resources, path dependencies and outdated infrastructure, and financial and governance constraints. The report calls for recognition of the urgency of transition to a low-carbon path, and for moving investment from fossil fuels to energy efficiency.

Read *Post Carbon Pathways: Towards a Just and Resilient Post Carbon Future Learning from leading international post carbon economy researchers and policy makers* at http://www.postcarbonpathways.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Post-Carbon-Pathways-Report-2013_Final-V.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Denial, Infrastructure, Low-Carbon Transition, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

Naomi Klein Calls on Green Groups to Join the Fossil Fuel Divestment Movement

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Citing the growing campaign for divestment from fossil fuel companies, Naomi Klein asks the question: “Shouldn’t environmental organizations be more concerned about the human and ecological risks posed by fossil fuel companies than they are by some imagined risks to their stock portfolios?” In an article in *The Nation*, she names the names of the green organizations which are “part owners of the industry causing the crisis they are purportedly trying to solve”. She also names the organizations which are not, including “Greenpeace, 350.org, Friends of the Earth, Rainforest Action Network, and a host of smaller organizations like Oil Change International and the Climate Reality Project.” Read <http://www.thenation.com/article/174143/time-big-green-go-fossil-free#>, reprinted as “It’s time for environmental groups to divest from fossil fuels” (May 2) at *Rabble.ca* at <http://rabble.ca/columnists/2013/05/its-time-environmental-groups-to-divest-fossil-fuels>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **350.org, Environmental Groups, Fossil Fuel Divestment, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Naomi Klein, Protests & Rallies** | [Leave a reply](#)

Proposed Terms of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) Could be Used to Challenge Canadian Fracking Bans

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A May 6 briefing by Corporate Europe Observatory, the Council of Canadians and the Transnational Institute “highlights the public debate around fracking, the interests of Canadian oil and gas companies in shale gas reserves in Europe, and the impacts an investment protection clause in the proposed CETA could have on governments’ ability to regulate or ban

fracking.” A similar provision investment protection clause in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is the basis for a current challenge by Lone Pine Resources to a fracking moratorium in Quebec. See the briefing, *The Right to Say No: EU-Canada Trade Agreement Threatens Fracking Bans* (May 6) at <http://corporateeurope.org/publications/right-say-no-eu-canada-trade-agreement-threatens-fracking-bans> .

Posted in **Government Policy, Uncategorized** | Tagged **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), Council of Canadians, Fracking, International Trade, Lone Pine Resources, NAFTA** | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia Municipality Passes Fracking Ban Based on Community Health Grounds

Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Municipality of the County of Inverness, Nova Scotia passed an anti- fracking bylaw on May 6th. The bylaw bypasses provincial jurisdiction over mineral rights and drilling permits and focuses on using the precautionary principle to protect citizens' health and wellbeing. The bylaw, while specifically drafted to prevent fracking in Inverness County, establishes a framework for any municipality to protect its citizens from harmful activities that threaten the health of the community. It empowers such municipal action and advocacy by appealing to legal principles in international law, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, related interpretations and decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada, and provincial legislation. See the *Cape Breton Post* article at <http://www.capebretonpost.com/News/Local/2013-05-06/article-3237799/Inverness-County-passes-anti-fracking-bylaw/1> ; also see the website of the Nova Scotia Fracking Resource and Action Coalition, (NOFRAC) at <http://nofrac.wordpress.com/> . Their report, *Out of Control*, released on April 22, documents the fracking experience in Hants County from 200, relying on documents obtained by Freedom of Information requests. The province of Nova Scotia is currently undergoing a provincial review of fracking before allowing any permits, and the decision on the review is set to be released in 2014. See the Government Review website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/pollutionprevention/consultation.hydraulic.fracturing.asp> .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Fracking, Municipal Government, Nova Scotia** | [Leave a reply](#)

Pulitzer Prize for Online Climate News Report

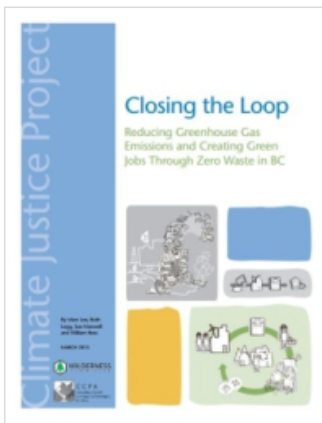
Posted on **May 24, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In April, three reporters from the online news service *Inside ClimateNews.org* won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting, for their story about the 2010 oil spill in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This is the 3rd internet news organization to win a Pulitzer Prize (Huffington Post and ProPublica being the previous winners) – it is certainly the smallest. Internet news has now “arrived” and climate journalism has also now “arrived”. See the press release at <http://insideclimatenews.org/todaysnews/20130416/ny-based-insideclimate-news-wins-pulitzer>. See their full, free website at <http://insideclimatenews.org/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **ClimateNews.org, Huffington Post, Journalism, ProPublica, Pulitzer Prize** | [Leave a reply](#)

A Zero Waste Economy Benefits the Environment and the Economy

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A report released on March 28 calls for a move to a zero waste economy in British Columbia, estimating that more aggressive reduction and recycling of consumer goods could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by almost 5 million tonnes by 2020 and 6.2 million tonnes by 2040. A “closed loop system”, in which products like appliances would be repaired and reused for as long as possible, and finally recycled or reused in new products, would also benefit local economies by creating decent green jobs in repair, servicing and maintenance, waste management in sophisticated collection and sorting systems, as well as re-manufacturing and recycling activities. Based on research carried out in the US, UK and Europe, the authors estimate that “100% recycling of B.C.’s waste, with all sourcing and processing done locally, would support 12,300 direct jobs. With an existing provincial diversion rate of 43%, this would mean about 7,000 new direct jobs. In addition to these, there are also potential jobs gains in the more labour-intensive repair and refurbishment of products.”

“Because there may be job losses from reduced resource extraction and landfilling and incineration practices, “just transition” programs will be needed that facilitate new skills development. On balance, it is anticipated that job creation impacts would be larger than losses, but policy should actively seek to create those jobs by developing the sectors cited above. Promoting and supporting unionized workforces would push green jobs to ensure decent wages and working conditions.”

LINK

Closing the Loop: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Creating Green Jobs through Zero Waste in B.C. by Marc Lee, Sue Maxwell, Ruth Legg, and William Rees is available at the Climate Justice Project of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (B.C. Office)

at: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2013/03/CCPA-BC-Zero-Waste.pdf>

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Circular Economy](#), [Just Transition](#), [life cycle analysis](#), [Recycling](#), [Retraining](#), [Waste management](#), [Zero Waste](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Investment in Fossil Fuel Companies is on Shaky Ground – and that Includes Pension Funds

Posted on [April 23, 2013](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a report released on March 26, authors Marc Lee and Brock Ellis warn of a possible “carbon bubble”, akin to the high tech or housing bubbles that have rocked financial markets in the past. The study finds that at least 78% of Canada’s proven oil, bitumen, gas, and coal reserves must remain in the ground in order to keep global temperature rise under 2 degrees C. This stranded, unburnable fossil fuel is part of the carbon liability of oil and gas companies, and has not been adequately recognized and accounted for by financial analysts. Because the Toronto Stock Exchange is highly weighted towards the fossil fuel sector (with 405 oil and gas companies and a total market capitalization of over \$379 billion on the TSX in 2011), the authors argue that this failure to account for these climate risks means that large amounts of invested capital are vulnerable – including the pension assets of working Canadians. They also point out the intergenerational

inequity implied in ignoring the interests of younger workers in pension fund management. They propose a series of measures to deflate the carbon bubble and green Canada's investment markets as part of an orderly transition to a clean energy economy.

Unburnable Carbon, a report by the Carbon Tracker Initiative, discusses the implications of these stranded carbon assets for world and U.K. financial markets. A 2013 update will be available in late April.

Meanwhile, the U.S. campaign for divestment of fossil fuel investments, spearheaded by Bill McKibben and 350.org, is gathering momentum in Canada. See the website of <http://gofossilfree.ca/> to follow the campaign to lobby universities to divest themselves of any investments related to fossil fuel companies.

LINKS

Canada's Carbon Liabilities: The Implications of Stranded Fossil Fuel Assets for Financial Markets and Pension Funds is available

at: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2013/03/Canadas%20Carbon%20Liabilities.p>

Unburnable Carbon (2012, and forthcoming 2013 update) is available at the Carbon Tracker website

at: <http://www.carbontracker.org/carbonbubble>

"Global warming's terrifying new math" by Bill McKibben in *Rolling Stone*, July 2012

at: <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **350.org, Carbon Bubble, Carbon Tracker Initiative, Fossil Fuel Divestment** | [Leave a reply](#)

Resist, Reclaim, Restructure: The Trade Union Struggle for Energy Democracy

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

"The Trade Unions for Energy Democracy is a global, multi-sector initiative to advance democratic direction and control of energy in a way that promotes solutions to the climate crisis, energy poverty, the degradation of both land and people, and the repression of workers' rights and protections." Now available on their website: *Resist, Reclaim, Restructure: The Trade Union Struggle for Energy Democracy*, a framing discussion document written for the 3-day global trade union roundtable which launched the initiative in October 2012, convened by the Cornell Global Labor Institute and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation of New York City. Representatives from several Canadian public sector unions and the Canadian Labour Congress participated. "The Trade Unions for Energy Democracy initiative focuses on three main concerns; the recognition that there is a global energy emergency; the needed transition to renewable energy is not happening, and the need for energy democracy led by public sector unions.

LINKS

Resist, Reclaim, Restructure: The Trade Union Struggle for Energy Democracy.

(October 2012) Roundtable discussion document, by Sean Sweeney, is available

at: <http://energyemergencyenergytransition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Resist-Reclaim-Restructure.pdf>

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy website, with news and further documents

at: <http://energydemocracyinitiative.org/about-initiative/>

Statements from many international union federations are
at: <http://energydemocracyinitiative.org/category/resources/trade-union-statements/>

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Canadian Labour Congress, Cornell Global Labor Institute, Labour and Greens, labour union policies, Protests & Rallies, Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy** | [Leave a reply](#)

New Gender Analysis of Green Jobs in the U.S. Shows Women Under-Represented

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On April 2, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) in Washington D.C. published the first analysis of gender distribution of green jobs in America. The report concludes that women are underrepresented in the green economy (holding only 29.5% of green jobs, vs. a 48% participation rate in the general labour force). There are large variations across the country: ranging from a 4% gap in Washington, D.C. to a 24% gap in Maine. The pattern in the overall economy is expected to continue since the fastest-growing green jobs are those traditionally held by men, such as HVAC technicians and electricians. The good news is that the gender wage gap is lower in the green economy than in the overall economy, (18% versus 22% in 2010). The lead author of this study is Ariane Hegewisch ; the President of the IWPR is Heidi Hartmann. The report used data from the U.S. Department of Labor Green Goods and Services Survey and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2008-2010, as well as the Clean Economy database maintained at the Brookings Institute. The report is the first in a series that will be funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation's Sustainable Employment in a Green US Economy (SEGUE) Program. Future reports will address good practices in workforce development for women in the green economy.

LINKS

Quality Employment for Women in the Green Economy: Industry, Occupation, and State-by-State Job Estimates, is available from a link at:<http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/quality-employment-for-women-in-the-green-economy-industry-occupation-and-state-by-state-job-estimates>

True Sustainability Requires Gender Equality, by Adam James
at:<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/news/2013/03/08/55750/true-sustainability-requires-gender-equality/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Gender, Gender Differences, Gender Equality, Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), Wage gap** | [Leave a reply](#)

Release of 2011 U.S. Green Jobs Statistics Shows Growth; Future Surveys Cancelled

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics published the results of the latest Green Goods and Services Survey on March 19, 2013, estimating that there were 3.4 million Green Goods and Services (GGS) jobs in the U.S. in 2011, with a growth rate of 2.6% from 2010 to 2011. The leading source of private sector green job growth from 2010 to 2011 came in the construction sector, with more than 100,000 jobs. California, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Ohio ranked highest in the number of GGS jobs.

See the 2011 survey results, supplemental tables, and the revised 2010 data archived at:<http://www.bls.gov/ggs/news.htm>. At the same time, the Bureau announced that one of the means by which it will meet its budget cut of more than \$30

million, is to eliminate all the products associated with its “Measuring Green Jobs” program, including the surveys and the career information publications.

See the Sequestration announcement at:http://www.bls.gov/bls/sequester_info.htm.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Bureau of Labor Statistics, Construction Industry, Green Goods and Services (GGS), Green Growth, Green Job Creation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Tech Job Growth in California Four Times Greater Than the Overall Job Growth Rate

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The *2013 California Green Innovation Index*, the 5th edition of this index, was released on March 28 by the non-profit group, Next10. It reports that California's per capita emissions have dropped 17% since 1990, and 2% between 2009 and 2010 alone. Between 2010 and 2011, clean tech patent registrations in California increased by 26% (more than double the rate of the U.S. as a whole, and more than 5 times the global rate). In the special feature section on Jobs in the Core Clean Economy, the report shows that job creation was four times greater in the clean economy than in the economy as a whole from 2001 to 2011. Regional data are provided.

LINK

2013 California Green Innovation Index is available at: <http://greeninnovationindex.org/content/index-page>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **California Green Innovation Index, Clean Tech Jobs, Clean Technology, Green Job Creation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Worldwide Case Studies of Decent Green Jobs Show the Need for Strong Policy Support

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A special issue of the *International Journal of Labor Research*, dated 2012 but just released in 2013, provides case studies of green jobs in Korea, South Africa, the EU, and a chapter on “Working Conditions in ‘Green Jobs’: Women in the Renewable Energy Sector”, by researchers from the European WiRES project. From the Journal's Forward: “While these results remain very partial, this should be seen as an important reminder that “green” employment is not decent by definition and that in any other sector, green jobs require careful stewardship from public authorities to ensure that workers are able to exercise their rights. ...Indeed, government subsidies and procurement to encourage the shift to a greener environment should be attached to strict clauses protecting the rights to freedom of association and to bargain collectively and ensuring decent minimum conditions for workers.”

LINK

Are Green Jobs Decent? In the *International Journal of Labor Research* (2012) v. 4 #2, published by the International Labor Organization at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_dialogue/—actrav/documents/publication/wcms_207887.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Bargaining Rights, EU, European Commission, European WiRES, International Journal of Labour Research, Labour Rights, Occupational Health and Safety, Women in Renewable Energy** | [Leave a reply](#)

How can Renewable Energy Meet Future Needs in Canada?

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A survey released in March by the David Suzuki Foundation and the Trottier Energy Futures Project states that Canada's supplies of solar, wind, hydroelectric and biomass energy are much larger than the current or forecast demand for fuel and electricity. It concludes that Canada can achieve an 80 % reduction in energy-related GHG emissions by 2050 by creating an integrated energy system which includes: a smart electricity grid which uses information technologies "to balance a wider range of supply sources, energy storage, interprovincial transfers of electricity and a wide variety of energy management and efficiency tools." Still, the report sees "up to half of Canada's energy demand would still be met by liquid fuels". *An Inventory of Low-Carbon Energy for Canada*, released on March 27 at:

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/media/news/2013/03/renewable-energy-sources-can-drive-canadas-low-carbon-future-trottier-energy-fut/> is the second research report released by the Trottier Energy Futures Project.

IN THE U.S.

A new report from the Union of Concerned Scientists predicts that current renewable energy technologies-wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, and hydropower-could supply 80% of U.S. electricity in 2050, reliably and across the entire country. Such a conversion would require new power transmission lines, new technologies to store renewable energy and to create a "smart" grid, and economic policies to encourage energy efficiency and lower market barriers to renewable technologies. Read *Ramping up Renewables: Energy you can Count on* at:

http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/clean_energy/Ramping-Up-Renewables-Energy-You-Can-Count-On.pdf

IN NEW YORK STATE

A new study by Mark Jacobson and Mark Delucchi, published in the journal *Energy Policy*, proposes that New York State's power needs could be met by solar, wind power, hydro and geothermal sources as early as 2030. See "Examining the Feasibility of Converting New York State's All-Purpose Energy Infrastructure to One Using Wind, Water, and Sunlight" in *Energy Policy* 2013 v. 57, at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/Articles/I/NewYorkWWSEnPolicy.pdf>

IN EUROPE

A newly released report from the World Future Council documents an October 2012 workshop in Denmark where representatives from around the world, including Canada, discussed strategies for implementing renewable energy, and shared successful examples from around Europe. *From Vision to Action: A Workshop Report on 100% Renewable Energies in Europe* is available at:

http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Climate_and_Energy/From_Vision_to_Action_Policy_Recommendations_for_100_RE_in_European_Regions.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Emissions, Canadian Renewable Energy Sector, David Suzuki Foundation, energy efficiency, Renewables, Trottier Energy Futures Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

The IMF Decries the Distortions of Fossil Fuel Subsidies; Working at a Cross-Purpose with Climate Compatible Investment

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A new report from the International Monetary Fund enumerates the economic problems caused by fossil fuel subsidies, including aggravating fiscal imbalances; crowding out priority public spending and private investment; encouraging excessive energy consumption; artificially promoting capital-intensive industries (thus discouraging employment creation); reducing incentives for investment in renewable energy; and accelerating the depletion of natural resources. The report continues, "As most subsidy benefits are captured by higher-income households, energy subsidies have important distributive consequences that are often not fully understood."

Importantly, the paper includes what it calls "the most comprehensive estimates of energy subsidies available covering petroleum products, electricity, natural gas, and coal." The report estimates the post-tax subsidies for energy around the world at \$1.9 trillion in 2011, with the top three subsidizers, in absolute terms: the United States (\$502 billion), China (\$279 billion), and Russia (\$116 billion).

Read *Energy Subsidy Reform: Lessons and Implications* at: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2013/012813.pdf>.

A related paper by the Overseas Development Institute throws light on the current dilemma of international carbon development goals and fossil fuel subsidies. For examples, it points out that five countries (China, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Mexico), appear in both the list of top 12 recipients of climate finance and the list of top 12 providers of fossil-fuel subsidies to domestic consumers. See *At Cross-Purposes: Subsidies and Climate Compatible Investment* at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/7343-subsidies-climate-compatible-investment-fossil-fuel-private-finance>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#), [Overseas Development Institute](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fraser Institute Analysis Pans Ontario's Green Energy Act

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A Report released on April 11 by Canada's Fraser Institute analyses Ontario's Green Energy Act and finds no redeeming features. The report concludes that "Overall, GEA-related energy cost increases will yield a net loss of investment and employment in Ontario, in pursuit of environmental benefits that could have been obtained at a fraction of the cost." The report was released by the Fraser Institute, whose defining goal is "a free and prosperous world through choice, markets and responsibility". Read *Environmental and Economic Consequences of Ontario's Green Energy Act* at: <http://www.fraserinstitute.org/uploadedFiles/fraser-ca/Content/research-news/research/publications/environmental-and-economic-consequences-ontarios-green-energy-act.pdf>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Fraser Institute](#), [Ontario Green Energy Act](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Changes in Oil and Gas Regulations for Canada and Alberta

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

While Canada waits for the new oil and gas regulations promised for Spring 2013 by Environment Minister Kent, the Pembina Institute has released its own recommendations for what it calls this "make-or-break moment for Canada's climate credibility". Author Claire Demerse recommends: the oil and gas industry reduce emissions intensity by 42 % ; the

technology fund levy for those who don't meet the emissions reduction target should increase to at least \$100 per tonne by 2020; the current unlimited access to offset credits for companies should end.

Read *Getting on Track to 2020: Recommendations for Greenhouse Gas Regulations in Canada's Oil and Gas Sector* from links at:<http://www.pembina.org/pub/2427> .

In Alberta, discussion is underway for reform of the provincial carbon pricing system, with the media reporting proposals of a 40% target to improve emissions intensity, and a compensating payment of \$40 per tonne if that is not achieved.

Read "Carbon levy talks in early stages, Alberta environment minister confirms" in the *Edmonton Journal*, April 4, 2013 at:<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/technology/Alberta+reviewing+climate+change+policy+McQueen+confirms/8195862/story.html>, and See *What you need to know about Alberta's 40/40 carbon pricing proposal*, by Simon Dyer (April 5, 2013) at the Pembina website: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/707>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Emissions, Carbon Pricing, Oil and Gas Regulations, Pembina Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Provincial Election May 14

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Environmental issues will be a high priority for B.C. voters in the election, called for May 14. Follow the issues at The Tye at: <http://thetye.ca/>; BetterFutures B.C. at: <http://betterfuturebc.ca/nextstep/>; the Pembina Institute at: <http://www.pembina.org/media-releases>; Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. Office at: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/offices/bc/news-updates>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Provincial Elections** | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. Auditor General is Highly Critical of the Pacific Carbon Trust

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Public release of a report from the Office of the B.C. Auditor General has been indefinitely delayed by the provincial government, but Ben Parfitt of the B.C. office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives provides a summary of the report, and explanation. According to Parfitt, the Auditor General examined two major purchases of carbon offsets sold in 2010, (which together accounted for 70% of the 2010 offsets): the purchase of the Darkwoods private forestlands by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and a project that reduced flaring of natural gas at wells operated by Encana. The Auditor General's report found evidence that both the Nature Conservancy and Encana overstated the climatic benefits of their carbon offset projects by presenting "flawed" baseline information; that the Pacific Carbon Trust (PCT) overpaid for the offsets, and finally, that the PCT proceeded with the purchases against the advice of independent contractors. Read "The campaign to discredit BC Auditor General's report on carbon neutrality" by Ben Parfitt, (March 27, 2013) at the CCPA Climate Justice website at:<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/campaign-discredit-auditor-generals-report-carbon-neutrality>, and a related post from July, 2011 which provides more details at:<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/darkwoods-murky-world-carbon-credits-and-%E2%80%9Ccarbon-neutral%E2%80%9D-bc-government>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Forecasts of B.C. LNG Revenues are Disputed as “Cloudy”

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A week after Premier Clark released optimistic projections for the province’s liquefied natural gas strategy in February, the Energy ministry released two independent consultant’s reports on the issue. In an article in *The Tyee*, Geoff Dembicki unravels the calculations behind the government’s projected revenues, the consultants’ numbers, and the current industry opinion. He concludes that the projections are built on unrealistic assumptions, and “industry opinion also suggests B.C. is unlikely to realize tax revenues of \$260 billion, or even the lower Liberal estimate of \$130 billion.” Read “Clark’s Gas Export Optimism Floats on Cloudy Numbers” by Geoff Dembicki in *The Tyee* (April 10, 2013) at: <http://thetyee.ca/News/2013/04/10/LNG-Revenues-Cloudy/>.

The two consultant’s reports are at: <http://www.lbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs2013/528495/grant%20thornton%20-%20lng%20revenue.pdf> and <http://www.empr.gov.bc.ca/OG/Documents/Ernst%20and%20Young%20-%20LNG%20Revenue.pdf>.

Another article by Dembicki, on April 4, provides more background and criticism of the LNG strategy. By changing the rules to allow natural gas to power the energy-intensive processing stages of LNG, the government has undercut its own “clean energy” boast and reduced the potential job benefits for First Nations clean energy enterprises. Read “Changes to LNG Plan Pull Plug on Jobs Say First Nations” in *The Tyee* (April 4, 2013) at: <http://thetyee.ca/News/2013/04/04/Changes-to-LNG-Plan/>, and a supporting 2012 blog by Matt Horne of the Pembina Institute at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/611>.

Posted in **Energy Policy, Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Aboriginal Peoples, British Columbia, Christy Clark, First Nations, LNG** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Pipelines: Funding New Eastern Markets for Western Bitumen Sparks Widespread Opposition

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Energy East pipeline project proposal by TransCanada Pipeline is being promoted by Premier Redford of Alberta and New Brunswick’s David Alward. The proposal involves the inversion of 3,000 kilometres of existing pipeline from natural gas to crude oil, as well as the construction of 1,400 kilometres of new pipeline from Quebec to the Irving refinery in Saint John, New Brunswick. The project could carry as much as 850,000 barrels of crude oil per day. New Brunswick’s recent budget highlighted it as part of the province’s “Brighter Future”.

Echoing the recent vocabulary of Alberta Premier Redford, N.B. Premier David Alward has said “This project is potentially as important to Canada’s economic future as the railway was to its past. If we proceed, this project will strengthen our national and provincial economies and create jobs and economic growth today and for generations to come.”

Read *Premier encouraged by important step in West-East pipeline* (April 2) at CBC New Brunswick website at: http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.04.0274.html; New Brunswick budget document, *Managing Smarter for a Brighter Future* (March 26, 2013) at: <http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/627691-budget-2013-14-final-e.html#document/p2>, and “TransCanada’s West-East oil pipeline gains momentum” in the *Globe and Mail*, (April 2, 2013) at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/transcanadas-west-east-oil-pipeline-gains-momentum/article10663042/>.

A related protest is scheduled for Montreal on April 21: Marche pour la Terre/ Walk for the Earth is the result of a collaboration between AQLPA, the David Suzuki Foundation, Earth Day Quebec, ENvironnement JEUnesse, Equiterre, Greenpeace and Nature Quebec, along with the Idle No More movement. They will be protesting any expansion of the tar sands and the presence of pipelines in Quebec, along with many other demands for improved environmental policies and protections. See the website: in French at: <http://marchepourlaterre.org/> and in English at: <http://marchepourlaterre.org/en/>.

Another East-West pipeline, Enbridge Line 9, has drawn criticism from environmentalists since November 2012, when Enbridge applied to the National Energy Board to reverse the flow of oil and boost the line's capacity from 240,000 barrels per day to 300,000. Line 9 is a pipeline built in the 1970's which currently runs between Montreal and Westover, Ontario, through highly populated areas and across water sources, including the three rivers of the Greater Toronto area. Because of the danger of a disastrous oil spill, especially given Enbridge's historic spill in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 2010 and the toxicity of diluted bitumen that it could carry, the "Stop Line 9" movement has drawn large protests in communities across the proposed route.

On March 21, the following groups from Quebec and Ontario were allowed to submit their "List of Issues" to the NEB : Équiterre, Environmental Defence, Climate Justice Montreal, Sierra Club of Canada, Greenpeace Canada, and Association québécoise de lutte contre la pollution Atmosphérique. The U.S. Environmental Resources Defense Council is also involved because of the potential for oil to travel from Montreal across New England, via the existing connection with the Portland-Montreal pipeline.

Read the *Primer on the West-East Pipeline* (April 8, 2013) by Maryam Adrangi at the Council of Canadians website at:<http://canadians.org/blog/?p=20308>; *Enbridge's Oil Sands Pipeline Plan: All pain and no gain for Ontario* at the Environmental Defence website at: <http://environmentaldefence.ca/enbridgestarsandspipelineplan>; Natural Resources Defense Council press release (March 26, 2013) at: http://equiterre.org/sites/fichiers/nrdcrelease_-_us_group_submittal_to_neb_line_9_reversal_project_review-nrdc-march_26-final-english.pdf, and visit the Stop Line 9 Toronto website at: <http://www.stopline9-toronto.ca/> for links to major resources and other organized groups at: <http://www.stopline9-toronto.ca/line9resources.php>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cimate Justice Montreal, Enbridge, Energy East pipeline, Equiterre, Greenpeace Canada, Line 9, Montreal Refineries, National Energy Board, Natural Resources Defence Council, NEB, Protests & Rallies, Saint John Irving Refinery, Sierra Club of Canada, TransCanada Corporation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Employment Estimates for Fracking Shale Gas in Quebec

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A new study by the Canadian Energy Research Institute in Calgary provides an overview of shale gas locations and geology across Canada, describes the fracking process, and focuses on the current state of the Utica Shale Gas field in Quebec, using economic analysis to estimate GDP, employment, tax and royalty revenue. The report estimates Canadian employment gains in direct, indirect and induced job to range from 293,000 in the base case and 880,000 person-years in the maximum production case. Approximately 69% of jobs are estimated to occur in Québec, 23% in Alberta, and the remaining 8% across Canada. The Quebec government has put a moratorium on shale gas development to allow for public consultation about oil and gas regulations; the government is currently awaiting the completion of a Strategic Environmental Assessment, expected in late 2013.

LINK *Potential Economic Impacts of Developing Quebec's Shale Gas*, (March 2013) is available at the Canadian Energy Research Institute website at:http://www.ceri.ca/images/stories/2013-03-08_CERI_Study_132_-_Quebec_Shale.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Energy Research Institute, Economic Impacts of Fracking, Fracking, Job Creation, Quebec, Shale gas** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Industry and Environmental Groups Join to Create the Center for Sustainable Shale Development

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

In late March, 2013, the following groups announced their cooperation to create the Center for Sustainable Shale Development (CSSD): Chevron; Clean Air Task Force; CONSOL Energy; Environmental Defense Fund; EQT Corporation; Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP); Heinz Endowments; Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future; Pennsylvania Environmental Council; Shell; and the William Penn Foundation.

The CSSD website at: <http://037186e.netsolhost.com/site/> describes the group as: "an unprecedented collaboration built on constructive engagement among environmental organizations, philanthropic foundations and energy companies from across the Appalachian Basin...The result of this unique collaboration: the development of rigorous performance standards for sustainable shale development and a commitment to continuous improvement to ensure safe and environmentally responsible development of our abundant shale resources."

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Appalachian Basin, Center for Sustainable Shale Development, Environmental Defense Fund (U.S.), Environmental Groups, Shale gas** | [Leave a reply](#)

Emissions Standards Could Drive Job Creation in European New Vehicle Technology

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A new report by consulting firm Cambridge Econometrics and Ricardo-AEA forecasts that 350,000-450,000 new jobs will be created if stricter carbon dioxide emissions standards for new cars and vans are implemented across Europe. Details of new regulations and targets are being debated, with German manufacturers at odds with those in France and Italy; Germans believe they would be at a disadvantage because of the bigger cars they produce. See *An Economic Assessment of Low-carbon Vehicles* at: <http://www.ricardo-aea.com/cms/assets/MediaRelease/Economic-Assessment-Vehicles-FINAL2.pdf>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Green Job Creation, Vehicle emission standards** | [Leave a reply](#)

Extreme Climate Events Threaten Australian Agriculture, Cities

Posted on **April 23, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A report by Australia's Climate Commission, released in March 2013, states that "There is little doubt that over the next few decades changes in extreme events will increase the risks of adverse consequences to human health, agriculture, infrastructure and the environment", with key food-growing regions across the southeast and the southwest, and cities in the southeast especially at risk. The report calls for deep, immediate cuts to carbon emissions as the only way to reverse the trend. The Climate Commission is an independent advisory group established by the Australian government in 2011 to provide Australians with an independent and reliable source of information about climate change. Read *The Critical Decade: Extreme Weather Report* at: <http://climatecommission.gov.au/report/extreme-weather/>.

Canada Caught in a “Staples Trap” and a “Carbon Trap” by Current Pace of Oil Development

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The authors of a new report released jointly by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Polaris Institute reject the polarizing framework of “economic interests vs. environmental interests”, or “East vs. West”, and call for a public debate of the social, economic and environmental complexities of Canada’s current “bitumen path”. They argue that Canada’s current “gold rush” approach is creating a double threat to the country: a “staples trap,” which is making our economy less diversified, productive and resilient, and a “carbon trap,” which will make the inevitable day of reckoning for climate adaptation much more expensive and difficult. The report discusses employment impacts, income distribution, international trade, currency effects, and “Dutch Disease” and the Canadian manufacturing sector. An alternate policy approach is recommended, which uses tighter regulation to slow the pace of bitumen extraction and to boost Canadian content in the upstream and downstream supply chains. At the same time, Canada’s economy needs to encourage more balanced, innovative and low-carbon industries.

LINK

The Bitumen Cliff: Lessons and Challenges of Bitumen Mega-Developments for Canada’s Economy in an Age of Climate Change by Tony Clarke, Jim Stanford, Diana Gibson, and Brendan Haley is available at:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2013/02/Bitumen%20Cliff.pdf>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives \(CCPA\)](#), [Canadian Manufacturing](#), [Carbon Trap](#), [Dutch Disease](#), [Economic Diversity](#), [Environment-Economy Dichotomy](#), [Manufacturing](#), [Polaris Institute](#), [Staples Trap](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. State Department Releases New Jobs Estimates for Keystone XL Pipeline

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. State Department released the *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Keystone XL* on Friday March 1, making no recommendations for or against approval of the pipeline project. A 45-day period has commenced to allow for public comments, with a final supplemental environmental impact statement to be released before a government decision, expected no earlier than Summer 2013.

Although mainly assessing environmental impacts, the report includes a socioeconomic section which provides new data: a wider view of impacts (including housing, public services support, fiscal revenues and private property valuations), and more detailed estimates about job creation and earnings impacts. According to the new estimates, 42,100 indirect jobs and 3,900 direct jobs would be created during the one- to two-year construction period, but the ongoing operation of the pipeline would only support 35 permanent and 15 temporary jobs, mostly for inspections, maintenance and repairs.

Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver summed up the Canadian government position on the Keystone XL pipeline when he traveled to Houston Texas on March 6 to address the Houston oil workers. He stated: "The oil sands generate jobs and economic prosperity both in Canada and in the United States. Currently, oil sands production supports 63,000 American jobs per year. With expansion through Keystone and other projects, the oil sands will support tens of thousands more on both sides of the border."

LINKS

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Keystone XL is available in a series of PDF files at: <http://keystonepipeline-xl.state.gov/draftseis/index.htm>

Detailed Socioeconomic estimates, including employment and earnings, are published in Section 3.10 at: <http://keystonepipeline-xl.state.gov/documents/organization/205641.pdf> and Section 4.10 at: <http://keystonepipeline-xl.state.gov/documents/organization/205612.pdf>

All documents related to the project are posted on a dedicated State Department website at: <http://www.keystonepipeline-xl.state.gov/>

Reactions to the statement from:
TransCanada Pipeline <http://www.transcanada.com/6209.html>;

National Resources Defence Council (U.S.) at:
http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/sclefkowitz/keystone_xl_tar_sands_pipeline_7.html;

Indigenous Environmental Network at: <http://www.ienearth.org/ien-responds-to-draft-keystone-xl-supplemental-eis/>;

Sierra Club of Canada [http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/climate-change/media/release/statement-keystone-xl-pipeline-report](http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/climate-change/media/release/statement-keystone-xl-pipeline-report;);

Pembina Institute <http://www.pembina.org/blog/694>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Construction Industry, Environmental Impact Assessment, Indigenous Environmental Network, Job Creation, Joe Oliver, Keystone XL, Oil Sands Jobs, Pembina Institute, Pipeline Jobs, Pipelines, Sierra Club, TransCanada** | [Leave a reply](#)

Liquified Natural Gas: B.C. Announces Royalty Credits and Grants to First Nations to Stimulate the Industry

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Government of British Columbia released a strategy for LNG development in February 2012, and has now released a one year update. The government now predicts that "LNG development is expected to create on average 39,000 new full time jobs during a nine-year construction period. There could be as many as 75,000 new, annual full-time jobs once all LNG plants are in full operation."

On February 25 at a conference called *Fuelling the Future: Global opportunities for LNG in BC*, Premier Christy Clark **announced** that British Columbia will provide up to \$120 million in royalty credits to the industry in 2013, through the existing Infrastructure Royalty Credit Program (IRCP). The program, established in 2004, allows resource companies to recover up to 50 % of the cost of roads and pipelines through credits that reduce royalties payable to government.

At the same conference, the Premier [announced that the government will provide \\$32 million](#) to the First Nations Limited Partnership (comprised of 15 northern First Nations) to facilitate their non-equity investment in the proposed Pacific Trails Pipeline project , a 463-kilometre pipeline planned to run from Summit Lake, north of Prince George, to the proposed Kitimat LNG facility on the coast.

LINKS

British Columbia's Liquefied Natural Gas Strategy: One Year Update is at:http://engage.gov.bc.ca/Inginbc/files/2013/02/LNGreport_update2013_web.pdf, with job forecasts summarized in a news release at:<http://engage.gov.bc.ca/Inginbc/files/2013/02/News-Release-Major-progress-job-creation-evident-in-LNG-update.pdf>

Liquefied Natural Gas: A Strategy for British Columbia's Newest Industry, published in Feb. 2012, is at: http://www.gov.bc.ca/ener/popt/down/liquefied_natural_gas_strategy.pdf

See the new B.C. government website at: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/Inginbc/> for all LNG developments.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Aboriginal employment, Aboriginal Energy Development, British Columbia, Christy Clark, First Nations, First Nations Limited Partnership, Infrastructure, Infrastructure Investment, Infrastructure Royalty Credit Program (IRCP), Liquefied Natural Gas, LNG, LNG Jobs, Pacific Trails Pipeline Project** | [Leave a reply](#)

Models Predict the Effect of Heat Stress on Workers

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A scientific article by researchers at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration uses historical climate data from 1860 and modeling to 2200 to forecast “wet-bulb temperatures” – a heat stress indicator that takes humidity into account. They estimate that if carbon dioxide levels keep rising over the next two centuries, labour capacity during the hottest months will fall from a current level of approximately 90% to 80% by 2050, 63% by 2100 and 39% by 2200, in the worst case scenario. Although the worst effects would be felt in tropical and mid-latitudes, the authors predict that “heat stress in Washington D.C. becomes higher than present-day New Orleans, and New Orleans exceeds present-day Bahrain.”

LINKS

“Reductions in Labour Capacity From Heat Stress Under Climate Warming”, by [John P. Dunne](#), [Ronald J. Stouffer](#) & [Jasmin G. John](#) in *Nature Climate Change online*, February 23, 2013 (abstract free; full article for a fee) at:<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1827.html>

A layman's summary appears in *Surprising Science*, published by the Smithsonian Institute, at:<http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/science/2013/02/climate-change-is-reducing-our-ability-to-get-work-done/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Heat Stress, Heat Stress Indicators, Modelling, Occupational Health and Safety** | [Leave a reply](#)

Overviews of Green Jobs, Skills, and Social Dialogue in Europe and South Africa

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Two new reports were released by SustainLabour in February. The first, *Green Jobs and Related Policy Frameworks: an Overview of the European Union* provides detailed employment data by sector, subsectors, and countries across Europe - estimating that there are about 7,360,000 jobs in the 27 EU countries in green sectors (renewable energies, energy efficiency, retrofitting, organic agriculture, waste management and green transportation.) The report discusses the quality of green jobs, skills development, and gender differences in green job creation. It describes the social dialogue between employer associations and trade unions with European and national examples, and discusses the current major policy instruments, including the Lisbon Strategy, Europe 2020, the European Economic Recovery Plan and national Economic strategies, and Roadmaps 2050 for a Resource Efficient Europe. An extensive bibliography is included.

A South African overview report analysing national policies was posted to the Sustainlabour website but has been removed, and replaced by briefer presentations from February meetings in Johannesburg. The meetings and report are part of the "Social Dialogue for Green and Decent Jobs. South Africa-European Dialogue on Just Transition", a collaboration of Sustainlabour with COSATU (South African Trade Union Congress) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and funded by the European Union. In South Africa, with an unemployment rate of 25%, the green economy is seen as a major source of job creation; the New Growth Path policy statement of 2011 included a Green Economy Accord, signed by government, business and trade unions and other civil society organizations.

LINKS

Green Jobs and Related Policy Frameworks: an Overview of the European Union is available at:

<http://www.sustainlabour.org/documentos/Green%20and%20decent%20jobs-%20An%20Overview%20from%20Europe.pdf>

Sustainlabour European Union-South Africa Dialogue on Green Jobs and Just Dialogue on Green Jobs and Just Transition Presentation from 20 February 2013 (comparative summary) is available at:

<http://www.sustainlabour.org/documentos/Ana%20Sanchez-%20EU-SA%20green%20jobs%20Nairobi.pdf>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Employer Associations, Europe 2020, European Economic Recovery Plan, Gender, Gender Differences, Green Job Creation, Green Jobs, Job Quality, Just Transition, Lisbon Strategy, Roadmaps 2050, South Africa, Sustainlabour, Trade Unions** | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal Environmental Policy Review and Funding for Clean Tech

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

On February 15, Canada's Environment Minister released the *2012 Progress Report on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS)*, along with the 2013-16 draft *Strategy*, which forms the basis of public consultation, open until June 14, 2013. Also on Feb. 15th, the government announced \$61.8 million of funding to support 23 clean technology projects across Canada, in areas such as agriculture, biofuels, transportation, mining and electric power generation, with funding provided through Sustainable Development Technology Canada's (SDTC) SD Tech Fund™. Individual projects are described in the [Backgrounder](#).

LINKS

2012 Progress Report on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) is available

at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/Publications/default.asp?lang=En&xml=CC4A6872-E0BE-4C90-A4AA-DD11320F10BF>

The 2013-16 Draft Federal Sustainable Development Strategy is available at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/dd-sd/default.asp?lang=En&n=C2844D2D-1> or the [Consulting with Canadians website](#); comments accepted by June 14, 2013.

Backgrounder (with details of individual projects) at: http://www.sdte.ca/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=317&cntnt01origid=15&cntnt01detailtemplate=news-details&cntnt01returnid=143&hl=en_CA

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Clean Technology, Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Fragmentation the Defining Trend in Canada's Carbon Policy

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The International Institute for Sustainable Development has published a policy brief which analyses Canada's carbon policy developments in 2012 and identifies key trends to watch for in 2013. The authors note that "accommodating the historical patchwork of provincial policy is pushing the country down a path of further fragmentation, increasing the risk of high-cost compliance and decreasing the likelihood of meeting Canada's aspirational GHG targets." And further, "In 2012 the federal government set an important precedent The Canada-Nova Scotia Equivalency Agreement has therefore established a pattern of federal policy deferral that is expected to become entrenched in 2013. The splitting of policy responsibility, with architecture provincially tailored but GHG performance standards nationally set, will underscore policy development in 2013." Among the recommendations for 2013: "Mechanisms for coordination of policy, whether through linkage, equivalency agreements or even common LCDR markets, should be nurtured and supported. Quebec's experiment with linking permit trade bi-laterally with California is an important precedent to watch".

Canadian Carbon Policy Year in Review and Emerging Trends, 2012 is available at:
http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2012/regulating_carbon_canadian_policy.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **California, Canadian Emissions, Cap and Trade, Emissions Trading, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Policy Fragmentation, Quebec** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Consultation Period Re a Cap and Trade Policy

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment released *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions in Ontario: A Discussion Paper* at the end of January, with a public comment period open till April 21, 2013. The discussion paper states that it is not considering a carbon tax, but rather a cap-and-trade system. According to an article by lawyers at Osler Hoskin and Harcourt LLP, "Ontario intends to seek an equivalency arrangement with the Federal Government so as to render federal regulations inapplicable as long as equivalent Ontario regulations achieve identical (or better) outcomes."

LINKS

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions in Ontario: A Discussion Paper

is available at:

http://www.downloads.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/er/documents/2013/011-7940.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Environment Climate Change website at:

http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/category/climate_change/STDPROD_078897.html

and also provides links to earlier policy documents, including the November 2012 Climate Change

Progress Report. "Change is in the Air: Ontario Closer to a Cap-and-Trade System" in *Osler Updates*, February 21, 2013 at: <http://www.osler.com/NewsResources/Details.aspx?id=5497>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cap and Trade, Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Carbon Pricing Compared: Alberta, B.C., California, Australia, and Other Jurisdictions

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Released by the Pembina Institute on February 25, a useful comparison chart highlights carbon pricing approaches in Alberta, British Columbia, California, Australia, Norway and the European Union. Details about each jurisdiction include the 2013 carbon price, proportion of GHG's covered by the carbon price; presence of a "hard cap" on emissions; percentage of allowance value collected by government; extent to which offsets may be purchased; anticipated public revenue in 2013; and where carbon revenues are allocated.

LINKS

Carbon Pricing Approaches in Oil and Gas Producing Jurisdictions is available at the Pembina Institute website at: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2414>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing, Hard Cap, Pembina Institute** | [Leave a reply](#)

CCPA Alternative Budget Proposes Environmental and Energy Policies

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives provides alternative budget proposals for 2013 which, they estimate, will create 200,000 to 300,000 full time jobs in any given year. Among a full-range of budget items, there are many environment- and energy-related proposals, including targeting research and development for "fostering innovation in energy storage, investment in Sustainable Development Technology Canada, supporting "Green Energy Bonds", a National Green Homes Strategy for energy efficiency, and securing Arctic and remote communities' local energy supplies."

The Alternative Budget calls for a collaborative National Energy Plan which would "slow the pace of bitumen development and use it for domestic needs first; upgrade the resource in this country before it is exported, and develop linkages to upstream and downstream energy related activities." In the category of Sectoral Development, the report proposes to enhance value-added production and investment in key sectors, including manufacturing, automobiles, aerospace and forestry, with funding to come from cancelling biofuel crop subsidies and the Green Car Levy.

See *the Alternative Budget in Brief* (34 pages) at:

http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2013/03/AFB2013_BudgetInBrief.pdf and the full document (172 pages) at:

http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2013/03/AFB2013_MainDocument.pdf. For French language versions, go to: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/abgf2013>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Arctic, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Canadian Federal Budget, Canadian National Energy Plan, CCPA Alternative Budget, Green Bonds, Green Energy Bonds, Northern Development, Northern Energy Infrastructure, Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC)** | [Leave a reply](#)

Meaningful GHG Reductions in Toronto Possible with Retrofitting, Low Carbon Transit

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A new article demonstrates the combination of strategies which might reduce Toronto's per capita GHG emissions by over 70%. "With current policies, especially cleaning of the electricity grid, Toronto's per-capita GHG emissions could be reduced by 30 per cent over the next 20 years. To go further, however, reducing emissions in the order of 70 per cent, would require significant retrofitting of the building stock, utilization of renewable heating and cooling systems, and the complete proliferation of electric, or other low carbon, automobiles."

See "A Low Carbon Infrastructure Plan for Toronto, Canada", by Christopher Kennedy (Department of Engineering, University of Toronto) and Loraine Sugar, in *Canadian Journal of Civil Engineering*, volume 40 (1), January 2013 at: <http://www.nrcresearchpress.com/doi/pdf/10.1139/cjce-2011-0523>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cities and Climate Change, Electric Vehicles, Heating and Cooling, Low-Carbon Transportation, Per Capita Emissions, Public Transportation, retrofitting, Toronto, Toronto Emissions, Transit, Transportation Investment** | [Leave a reply](#)

...And in Sudbury

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A 5-year review of the Official Plan of the city of Sudbury in northern Ontario elicited public concerns about climate change. In response, the city planning department tabled a report on February 25 which highlights existing city policies to prepare for climate change, and proposes new initiatives in the areas of growth management, compact mixed use communities, and active transportation and transit policies. Read *Climate Change and the Official Plan*, at: <http://www.greatersudbury.ca/agendas/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&lang=en&id=594&itemid=6909>. These are strategies based on the land use policy guidance released in 2012 by the government of Ontario in *Climate Ready: Ontario's Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan for 2011-2014*, and the proposed *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)*.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cities and Climate Change, Ontario Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, Sudbury** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian Physicians Urged to Fight Climate Change

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

An Editorial in the February 13, 2013 issue of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* urges the Canadian medical establishment and individual physicians to advocate against climate change by signing the December 2012 Doha

Declaration on Climate, Health and Wellbeing. It also points out that physicians can act on a professional level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their own health care workplaces. See “Physician’s Roles on the Front Line of Climate Change” in the *CMAJ* volume 185 #3 at: <http://www.cmaj.ca/content/185/3/195.full.pdf+html?sid=ffff264c-ea63-4daa-9c5d-ae8cdf448787>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Doha Declaration on Climate Health and Wellbeing, Professional Adaptation, Professional Ethics, Public Health, Workplace Emissions Reduction** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Fuel Efficiency Regulations for Heavy Duty Vehicles Finalized

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

On February 25, Canada’s Environment Minister announced the final regulations to improve fuel efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with progressively more stringent standards for 2014 to 2018 model-year heavy-duty vehicles such as full-size pick-ups, semi-trucks, garbage trucks and buses. The regulations were first made public in April 2012, and follow the standards set in the U.S. See: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=714D9AAE-1&news=3FC39747-ABF2-470A-A99E-48CA2B881E97> for the press release and links to a timeline, background, and Regulatory Impact Analysis statement.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Emissions, Emissions Regulations, energy efficiency, Fuel Efficiency, Heavy Duty Vehicles** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Proposals to Encourage Large-scale Wind Power

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

The costs and benefits of developing a commercial-scale offshore wind industry in the United States are explored in a report released on February 28. Policy recommendations are: accelerate the existing “Smart from the Start” program, enact the proposed *Incentivizing Offshore Wind Power Act*; establish a carbon tax, and roll back fossil fuel subsidies. *Making the Economic Case for Offshore Wind* was commissioned by the Center for American Progress, the Clean Energy States Alliance, the Sierra Club, and the U.S. Offshore Wind Collaborative, and conducted by the Brattle Group, a consulting firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Read it at:

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/report/2013/02/28/54988/making-the-economic-case-for-offshore-wind/>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Tax, Economics of Renewables, Fossil Fuel Subsidies, Offshore Wind, Renewable Energy Incentives, Renewables, Wind Farms, Wind Power** | [Leave a reply](#)

How Sustainable are the Supply Chains of Multinational Food Companies?

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Oxfam America released *Behind the Brands* on February 25th, the most recent update to their GROW campaign, which seeks to increase the transparency and accountability of the “Big 10” food and beverage companies in the world. The report is a scorecard which examines company policies in seven topics critical to sustainable agricultural production: women, small-scale farmers, farm workers, water, land, climate change, and transparency. Nestlé and Unilever scored

highest for their policies; Associated British Foods (ABF) and Kellogg ranked at the bottom. The other companies measured were: Coca-Cola, Danone, General Mills, Mars, Mondelez International (previously Kraft Foods), and PepsiCo. Read *Behind the Brands* at: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/files/behind-the-brands-briefing-paper-final.pdf>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Coca Cola, Danone, Food and Agriculture, Food Retail Industry, Food Wastage, Gender, General Mills, Mars, Mondelez International, Multinational Corporations, Nestle, Oxfam America, PepsiCo, Supply Chain Analysis, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Food System, Unilever, Water Politics** | [Leave a reply](#)

Global Assessment of the Impacts of Biofuels

Posted on **March 20, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the U.N. released “a comprehensive study that attempted to integrate into a single report the major issues related to biofuel and related feedstock sustainability.” The report focuses on the environmental issues of first and second-generation biofuels, with a brief consideration of landowner rights and the labour/employment effects. It provides case studies of national sustainability initiatives from nine countries: Canada, Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, U.S., U.K., E.U and Germany, and The Netherlands. The final chapter is a critical evaluation of biofuel certification schemes and lessons for sustainability, including impacts on agriculture and forestry. See *Biofuels And The Sustainability Challenge: A Global Assessment of Sustainability Issues, Trends and Policies for Biofuels and Related Feedstock* at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3126e/i3126e.pdf>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Biofuel Certification, Biofuel Labour, Biofuels, UN Food and Agricultural Organization** | [Leave a reply](#)

International Policies to Encourage Building Retrofits and Energy Efficiency

Posted on **February 13, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A January report from the International Energy Agency attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of various economic policies to improve energy efficiency. A large part of the report consists of detailed case studies of incentive programs for the buildings sectors in France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Canada. The Canadian case study highlights the ECO-Energy Retrofit Homes program, which ran from 2007 to 2012. The report concludes that it was “relatively effective” in delivering the expected results, but that “changes will be needed to reach a significant reduction in energy consumption from residential buildings of the order of 50% by 2050”. The program reached approximately 5% of low rise housing in Canada, and achieved an average 24% improvement in energy performance of participating homes. The report also estimates that the program supported the direct creation of 2000 energy advisor jobs, as well as construction installation jobs and jobs in insulation, window and door manufacturing (which it does not attempt to quantify).

LINK:

Mobilising Investment in Energy Efficiency: Economic Instruments for Low-Energy Buildings is available at: http://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/Mobilising_investment_EE_FINAL.pdf

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Overview of Green Jobs in the U.S.

Posted on **February 13, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The January 2013 issue of *Monthly Labor Review online* is a special issue dedicated to green jobs. Four articles are included, which explain the methodology of the two BLS surveys, the Green Goods and Services survey and the Green Technologies and Practices survey, and summarize previously published data. The final article, "Workplace safety and health profiles of occupations with green technology jobs" uses BLS workplace safety and health data, which shares the same industry and occupation classification systems used in the green jobs studies, to report on the prevalence and details of workplace injuries and accidents. Unfortunately, the data cannot be separated into green and non-green jobs, so that the results are for all jobs in the industries or occupations that contain green jobs. Also included: a book review of *Good Green Jobs in a Global Economy: Making and Keeping New Industries in the United States*, by David J. Hess, published by MIT Press in 2012.

LINK:

Monthly Labor Review Online, January 2013 issue, published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is at:

<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2013/01/>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Low-Carbon Energy Futures Require Transformative Change

Posted on **February 13, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In *Low-Carbon Energy Futures: A Review of National Scenarios*, the Trottier Energy Futures Project (TEFP) summarizes common themes in leading greenhouse gas reduction strategies for eight countries: Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The study shows that Canada and other industrialized countries have the technology to achieve an 80 per cent reduction in their energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Deep GHG emissions reductions will depend on major improvements to energy efficiency; greater reliance on electricity for heating, personal transportation and some industrial processes, coupled with a transition to low- or zero-carbon electricity sources, and a wider use of biofuels. "The transition to a low-carbon energy future will be transformative, requiring a boom in clean-energy technologies and low-energy practices at least as significant as the post-Second World War boom in fossil fuel consumption". The TEFP is a joint initiative of the David Suzuki Foundation, The Canadian Academy of Engineering and the Trottier Family Foundation.

LINK:

Low-Carbon Energy Futures: A Review of National Scenarios report and news release summary are available from link at: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/reports/2013/low-carbon-energy-futures-a-review-of-national-scenarios/>

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Canada and the U.S. are Falling Short on Capitalizing and Competing in Clean Energy

Posted on **February 13, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

In *Competing in Clean Energy, Capitalizing on Canadian innovation in a \$3 trillion economy*, the Pembina Institute identifies two main challenges to clean energy entrepreneurship in Canada: the lack of stable, long-term government policy and difficulty accessing capital. The report states that jobs in Canada's cleantech sector grew by 11%, and the industry invested almost \$2 billion in research and development between 2008 and 2010. Yet, "With the Harper government's focus set on accelerating development of Canada's fossil fuel commodities – from oilsands to shale gas and coal – Canada is currently capturing just one percent of the thriving clean energy market." Three main opportunities for support for clean energy entrepreneurship in Canada were identified: develop a set of specific federal financial tools to encourage clean energy entrepreneurship; engage in the development of a national energy strategy; and send the right price signals.

Although the Pembina Institute sees the U.S. as one of the countries outstripping us in the cleantech sector, a new report commissioned by the Pew Charitable Trusts states that the U.S. is missing the boat on clean energy investment. The study developed projections of how much clean generating capacity has been deployed in the United States and globally over two time periods: 2009 to 2011, and prospectively from 2012 to 2018. The report provides a number of policy recommendations to improve the situation.

LINKS:

Competing in Clean Energy, Capitalizing on Canadian innovation in a \$3 trillion economy. Report and executive summary: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2406>

Innovate, Manufacture, Compete: A Clean Energy Action Plan

is available from the Pew Charitable Trusts at: <http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/reports/innovate-manufacture-competite-a-clean-energy-action-plan-85899443754>

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Reducing GHG Emissions in the U.S.

Posted on **February 13, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

A recently released report by the World Resources Institute identifies a suite of policies that the U.S. Administration can pursue that do not require new legislation by Congress. *Can the U.S. Get There from Here? Using Existing Federal Laws and State Action to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, explains that if pursued with a "go-getter" level ambition, those policies can reduce U.S. emissions 17 percent below 2005 levels in 2020 and thereby reach its international commitments.

LINK:

Can the U.S. Get There from Here? Using Existing Federal Laws and State Action to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions: <http://www.wri.org/publication/can-us-get-there-from-here>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Final Assessment of Canada's Outgoing Commissioner of the Environment

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

Scott Vaughan, Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, presented his 2012 Fall Report to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on February 5th. The report is available at: http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_cesd_201212_e_37708.html as five separate chapters: Atlantic offshore oil and gas activities; Financial Assurances for Environmental Risks; Marine Protected Areas; A Study of Federal Support for the Fossil Fuel Sector; and, Environmental Petitions. The Commissioner's Perspective document at: http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_cesd_201212_00_e_37709.html concludes with the following concerns: "... the current level of inspections of major resource projects in the North is very low relative to the level of activity. The government does not know the actual cost of its support to the fossil fuel sector. Meanwhile, offshore resource development continues to expand even as the government makes slow progress establishing marine protected areas. As well, the petroleum boards on the east coast and their federal partners are not adequately prepared to respond to a major oil spill should they need to step in." French versions of these documents are available at: http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/Francais/parl_cesd_201212_f_37708.html. The Government's official response to the report is at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=FFE36B6D-1&news=A832AD6F-5CE4-448B-B91D-B5C7E2AB4B2A>. See the reaction of the David Suzuki Foundation to the Commissioner's report at: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/science-matters/2013/02/government-must-heed-environment-commissioners-warnings/>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Keystone XL Pipeline: Protests Include the Sierra Club

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by **elizabethperry493**

On February 13th, the day after Obama's State of the Union address was silent on the Keystone XL issue, protestors were arrested outside of the White House, including James E. Hansen, Bill McKibben, environmental lawyer Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and Michael Brune, the executive director of the Sierra Club of the U.S. The Sierra Club, for the first time in its 120 year history, endorsed a policy of peaceful civil disobedience: see the January 23 press release at: <http://content.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2013/01/sierra-club-engage-civil-disobedience-first-time-organizations-history> or the Director's Blog, "From Walden to the White House": <http://sierraclub.typepad.com/michaelbrune/2013/01/civil-disobedience.html>.

The Canadian Executive Board meeting of January 31 issued this statement: "...*Since the history of inaction on climate change in Canada is similar to the record in the United States, Sierra Club Canada is undertaking an internal dialogue to reassess its rules concerning civil disobedience in future campaigns and will make a decision at the appropriate time.*" In a survey of Sierra Club supporters on Jan. 31, over 94% responded that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: "Non-violent civil disobedience in campaigns for environmental protection can be a legitimate and acceptable tactic in a democratic society", and 88% agree or strongly agree that "Sierra Club Canada should seriously consider participating in non-violent civil disobedience actions". The Executive Board statement is at: <http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/media/release/sierra-club-canada-statement-civil-disobedience>; results of the survey are at: http://www.sierraclub.ca/sites/sierraclub.ca/files/surveyresults01312013_0.pdf.

The *Forward on Climate Rally* on February 17th, a project of 350.org, Sierra Club, and 120 other organizations, was billed as “the largest climate change rally in U.S. history”, in Washington, D.C. See: <http://forwardonclimate.tumblr.com/> for details. The goal of the rally is to demand that President Obama reject the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, finalize carbon pollution standards for power plants, and promote energy efficiency and clean energy.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Keystone XL Pipeline: Effects on GHG Emissions

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Natural Resources Defense Council released *Climate Impacts from the Keystone XL Tar Sands Pipeline, a Backgrounder*, on February 8. [Click Here](#) for the 8 page review, which includes full citations to further documentation.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Keystone XL Pipeline: Union Opposition

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Dave Coles, President of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) delivered a strong statement against the Keystone XL pipeline at a conference at City University of New York in January 2013. Although the CEP represents 35,000 members employed in oil and gas extraction, transportation, refining, and conversion in the petrochemical and plastics sectors, Coles stated in his speech: “We oppose the proposed Keystone XL pipeline and call on President Obama to reject the project. Climate pollution from the bitumen sands industry is already considerable and will only get worse by approving Keystone XL. The Canadian government’s aggressive lobbying in the U.S. in favor of the pipeline is an embarrassment. I have been arrested in the fight against Keystone XL because our union understands that this pipeline is bad for both the environment and Canadian workers. The pipeline will take potential upgrading and refining jobs away from Canadians and put our country’s energy security at risk.” The Canadian Labour Congress passed the following resolution at its 2011 Conference: “The CLC will promote the creation of good jobs for Canadians through increased processing of Canadian natural resources, including bitumen, within Canada, stopping the Keystone XL Pipeline from commencing its activities, and actively supporting the Canadian petrochemical industry.”

LINKS:

Keystone XL Pipeline: Bad for the environment and Canadian Workers is at the CEP website at: <http://www.cep.ca/en/news/in-the-news/keystone-xl-pipeline-bad-environment-and-canadian-workers>, and was reproduced at [Rabble.ca](#) on January 17 at:

<http://rabble.ca/news/2013/01/keystone-xl-pipeline-bad-environment-and-canadian-workers>

Canadian Labor Congress resolution at: <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/convention/2011-convention/economic-and-social-policy-resolutions>

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Keystone and Northern Gateway: Union Support

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The president of the U.S. Building Trades Department of the AFL-CIO issued a press release on February 13 calling for the immediate approval of the pipeline. In "President McGarvey Joins API President Jack Gerard for Joint Appeal for Keystone XL Pipeline Project", the union states: "Keystone pipeline is critical to our domestic energy industry. And our domestic energy is proving to be critical to the re-awakening of the American economy." See:<http://www.bctd.org/Newsroom/Latest-News/President-McGarvey-Joins-API-President-Jack-Gerard.aspx>. A press release from their Canadian counterparts on January 15 indicates that the position is similar for Canada, though it is specifically about a different pipeline. "Northern Gateway project an enormous opportunity for Canada's building trades", includes endorsements for the Northern Gateway pipeline from Robert Blakely, Director of Canadian Affairs, Building Trades Department of the AFL CIO and John Telford, Canadian Director for the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters. See:
<http://www.buildingtrades.ca/Newsroom/Latest-News/Industry-News/Northern-Gateway-project-an-enormous-opportunity-f.aspx>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

An Economic Argument for Pipelines

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canada West Foundation, a Calgary-based think tank, argues for their viewpoint in *Pipe or Perish, Saving an Oil Industry at Risk* at: http://cwf.ca/pdf-docs/publications/PipeOrPerish_Feb2013-1.pdf. The report, commissioned and financed by the government of Saskatchewan, argues "If pipeline project proposals such as Trans Mountain, Keystone XL and Northern Gateway don't move forward, Canada will be foregoing \$1.3 trillion in economic output, 7.4 million person-years of employment and \$281 billion in tax revenue between now and 2035."

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Oil Sands Production: the Environmental Impact

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Beneath the Surface: A Review of Key Facts in the Oilsands debate, published by Pembina Institute on January 28th, examines statements made that are not false, but selectively present information to minimize the negative impacts of oilsands production or overstate the positive strides that industry or governments have made toward addressing those impacts. The report focuses on five key areas including: air quality and emissions levels, land reclamation and wildlife, water impacts, volume of oil sands tailings and how reliance on the oil sands puts Canada's overall economy at risk. See *Beneath the Surface: A Review of Key Facts in the Oilsands debate* at:<http://www.pembina.org/pub/2404>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental Performance is One Indicator of Canadian Quality of Life

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

How Canada Performs is a detailed national "report card" across dimensions: economy, society, innovation, health, education and skills, and the environment. In the release of January 2013, at:<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/environment.aspx>, Canada receives a "C" grade on environmental performance and a rank of 15th out of 17 peer countries, measuring on 6 dimensions: air quality, waste, water quality and

quantity, biodiversity and conservation, natural resource management, and climate change and energy efficiency. Climate change is measured using the proxy of GHG emissions per capita, and on that dimension, our country receives a “D” grade. “The main challenge is to make economic growth less dependent on energy use and related air emissions, by improving energy efficiency and by developing and using cleaner fuels and low-emitting electricity sources.” Citing its previous reports from 2007 – 2011, the Board reiterates its call for a green taxes, green investment tax credits, and a cap and trade system for emissions. Data and analysis of GHG emissions are at:<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/environment/greenhouse-gas-emissions.aspx>. The main home page for *How Canada Performs: a Report Card on Canada* is at:<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/default.aspx>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

EU Transportation Sector Urged to Find Alternatives to Food Crop Biofuels

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report outlines a vision for the transportation sector of the EU which would reduce its reliance on biofuels from food crops while cutting its CO2 emissions by 205 million tonnes by 2020. The authors claim that the EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED) target and the Fuel Quality Directive (FQD) can be met by improved energy efficiency, combined with a the growth of renewable electricity use, and the use of biofuels and biomethane from waste and residues rather than from food crops. *Sustainable Alternatives for Land-based Biofuels in the European Union: Assessment of options and development of a policy strategy* was commissioned by Greenpeace, Transport & Environment, the European Environmental Bureau and BirdLife Europe, and written by CE Delft, an independent, non-profit research and consultancy organization in the Netherlands. The report is available at: http://www.cedelft.eu/publicatie/sustainable_alternatives_for_land-based_biofuels_in_the_european_union/1325.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change Coverage Decreasing in the Media

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In its annual review of media coverage of climate change, Daily Climate.org website states that *The New York Times* published the most stories on climate change and had the biggest increase in coverage among the five largest U.S. daily papers in 2012. Daily Climate.org also states that climate change reporting declined by 2% worldwide in 2012 from 2011, despite the increased coverage of extreme weather events such as Hurricane Sandy. For a review of climate change reporting in 2012, see: <http://www.dailyclimate.org/tdc-newsroom/2013/01/2012-climate-change-reporting>. Given its prominence, there is further concern for the diminution of climate change reporting after the *New York Times* announced in early January that it is reorganizing its coverage of environmental issues – eliminating the positions of environment editor and deputy environment editor and reassigning the seven reporters from a dedicated “desk”. *The Times* maintains that it will continue to cover environmental issues, but in an interdisciplinary way, reflecting that “environmental stories are “partly business, economic, national or local, among other subjects”. The online Green Blog is still publishing and no statement has been made about its future. See “New York Times Dismantles Its Environment Desk”, in *Inside Climate News*, January 11, 2013, at: <http://insid climat enews.org/news/20130111/new-york-times-dismantles-environmental-desk-journalism-fracking-climate-change-science-global-warming-economy>.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Leadership Program for Members of U.K. Parliament

Posted on **February 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Since 2009, the Green Alliance in the U.K. has been working to encourage climate change advocacy and action amongst elected politicians, through a Climate Leadership Programme. Over 50 MP's from all three political parties have attended workshops and information sessions on the science, policy and politics of climate change, and their links with key constituency issues. As the program enters a new 2-year phase, past achievements and policy documents are summarized in an essay at: <http://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2013/02/01/a-new-generation-of-climate-leaders-is-emerging-in-parliament/>; for Background on the Climate Leadership Program, see:<http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/grea1.aspx?id=4613>

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New Green Jobs Map for Canada, Ontario

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The latest report from ECO Canada, *Green Jobs Map*, focuses on “the major contributing industries in the Canadian green economy, essential green competencies within these industries, and the requisite green skills and training that professionals need in order to work in these particular occupations.” The report makes a distinction between those jobs that are linked to a green economy *and* also require environmental skills (which is the focus), and the larger universe of jobs that are found in green industries, sectors and companies, but do not require special environmental skills (which are *not* included). The report is based on analysis of 835 job postings, drawn from a database of online job vacancy advertisements throughout Canada, appearing from March through May 2012.

A separate, supplementary report developed in partnership with Toronto-based Evergreen uses the same database to focus on Ontario's green economy and finds, for example, that 58% of green job opening were at private sector employers. Amongst those companies, 67% of the green job postings were at environmental consulting, engineering or architectural firms.

LINKS:

Green Jobs Map: Tracking Employment through Canada's Green Economy is available from a link at: <http://www.eco.ca/publications/The-Green-Jobs-Map:-Tracking-Employment-through-Canada%E2%80%99s-Green-Economy/51/Featured%20Report/> (registration required).

Supplementary Report: Ontario is available at the Evergreen website at:

<http://www.evergreen.ca/docs/res/Green-Jobs-Map-Ontario-2012.pdf>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Sustainability Executives and Energy Managers

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

GreenBiz Group has published the 2013 edition of the *State of the Profession*, which provides a snapshot of the current status of Sustainability Vice-Presidents, Managers, and staff – although the report points out that there is, as yet, no clear-cut definition of either the term or the role. As in the previous two years, the document reports on the salaries and job content of sustainability managers and executives, but this year's also discusses the training and educational background of incumbents, internal promotion vs. recruitment as a source of talent, reporting relationships, budgets, and the future of the role in organizations. It also highlights the position of the "energy manager". Data for the survey was collected from July 26 to August 10, 2012 from the 4,207 members of the GreenBiz Intelligence Panel. The response rate was 12.7%, with 73% of those responses from job holders in large organizations (those with revenues of over \$1 billion); 93% were from the U.S., 2.4% from Canada, and the remainder from the U.K. and 11 other countries.

LINKS:

State of the Profession 2013 edition by GreenBiz Group is available at:

<http://info.greenbiz.com/state-profession-2013-get-report.html?src=GreenBiz> (registration required).

A summary is available at: <http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/feature/2235283/the-state-of-the-sustainability-profession-2013/page/1>

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World's Largest Companies are Investing in Renewable Energy

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Based on interviews with executives and analysis of public disclosure documents, *Power Forward: Why the World's Largest Companies are Investing in Renewable Energy* states that clean energy practices are becoming standard procedures for some of the largest and most profitable companies in the world, including AT&T, DuPont, General Motors, HP, Sprint, and Walmart. 96 companies from the combined 173 companies in the Fortune 100 and Global 100 have set formal renewable energy commitments, and/or greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction commitments. Barriers and challenges to the use of renewable energy are identified, and the report offers several recommendations for policymakers, including promoting tax credits or other incentives for renewable energy, removing policy hurdles, and market-based solutions that put a price on the pollution from conventional energy generation. The report was released in early December 2012 by Calvert Investments, Ceres and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

LINK:

Power Forward: Why the World's Largest Companies are Investing in Renewable Energy is available at: <http://www.ceres.org/press/press-releases/majority-of-world2019s-largest-companies-shifting-to-clean-energy>

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Winter Tourism Industry Feeling Impacts of Climate Change

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A recent research report by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Protect Our Winters (POW) looks at the direct economic impact of climate change on the winter tourism industry in the USA. A new economic analysis details how the \$12.2 billion winter tourism industry across 38 states has experienced an estimated \$1 billion loss and up to 27,000 fewer jobs over the last decade due to diminished snow fall patterns and the resulting changes in the outdoor habits of Americans. In addition to tourism, snow-based recreation in the United States has been estimated to contribute \$67 billion annually to the U.S. economy and supports over 600,000 jobs. Climate change will spell trouble for all businesses dependent on winter weather from snowmobiling, snowboarding, and ice fishing to snowshoeing and skiing — as well as the other related sectors that depend on winter sports tourists, such as restaurants, lodging, gas stations, grocery stores, and bars.

LINKS:

Climate Impacts on the Winter Tourism Economy in the United States is available at:

<http://www.nrdc.org/globalwarming/climate-impacts-winter-tourism.asp>

Protect Our Winters (POW) website is at: <http://protectourwinters.org>

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Public Opinion Polls Consider: Do Canadians Still Care?

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two recent surveys consider Canadians' attitudes toward climate change and Ontario's green energy policies, respectively. As part of their Focus Canada series, Environics recently carried out a poll to consider the question "Climate Change: Do Canadians still care?" The survey is based on telephone interviews conducted with 1,500 Canadians between November 15 and December 5, 2012, and respondents were asked 5 questions.

A clear majority believe climate change is real, that government must take the lead role through new regulations, and that citizens like themselves must help pay for the necessary actions through taxes and higher prices for the goods and services they consume. 64% of British Columbians support their three-year old carbon tax, and there is clear support for this type of climate change tax in most other parts of the country.

A second opinion poll, commissioned by Friends of the Earth Canada and conducted by Oraclepoll Research, found that 83% of Ontarians believe it is important to have more renewable, green energy in Ontario to deal with climate change and help reduce record levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Only 11% of respondents believe that it is not important to take action. The survey also found that 73% of respondents feel that the WTO should not be able to override Ontario's plans to encourage investment in green energy.

LINKS:

For Environics Focus Canada poll results, [click here](#)

Oraclepoll for Friends of the Earth Canada is available at:<http://foecanada.org/en/2012/12/results-of-the-ontario-green-energy-opinion-poll/>

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WTO Decision Delivers a Blow to Renewable Energy Development in Ontario

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The official report of a 3-member dispute panel of the World Trade Organization was released on December 14th, and ruled that the local content regulations of Ontario's Feed-in Tariff program violate two of the three conventions that the European Union and Japan had cited in their complaint of 2011: specifically, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and Trade-Related Investment Measures Agreement (TRIM). The federal government has announced that it will appeal the decision on Ontario's behalf, but investment in renewable energy manufacturing in Ontario is expected to suffer in the interim. Read the full decision and all accompanying documentation at the World Trade Organization website:*Dispute 426, Measures Relating to the Feed-in Tariff*

Programat: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds426_e.htm; Reaction to the decision is summarized in "Canada to appeal WTO ruling on energy program" in the *Globe and Mail*, December 19th

at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/canada-to-appeal-wto-ruling-on-energy-program/article6558522/>.

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Quebec and California Working Together to Reduce GHG Emissions

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Quebec announced new regulations on December 13 aimed at harmonizing Quebec's cap-and-trade system with California's in 2013, operating within the Western Climate Initiative. Approximately 85 industrial locations in Quebec belonging to 60 companies will be part of the new cap-and-trade system, beginning in January 2013. The minister responsible stated, "I am confident that we will see a full linkage of the Québec and California markets during spring 2013 in anticipation of the first joint auction planned for August, 2013. Québec and California have agreed to work together closely so that Canadian provinces and U.S. states join the market." See the Government press release of December 13 at:http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/communiqués_en/2012/c20121213-carbone.htm (English) and <http://www.mddefp.gouv.qc.ca/infuseur/communiqué.asp?no=2301> (French), with more details at: <http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/changements/carbone/Systeme-plafonnement-droits-GES-en.htm> (English), <http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/changements/carbone/index.htm>(French).

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Regulation of Fracking in Alberta Under Review

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) announced on December 17th that it is accepting feedback on "the regulation of future unconventional resource development" until March 31, 2013. In its discussion paper, the ERCB has suggested a new regulatory approach that includes moving from well-by-well regulation to "play-focused regulation", i.e. regulation focused on development within a defined area. Outcomes to be regulated include "public safety, water protection, air quality, waste management, surface impacts, resource conservation, and orderly development". See the press release and backgrounder at: <http://www.ercb.ca/about-us/media-centre/news-releases/2012/nr2012-13>. The discussion paper, *Regulating Unconventional Oil and Gas in Alberta*, is at: <http://www.ercb.ca/about-us/media-centre/news-releases/2012/nr2012-13>.

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Ontario will Lead the Way in North America when Last Coal-Fired Power Plants Close in 2013

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Ontario's Minister of Energy announced on January 9th that the government will accelerate its program to close its coal-fired electricity plants, and that Lambton and Nanticoke, the last of the lot, will close by the end of 2013. The press release refers to a 2005 independent cost-benefit study which estimated that this will save approximately \$4.4 billion annually when health and environmental costs are taken into consideration. In a related document: the Union of Concerned Scientists in the U.S. recently released a report on coal-plants in the U.S. *Ripe for Retirement: The Case for Closing America's Costliest Coal Plants* estimates that as many as 353 coal-fired power generators in 31 states should be closed for economic reasons alone, even without considering the attendant benefits for public health and pollution reduction. Read the Ontario government press release at: <http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2013/01/ontario-getting-out-of-coal-fired-generation.html>. *Ripe for Retirement* is at: http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/smart-energy-solutions/decrease-coal/ripe-for-retirement-closing-americas-costliest-coal-plants.html.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Call for a Social Science Panel on Climate Change

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies has published a special issue, edited by Kelvin Mason, about the Politics of Climate Change. (volume 12, #1, 2013).

There are nine articles; one, by Vinthagen of Sweden, argues that the natural sciences alone are not sufficient to understand and deal with the dangers of climate change, but also require analysis of political power relations and the global political economy. He proposes a role for academics in his article, "Ten theses on why we need a 'Social Science Panel on Climate Change'" at: <http://www.acme-journal.org/vol12/Vinthagen2013.pdf>. The journal ACME is online at: <http://www.acme-journal.org/Home.html>; this latest issue will be posted shortly.

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New Priorities for Obama Administration After January 19th Inauguration?

Posted on **January 8, 2013** by [elizabethperry493](#)

There are some hopeful signals that the second Obama administration will move climate change up on its priority list. Senator Barbara Boxer, a Democrat from California and Chairwoman of the Environment and Public Works Committee publicly announced in December that she, along with the chairmen of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, will co-chair a "clearinghouse" on climate: "We are going to review the latest information, we are going to work on supporting a major bill, we are also going to work on various smaller provisions that we think will move us forward and focus on green jobs, energy efficiency and making sure that we get the carbon out of the air, and work with the administration on some executive stuff." See <http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/273539-sen-boxer-firms-up-senate-climate-change-clearinghouse-plan>. And some see Obama's nomination of John Kerry as Secretary of State, known for his interest in climate change, as a signal that the issue will be given greater priority. See the L.A. Times article, "Kerry expected to elevate climate change as secretary of state" at: <http://www.latimes.com/news/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-kerry-expected-to-elevate-climate-change-as-secretary-of-state-20121224,0,6445247.story>

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Report Makes the Case for Shifting Subsidies from Oil and Gas to Renewable Energy to Create Jobs and Address Climate Change

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

More Bang for our Buck from Blue Green Canada is a report describing the job creation potential of investing the \$1.3 billion in federal subsidies, now given to the oil and gas sector, in renewable energy, energy efficiency and public transit. The results show that six to eight times more jobs could be created: 18,000-20,000 jobs in clean energy sectors vs. 2,300 jobs in oil and gas. The report questions the current pace of expansion of the oil sands industry and calls for a plan to transition to clean energy. The global job market in renewable energy is growing, and the report documents the fact that approximately 5 million people were employed in the sector worldwide last year.

LINKS:

More Bang for our Buck: How Canada Can Create More Energy Jobs and Less Pollution, full Report:

<http://bluegreencanada.ca/sites/default/files/resources/More%20Bang%20for%20Buck%20Nov%202012%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf>

Brief summary and graphic: <http://bluegreencanada.ca/more-bang-for-our-buck>

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Doha Convention Update and Emissions Gap Report

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

DOHA CONVENTION UPDATE & EMISSIONS GAP REPORT

The 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place from 26 November to 7 December 2012 at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, Qatar. The Doha Summit faced a number of significant challenges, as this year marks the end of the first phase and the need to extend the Kyoto Protocol before it lapses at the end of the year. According to a summary compiled by the Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions, some of the key decisions include: the adoption of an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol establishing a second round of binding greenhouse gas emission targets for Europe, Australia and a handful of other developed countries; finalized decisions under a parallel negotiating track launched in 2007 in Bali that produced new mechanisms on finance, review, adaptation and technology, as well as voluntary emission pledges from 94 countries; the beginning of a new phase in which all the major issues will be negotiated within a single track called the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action; the Durban Platform calls for an outcome with legal force “applicable to all” starting in 2020.

Related to the Doha Convention, *The Emissions Gap Report 2012* has been released, coordinated by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the European Climate Foundation. The report includes an update on global GHG emissions estimates, an estimate of emissions consistent with the 2° C target in 2020, 2030 and 2050, as well as a look at progress being made in certain parts of the world leading to substantial emissions reductions, and how successful initiatives can be scaled up.

LINKS:

The official UNFCCC website is at: http://unfccc.int/meetings/doha_nov_2012/meeting/6815.php

For a background paper on Canada at Doha by Clare Demerse and P.J. Partington, from Pembina Institute released on November 26, see: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2394>

A helpful summary of G8+5 Country Climate Change Positions by Climatico can be found at:

<http://www.climaticoanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/11/Summary-of-G8+5-Climate-Change-Positions.pdf>

A summary of the outcomes of the Doha Conventions written by the Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions the can be found at: <http://www.c2es.org/docUploads/c2es-cop-18-summary.pdf>

The Emissions Gap Report 2012, is at: <http://www.unep.org/pdf/2012gapreport.pdf>

Emissions Gap summary and accompanying documents available from:

<http://www.unep.org/publications/ebooks/emissionsgap2012/>

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Governments Urged to be More Aggressive on Climate Change

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C Warmer World Must Be Avoided, was released by the World Bank on November 19. The report, prepared for the bank by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and Climate Analytics, says global mean temperatures are now about 0.8°C above pre-industrial levels and are set to be 4°C Celsius warmer by end of

this century. The report warns the world is on track to a “4°C world” which will be marked by extreme heat-waves and life-threatening sea level rise. Adverse effects of global warming will be most damaging to the world’s poorest regions, and likely to undermine development efforts and goals. The World Bank suggests governments must be more aggressive in tackling climate change if the worst effects are to be avoided.

LINKS:

See the full report, *Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C Warmer World Must Be Avoided* at:

http://climatechange.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/Turn_Down_the_heat_Why_a_4_degree_centrigrade_warmer_world_must_be_avoided.pdf

A summary of the report can be found at:

<http://climatechange.worldbank.org/content/climate-change-report-warns-dramatically-warmer-world-century>

An overview of the data in the form of an infographic can be viewed here: <http://climatechange.worldbank.org/content/4-degree-warmer-world-we-must-and-can-avoid-it-infographic>

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Northern Gateway Pipeline Hearings Ongoing

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new study, *Potential Economic Impact of a Tanker Spill on Ocean-Based Industries in British Columbia*, looks at the potential economic impact of a tanker spill on B.C.’s ocean-based industries. Ocean-based industries are vitally important to the coastal communities of northern B.C., where 30% of the local population has some form of employment linked to the industry. The authors consider the potential economic costs of a hydrocarbon spill from a tanker along the proposed shipping routes, something that has not previously been quantified. Three scenarios, including no impact, medium impact and high impact are calculated in the report. The findings show how a medium impact spill would mean that 30%, 16% and 33% of the projected output value, employment and contribution to GDP of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project could be lost to the spill. In the case of a higher impact spill, the percentages of the projected benefits from the Enbridge Northern Gateway project that could be lost to the spill are 49%, 52% and 70%, respectively. The results take into account the market-based value of four ocean-based industries and do not account for clean up, litigation and other cultural, social and environmental damages.

LINKS:

The report *Potential Economic Impact of a Tanker Spill on Ocean Based Industries in British Columbia*, by Ngaio Hotte and U. Rashid Sumaila of the Fisheries Centre, UBC can be found at: <http://www.fisheries.ubc.ca/publications/potential-economic-impact-tanker-spill-ocean-based-industries-british-columbia>

A summary of the issues from the Globe and Mail can be found at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/enbridge-opponents-spar-over-pipelines-risks/article6221920/>

The full schedule of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline Joint Review Panel hearings, with links to transcripts, can be accessed at: <http://gatewaypanel.review-examen.gc.ca/clf-nsi/prcptngprcss/hrng-eng.html>
Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate Change and New Organizational Landscapes

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The journal of Organization Studies has released a special issue for November 2012 titled *Climate Change and the Emergence of New Organizational Landscapes*, by Guest editors Bettina B. F. Wittneben, Chukwumerije Okereke, Subhabrata Bobby Banerjee and David L. Levy. The editors state in their introductory article: "Given the urgency of the problem and the need for a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy, there is a pressing need for organization scholars to develop a better understanding of apathy and inertia in the face of the current crisis and to identify paths toward transformative change." The issue includes such articles as "Hippies on the Third Floor: Climate Change, Narrative Identity and the Micro-Politics of Corporate Environmentalism" by Christopher Wright, Daniel Nyberg, and David Grant of the University of Sydney, Australia.

LINK:

Organization Studies, (November 2012) v. 33 #11 is available at the Sage website: <http://oss.sagepub.com/content/current>

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New Tools for Employment Counsellors Focus on Green Jobs

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report, titled *Emerging Green Jobs in Canada* released in summer, 2012 provides insight into the changing labour market and its potential for entry-level employment in the green economy. The report consists of a two-part literature review on the green economy and specifically on the renewable energy and energy conservation sectors and the skills needed to secure entry-level positions for job seekers. It includes tools for employment counsellors and job developers, including an inventory of training programs and employers, an online and interactive map of renewable energy and energy conservation projects across Canada, and case studies on five successful green jobs training programs. The report was published by the Green Skills Network with the support of the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC).

Also useful to employment counsellors are two new profiles added to the Green Careers series by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in September 2012: *Careers in Environmental Remediation (#8)* and *Geothermal Energy (#9)*. Both reports follow the template of this Career Guide series by defining and describing the work, identifying the major occupations, and providing job descriptions, current labour force statistics and wage information, and training requirements

for each occupation. Also from the summer 2012 issue of the BLS Occupational Outlook Quarterly, an article titled *Electric Vehicle Careers: On the Road to Change*.

LINKS:

Emerging Green Jobs in Canada Report, released in Summer 2012:
<http://ceric.ca/files/PDFs/Emerging%20Green%20Jobs%20in%20Canada.pdf>

Green Skills Network Website: <http://www.firstwork.org/wp/2010/06/green-skills-network-main/>

US BLS Career Guide #8, *Environmental Remediation*:

http://www.bls.gov/green/environmental_remediation/remediation.pdf
Career Guide #9, *Geothermal Energy*: http://www.bls.gov/green/geothermal_energy/geothermal.pdf

The article *Electric Vehicle Careers: On the Road to Change* is available at:
<http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2012/summer/art02.pdf>

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The Green Budget Coalition Releases Recommendations for 2013

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Green Budget Coalition's *Recommendations for Budget 2013* was released in November, with the following "feature recommendations" for the federal budget: 1) Subsidy Reform in the Extractive Industries; 2) National Conservation Plan: Securing Canada's Natural Advantage for Future Generations; 3) Strengthening Canada's Environmental Law and Science Capacity; and 4) Green Infrastructure in First Nations Communities. Regarding the reform of extractive industries such as oil and gas, the Coalition proposes three changes: enable the Canadian Exploration Expenses (CEE) subsidy only for unsuccessful exploration; remove the Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance (ACCA) for the mining sector; and do not renew the Mineral Exploration Tax Credit (METC) for flow-through shares. The report includes a table, which costs each recommendation; for example, the subsidy reforms, they estimate, would combine to produce a savings of approximately \$345 million per year. The Green Budget Coalition (GBC) was founded in 1999, and brings together sixteen leading Canadian environmental and conservation organizations.

LINKS:

Recommendations for Budget 2013 is available at:
<http://www.cela.ca/sites/cela.ca/files/876GBCRecommendationsBudget2013.pdf>

Archive of past annual recommendations is at: <http://www.cela.ca/collections/justice/green-budget-coalition>

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Canada's Climate Change Policy Ranks Worst in the OECD Countries

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The *Climate Change Performance Index for 2013* was released this month at the Doha climate talks. The report compares the top 58 CO2 emitting nations in the world- the countries listed being responsible for 90% of global energy-related CO2 emissions. The Index compares emissions trends, emissions levels and climate policies, and Canada ranked last overall. Published by Germanwatch and the Climate Action Network Europe, the *Climate Change Performance Index for 2013* full report, as well as links to tables and maps can be found at:

<http://germanwatch.org/en/5698>

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Sustainable Energy for All: the Business Opportunity

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The UN Global Compact and Accenture have released 19 sectoral reports within the theme of *Sustainable Energy for All: The Business Opportunity*. The reports identify priority activities and challenges for businesses to support the UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative. The reports are based on research and interviews with more than 70 companies and cover 19 industries. Key priority areas for action identified include: improving energy efficiency in operations; increasing the use of renewable energy; reusing waste streams; and increasing in stakeholder engagement and advocacy. The full report, *Sustainable Energy for All: the Business Opportunity* is available at: <http://www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/Accenture-Sustainable-Energy-for-All-The-Business-Opportunity.pdf#zoom=50> with individual industry reports available from: http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/Environment/Environment_Guidance_Material/sefa_industry_focused_reports.html

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Jobs in U.S. Solar Industry Increasing

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Solar Foundation released its third annual *National Solar Jobs Census* report, which found that the U.S. solar industry currently employs 119,016 Americans. This figure represents the addition of 13,872 new solar workers and a 13.2% employment growth rate over the past 12 months. 86% of the nearly 14,000 new solar workers added since August 2011 represent new jobs, rather than existing positions that have added solar responsibilities. The report, produced by The Solar Foundation and in partnership with BW Research and Cornell University, was released on November 14th, 2012, at the Interstate Renewable Energy Council's [Clean Energy Workforce Education Conference](#) in Albany, NY. *National Solar Jobs Census* Report is available at:

<http://thesolarfoundation.org/sites/thesolarfoundation.org/files/TSF%20Solar%20Jobs%20Census%202012%20Final.pdf>

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Weakening its Push to Reduce GHG Emissions?

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Ontario's Environmental Commissioner released a report titled *A Question of Commitment*, on December 4th, the 2012 edition of his annual review of the government's Climate Change Action Plan. The report points out the weakening of policies meant to reduce GHG's in the province, including the Green Commercial Vehicle Program cancellation despite achieving reductions that were 350% higher than expected; cuts to the Electric Vehicle Programs; High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes delayed; and the absence of a plan to join the Western Climate Initiatives' emissions trading program. The report, *A Question of Commitment*, can be found at: http://www.eco.on.ca/index.php/en_US/pubs/greenhouse-gas-reports/2012-greenhouse-gas

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Global Coal Risk Assessment Report Released

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Global Coal Risk Assessment: Data Analysis and Market Research, a working paper by Ailun Yang and Yiyun Cui, was released by the World Resources Institute on November 20. Using estimates from the International Energy Agency, the report states that global coal consumption reached 7,238 million tonnes in 2010. Original research by the authors shows that 1,199 new coal-fired plants with a total installed capacity of 1,401,268 MW are being proposed globally, in 59 countries. China (with 363 proposed new coal plants) and India (with 455) together account for 76% of the proposed new coal power capacities. Canada ranks 13th in current consumption and has no proposed coal projects; the U.S. has 36. See summary at:

<http://insights.wri.org/news/2012/11/new-global-assessment-reveals-nearly-1200-proposed-coal-fired-power-plants>
Full Report at: http://pdf.wri.org/global_coal_risk_assessment.pdf

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Comprehensive Assessment on Climate Change Impacts and Vulnerability in Europe Released

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has recently published a report on *Climate Change, Impacts and Vulnerability in Europe 2012*. This report assesses observed and projected climate change and associated impacts on ecosystems, society and human health in Europe based on more than 40 indicators. Compiled by about 100 authors and contributors, it is the most comprehensive assessment on climate change impacts in Europe so far. Read the press release in all official EEA languages at: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/pressroom/newsreleases/climate-change-evident-across-europe>
The full Report is available at:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/climate-impacts-and-vulnerability-2012/>

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Stewarding the Green Agenda – the Role of Union in the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and the Green Skills Agenda

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Stewarding the Green Agenda provides recommendations for the trade union role in the transition to a low carbon economy and the green skills agenda, and describes how trade unions in the U.K. are currently leading or 'stewarding' the transition through dialogue and advocacy with government. The report was commissioned by the TUC's Unionlearn and conducted by Capacity Global. *Stewarding the Green Skills Agenda* can be found at:

<http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/publications/stewarding-green-skills-agenda>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

Jobs, Groth and Warmer Homes: Economic Stimulus of Investing in Energy Efficiency Evaluated in the UK

Posted on **December 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report released in the UK in October, 2012 explains the potential benefits of spending carbon tax revenues on improving energy efficiency in fuel poor households to create a "triple win" of warmer homes, greater energy efficiency and economic growth. The study suggests if the carbon revenue is reinvested in such a program, it could create up to 71,000 jobs by 2015 and up to 130,000 jobs by 2027. *Jobs, Growth and Warmer Homes: Evaluating the Economic Stimulus of Investing in Energy Efficiency Measures in Fuel Poor Homes. Final Report for Consumer Focus* by Cambridge Econometrics can be found at: <http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/files/2012/11/Jobs-growth-and-warmer-homes-November-2012.pdf>

Posted in **Uncategorized** | [Leave a reply](#)

National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy Issues its Final Report

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 18th, Canada's National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy published *Framing the Future: Embracing a Low-Carbon Economy*. The report begins from the position that "Canada is unprepared to compete in a carbon constrained world." It outlines a low-carbon growth framework and action steps to achieve four main objectives: stimulate innovation, mobilize investment, enhance market access, and foster talent and skills development. The authors identify essential conditions required for future growth in all areas, emphasizing that "of all our key components of a low-carbon strategy, the most important and necessary is the establishment of long-term certainty on climate, energy, and innovation policies."

Throughout the report, definitions are important. This is not a report about the “green economy”, rather, “we are exclusively focusing on the actions needed to bring about the low-carbon aspect of the “green economy”. The discussion is based on data and analysis about “low carbon growth sectors (LCGS)”, which are defined as energy (traditional and alternative), industrial processes, buildings, and efficient vehicles. Referring to our knowledge of the labour market, the authors cite two main problems: an unclear definition of green jobs and a lack of baseline information. In masterful understatement, they conclude that “The fact remains that Canada’s statistical capacity is not attuned to tracking growth in the low-carbon economy”. Despite these problems, the report provides statistical estimates: first, based on commissioned analysis by Analytica, it estimates the 2010 low-carbon economy direct employment at approximately 42,000 FTE (96,000 when indirect and induced employment is added). Second, using the CIMS model and Statistics Canada data to project performance and labour inputs by sector, it projects total labour inputs (direct, indirect and induced jobs) of 224,000 in 2050 under its Reference Case and 402,000 under its carbon-constrained scenario.

LINK:

Framing the Future: Embracing a Low-Carbon Economy is available at: <http://nrtee-trnee.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/framing-the-future-report-eng.pdf> (English) and *Définir notre avenir: Vers une économie faible en carbone* est disponible à <http://nrtee-trnee.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/framing-the-future-report-fra.pdf>

This is the last in a six-part “Climate Prosperity” series and the final report of the organization. Note that the NRTEE will officially cease to exist on March 31, 2013.

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The Supply Side of Green Jobs in Ontario: An Interview of Training Opportunities

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A recent report by some of Ontario’s workforce development agencies summarizes the employment and training opportunities for the green economy in the Greater Toronto area since the enactment of *Ontario’s Green Energy Act* in 2009. A major focus of the report was to assemble a comprehensive database of skill-building programs in the GTA, reflected in a 20-page list of programs. Ontario community colleges have introduced 35 new diploma courses relating to the greening employment industry, and there are more than 165 organizations (including NGO’s, labour unions and non-profits) which offer some 370 green skill building courses. The report also identifies the grants (at all three levels of government) and organizations which have provided both private and public funding for training initiatives. *Tending Green Shoots* is a joint publication of the Durham Region Local Training Board, Toronto Workforce Innovation Group, Peel Halton Workforce Development Group, and the Workforce Planning Board of York Region and Bradford West Gwillumbury.

LINKS:

Tending Green Shoots: Green Skillbuilding Programs in the GTA is available at:

http://workforceinnovation.ca/sites/default/files/TWIG_GreenReport_WebVersion_V8-1.pdf

The Toronto Workforce Innovation Group has published 5 reports on the green economy in the GTA since April 2012. They are all available at:

<http://www.workforceinnovation.ca/workforce-development-trends/green-economy/twig-research-and-actions>

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WTO Ruling on Ontario's Green Energy Act Local Content Provisions

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Although the official World Trade Organization decision is not scheduled until the end of November, a leaked confidential interim decision indicates that the decision has gone against Ontario. An October 15th report in the *Globe and Mail* is based on a report by the Geneva-based International Centre on Trade and Sustainable Development, which states that the a three-member WTO panel has sided with the EU and Japan in their claim that Ontario's local content provisions violate the WTO's non-discrimination principle enshrined in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS). Unions and environmental groups are calling for the federal and Ontario governments to appeal the decision in order to protect the fledgling green manufacturing industry in Ontario and the cause of sustainable development.

LINKS:

"Ontario loses WTO ruling on green energy policies: reports", by Robert Blackwell in the *Globe and Mail*, October 15

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/ontario-loses-wto-ruling-on-green-energy-policies-reports/article4614805/?cmpid=rss1>

International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development report is at <http://ictsd.org/i/trade-and-sustainable-development-agenda/147275/>

Unions and environmental groups denounce preliminary WTO ruling against Ontario renewable energy policy by Stewart Trew at the Rabble.ca website at <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/council-canadians/2012/10/unions-and-environmental-groups-denounce-preliminary-wto-ru>

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Wind Energy in Quebec

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At its annual conference in Toronto in October, the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) projected that 60% of Canada's wind power installations in 2012 will occur in Quebec. In November 2012, the association released several documents produced in 2010, including a comprehensive economic impact study of the wind energy sector in Québec produced by Hatch Consulting and economist Jean-Claude Thibodeau.

LINKS:

See *WindVision 2025: A Strategy for Quebec* (in English) at http://www.canwea.ca/windvision_quebec_e.php. Supporting documents are all available in French only, and include the economic impact study, *Études retombées économiques de la filière de l'énergie éolienne sur le Québec et en Gaspésie, 2005 – 2025* at:

http://www.canwea.ca/pdf/economic_benefits_qc_full_fr.pdf, along with the results of a Leger Marketing survey of Quebecers about wind energy, done in Jan/February 2012 at <http://www.canwea.ca/pdf/Rapport-Omnibus-2012.pdf>.

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U.S. Case Studies of Energy Efficiency as a Job Creator

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An October report by the American Council for an Energy- Efficient Economy (ACEEE) provides six case studies that showcase the direct, indirect and induced jobs resulting from energy efficiency projects at: OPower, New York City Greener Greater Buildings, Nissan North America, Ohio Low-income Weatherization, Johnson Controls (Wisconsin), and General Electric Appliance Park. The case studies describe programs, policies, investments, partnerships, and business models. It also includes “Job Analysis 101”, a useful, non-technical explanation of how the ACEEE arrives at its job creation estimates, with clear definitions of the terms used.

LINKS:

Energy Efficiency Job Creation: Real World Experiences by Casey Bell is available at <http://aceee.org/files/pdf/white-paper/energy-efficiency-job-creation.pdf> *What is an energy efficient job?* at <http://aceee.org/blog/2012/10/what-energy-efficiency-job> is a related blog which summarizes this report but also includes discussion of the methodology in the form of questions from readers, with answers by Casey Bell.

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Regional Case Studies of Alternative Energy Lead to a Vision

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report released in October by the Center for American Progress focuses on low carbon economic development strategies to create jobs and increase climate change resiliency in six U.S. regions. Edited by Kate Gordon and Kiley Kroh, the chapters are authored by local contributors, and report on: Offshore wind on the Atlantic Coast; coastal restoration in the Gulf Coast; energy efficiency in the Southeast; advanced vehicle manufacturing in the Midwest; wind power and solar power development and distribution in the Mountain West; and solar power innovation and installation on the Pacific Coast.

The report concludes with recommendations for a future national energy policy for the U.S. and for policies for each of the regions discussed.

LINK:

Regional Energy, National Solutions: A Real Energy Vision for America is available at

http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/RER_full.pdf

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Environmental Activists Gather in Ottawa

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Ottawa/Gatineau was the scene of speeches, workshops, panels, and demonstrations for environmental justice. PowerShift 2012 was scarcely covered in the mainstream press, but reports of the group activities are at the PowerShift website at <http://www.wearepowershift.ca/about-1>, including videos of some of the speeches (Naomi Klein, Bill McKibben). For thoughts on the relationship of the labour movement and environmental activists, read "Pondering Powershift 2012: What's up with Canada's Blue-Green Alliance?" by Joel Davison Harden in the latest issue of *Our Times* at http://ourtimes.ca/Between_Times/article_242.php.

A manual published in Summer 2012 by the Labor Solidarity Network in the U.S. offers specific guidance to reduce such blue-green tensions. *Jobs Beyond Coal: A Manual for Communities, Workers, and Environmentalists* by Jeremy Brecher is "intended for communities, unions, environmentalists, native tribes, public officials, and anyone involved in or affected by coal retirement campaigns." It outlines strategies and techniques to help those campaigning for renewable energy to win support and reduce opposition from workers, unions and communities. See http://report.labor4sustainability.org/coal_2012.pdf.

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TUC Continues its Focus on the Green Economy

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 2012 annual climate change conference of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) of the U.K. took place on 23 October with over 200 delegates and 30 expert presenters. The conference theme was Green is Good for Growth, and included keynote addresses, expert-led workshops and panel debates between business, trade unions, campaigners and politicians. Topics included the Government's £250m package of support measures for the energy intensive industries, a description of the work of the Greener Jobs Alliance, skills shortages, and Powerpoint slides summarizing the TUC's latest research, the *Green Economy Study*. Downloadable resources are available at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-21611-f0.cfm>. For more information about the TUC, see the latest Green Workplaces newsletter at:

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-21567-f0.cfm>.

Public Approval of Carbon Tax Slipping in B.C.

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In an online survey of British Columbians commissioned by the Pembina Institute and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions at the University of Victoria, 79% of respondents stated that they are concerned about global warming. A majority are willing to pay more carbon tax if the revenue is directed toward social programs such as health care, education, or reduction of greenhouse gas pollution; 70% would oppose carbon tax increases if the revenue were used to reduce taxes on corporations. In general though, support for the B.C. carbon tax has dropped by 12% since 2011, according to this survey. See http://pics.uvic.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/MR_Carbon%20Tax%20Poll_19Oct2012_0.pdf for more information.

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A Defence of Green Stimulus

Posted on **November 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the Fall 2012 issue of *New Labor Forum*, Robert Pollin of PERI defends the results of the green stimulus program of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)*, arguing that it was envisioned as a 5-year program, but was judged after 2 years in the U.S. election campaign of 2012. See his 4-page article, *Getting Real on Jobs and the Environment: Pipelines, Fracking, or Clean Energy?* at

http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other_publication_types/magazine___journal_articles/Pollin-Getting_Real_on_Jobs-Environment-NLF_9-12.pdf.

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Job Creation in B.C.'s Clean Economy

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 11th, the Vancouver-based consultants, GLOBE Advisors, released three new studies which quantify job creation and highlight the public and private sector policies which have been effective in promoting the province's clean economy. According to the press release, "In 2011, the Clean Energy Supply and Storage, Clean Transportation, and Green Building and Energy Efficiency sectors in B.C. were responsible for 123,350 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs (75,170 direct and 48,180 indirect) and over \$15 billion in gross domestic product (\$10.7 billion direct and \$4.4 billion indirect)." The reports highlight demand and supply of specific occupations, such as engineers, technicians, and project managers. The other major focus of the reports is to identify the policy drivers and programs which can encourage further growth, with recommendations for the future. In addition to the perennial challenge of *any* Canadian company to find capital for innovation and expansion, the other important barriers to growth included access to skilled labour, education, and training. These three reports continue and build upon the analysis in the previous *West Coast Clean Economy* study (March 2012).

LINK:

GLOBE Advisors webpage for the 3 studies is at:

<http://www.globeadvisors.ca/market-research/bc-clean-economy-market-insights-study.aspx> Free downloads of the reports and technical documents are available from here by providing registration information.

West Coast Clean Economy Report: Opportunities for Investment & Accelerated Job Creation

(March 2012) examines members of the Pacific Coast Collaborative (PCC): California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. It is available at:

http://www.globeadvisors.ca/media/3322/wcce_report_web_final.pdf

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The Importance of Green Jobs for a Growing, Sustainable Economy

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a study released on October 10 by the Economic Policy Institute in the U.S., author Ethan Pollack compares the data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics *Green Goods and Services Survey* with other BLS employment trend data. The report begins with a discussion of the BLS definition and methodology regarding measurement of "green jobs". It then provides data and analysis of the number of green jobs by state, by sector, and by private vs. public sector, pointing out that green jobs are found throughout the economy, and that despite the focus on jobs in renewable energy, that sector represents less than 3% of green jobs (compared to the manufacturing sector which accounts for 20.4 % of all green jobs). Among the conclusions: greener industries grew, and will continue to grow, faster than the overall economy for the next 10 years; green states have fared better in the economic downturn; and, green jobs are accessible to people with all levels of education. And from the concluding paragraph: " In sum, a dirty economy subsidizes the well-off by taxing the poor and disenfranchised, distorts the market, and shortchanges future generations by leaving the world a worse place for them to live in. For these reasons alone, the case for transitioning to a greener and more sustainable economy is well justified. But the concept of green jobs does play an important role in illustrating a positive vision of a green economy. It reminds us that the seeds of a green transition are planted throughout the economy, that the fundamental structure of the economy will remain intact, and that this vision isn't so radical but rather is already happening all around us."

LINKS:

Counting up to green: Assessing the green economy and its implications for growth and equity is available at:

<http://www.epi.org/files/2012/bp349-assessing-the-green-economy.pdf>

Employment in Green Goods and Services (March 2012) is at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website at:

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ggqcew.pdf>; see also the BLS Green Jobs website at: <http://www.bls.gov/green/> .

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Green Jobs: Analysis, Statistics and Definitions for OECD Countries

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 2012 edition of the annual OECD *Employment Outlook Report* was released in August, and includes Chapter 4: “What green growth means for workers and labour market policies: An initial assessment”. The chapter is a summary version of a study released by the OECD in June 2012: *The Jobs Potential of a Shift to a Low-Carbon Economy*. It analyses the impacts of green growth policies, particularly mitigation policies, on the labour markets of the developed OECD economies, and then examines how labour market and education/training policies can facilitate green growth. The *Supplemental Material for Chapter 4* includes useful tables summarizing national definitions of green jobs, initiatives to estimate green employment, and green-specific employment and skill development programs. Information is derived from questionnaire responses from OECD member government ministries, as of November 2010.

LINK:

2012 OECD *Employment Outlook* overview website is at:

<http://www.oecd.org/els/employmentpoliciesanddata/oecdemploymentoutlook.htm>. The full text is not available for free download; click on “Browse this book”, select Chapter 4, and click on the “free preview” link for a read-only version.

The Jobs Potential of a Shift to a Low-Carbon Economy (June 2012) is available in full at:
<http://www.oecd.org/employment/employmentpoliciesanddata/50503551.pdf>

Supplemental Material for Chapter 4: Summary of Country Responses to the OECD Questionnaire on Green Jobs is available for download at:

<http://www.oecd.org/employment/employmentpoliciesanddata/Chap%204%20Web%20Annex.pdf>

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Are Canadian MBA and Engineering Students Learning to Deal with Sustainability Issues?

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In its 9th annual survey of the sustainability content in Canadian university programs, Corporate Knights (“the company for clean capitalism”) has focused on MBA and Engineering programs, using the rationale that corporate responsibility is most usually the result of CEO beliefs, and since 63 % of the executives for the top 10 TSX-traded companies hold either an MBA or an engineering degree, the education of these professionals is a necessary precondition of progress toward sustainability in corporate decision-making. As in every other year that the survey has ranked MBA programs, Schulich School of Business at York University in Toronto has ranked at the top. This year, the Master of Environment and Business (MEB) program at the University of Waterloo ranked second. In general, the survey calls for improvements in MBA course content and institutional support: for example, more opportunities for sustainability-oriented internships, and more sustainability-themed courses in the core curriculum.

Amongst engineering programs, University of Toronto ranked first, followed by University of Western Ontario, and L'Université Laval. Overall, the survey finds only 43% of engineering schools provide course specializations relevant to

sustainability concerns, and only 30% offering relevant joint degrees.

AND FOR PRACTISING ENGINEERS.... A survey published in May 2012 measured the knowledge and awareness to climate change adaptation of Canadian professional engineers practicing in five categories of built infrastructure: water, transportation, energy, buildings, and resource extraction/processing. The survey reveals that 70% of engineers agree that a changing climate affects their engineering decisions, (with lower than average agreement in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and higher than average in Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, and the North). However, only 10% of engineers indicate that they "always consider the impacts of a changing climate in their decisions." Only 3% of engineers have already used or intend to use the Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee (PIEVC) Protocol; 7% are somewhat familiar with it, and approximately 80% are not at all familiar. The survey was sponsored by Engineers Canada, was conducted between December 2011 and February 2012, and updates a 2007 survey.

LINKS:

2012 Knights School Survey, September 2012, including complete rankings and survey methodology, is available at: <http://corporateknights.com/report/2012-knight-schools-survey>

A Higher Degree of Sustainability by Jeremy Runnalls (overview) is at: <http://corporateknights.com/report/2012-knight-schools-survey/higher-degree-sustainability>

National Survey of Canada's Infrastructure Engineers about Climate Change is available at the Engineers Canada website at: http://www.engineerscanada.ca/files/csa_report_2012_eng.pdf

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Using Information Technology to Improve Sustainable Operations in U.S. Government Workplaces

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report from The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) (formerly the Pew Center on Global Climate Change) provides 8 case studies to highlight how the U.S. federal government is using innovative information and communication technology to achieve efficiencies, reduce operating budgets, and reduce energy consumption. One of the pilot projects, led by the General Services Administration (the landlord of federal government buildings), combines the latest mobility and collaboration tools with flexible office layout and telework to reduce office space requirements, resulting in a 45% reduction in energy use. Changes were guided by a Space Advisory Committee (composed of non-supervisory employees, union representatives and the GSA project team), and included regular communication to and from employees, training on the new technology tools, and management buy-in symbolized by the sacrifice of individual office space by managers. In an employee satisfaction survey at the conclusion of the pilot project, 78% of workers responded that the new workspace "adequately supported personal productivity". Other interventions highlighted in case studies: reduction of printing, migration to email cloud services, improved energy efficiency in building standards, use of alternative energy, and improved fleet management.

LINKS:

Leading by Example: Using Information and Communication Technologies to achieve Federal Sustainability Goals (all case studies) is available at: http://www.c2es.org/publications/leading-by-example-federal-sustainability-and-ict?utm_source=Center+for+Climate+and+Energy+Solutions+newsletter+list&utm_campaign=dd4b8608e1-September_2012_Newsletter&utm_medium=email .

GSA's Prototype Alternative Workspace: Redesigning the Federal Workplace for the 21st Century is available at: <http://www.c2es.org/docUploads/federal-sustainability-ict-gsa-prototype-workspace.pdf>.

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Call for New Information Technology Standards to Link it to the Environment and Climate Change

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the second Green Standards Week, held in Paris from September 17 – 21, members of the Information Technology community agreed upon and issued its “Paris Declaration”, titled *Green Growth and Climate Change Commitments: The ICT Sector Shows the Way*. The document calls for governments to recognize the ICT sector’s potential to contribute to climate change mitigation and economic recovery, claiming that the “The total savings of applying ICT to key sectors of the economy are estimated at 7.8 Gt of CO₂e, which represents 15% of global emissions.” The declaration calls for future actions, and briefly describes accomplishments of such IT companies as AT&T, Cisco, Dell, Fujitsu, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, Nokia Seimens. Green Standards Week was organized by the International Telecommunications Union (A United Nations agency with government and private sector membership) and TechAmerica Europe, and hosted by Microsoft.

LINK:

Paris Declaration, *Green Growth and Climate Change Commitments: The ICT Sector Shows the Way* is available at: http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-t/oth/4B/04/T4B040000190001PDFE.pdf

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Retrofitting as a Source of Good Green Jobs

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A briefing paper by the National Employment Law Project in the U.S. argues that retrofitting, especially in the commercial real estate industry (CRE), is a textbook example of the concept of the “triple bottom line”: profit, people and planet. The paper summarizes earlier reports on the job creation potential of retrofitting (see links below), discusses energy efficiency

standards and financing arrangements, and finally focuses on a call for policies and practices to promote decent jobs, such as the retrofitting initiatives in Milwaukee, Los Angeles, and Seattle.

LINKS:

Rebuilding Our Way to a Sustainable Recovery: Making Commercial Building Retrofit Jobs into Quality Jobs for Our Communities, available at the National Employment Law Project website at:
http://www.nelp.org/page/-/Job_Creation/CRE_Retrofits_Issue_Brief.pdf?nocdn=1

A New Retrofit Industry: An analysis of the job creation potential of tax incentives for energy efficiency in commercial buildings and other components of the Better Buildings Initiative (June 2011) at the U.S. Green Building Council website at: <http://www.usgbc.org/ShowFile.aspx?DocumentID=9531> and *Analysis of Job Creation and Energy Cost Savings From Building Energy Rating and Disclosure Policy* (2012) available at the Institute for Market Transformation website at: http://www.imt.org/uploads/resources/files/Analysis_Job_Creation.pdf.

The City of Seattle's Community High Road Agreement: Good Faith Stakeholder Engagement and Empowerment at: <http://www.communitypowerworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/CPW-HRA-Case-Study.pdf>

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Britain's Trade Union Congress Calls for Long-Range Planning for a Just, Low-Carbon Economy

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the belief that a shift to a lower carbon economy is necessary and inevitable, the TUC looks ahead to the economic disruption likely to flow from new environmental regulation and the establishment of carbon markets in the next decade, and calls for more proactive government leadership and planning. In *A Green and Fair Future for a Just Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy*, the TUC outlines 5 principles that must be present to affect a "just transition", including employee representation and involvement in decision-making bodies dealing with environmental transition, long-term planning necessary to achieve stable, safe employment; a fair distribution of costs across all levels of society; and a high level of commitment to change from government, trade unions and employer federations. The report focuses on the current state of public discussion and policy in the U.K., but surveys "Just Transition" initiatives in the U.S., Canada, Argentina, Spain, and the EU. Research for the document was performed by the Working Lives Research Institute at London Metropolitan University, and included interviews with officers from key unions, government advisors on environmental transition, representatives of NGOs and policy think tanks in the U.K.

LINK:

A *Green and Fair Future for a Just Transition to a Low Carbon Economy* is available at:
<http://www.tuc.org.uk/touchstone/Justtransition/greenfuture.pdf>

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GreenJobs BC Workshop

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

GreenJobs BC is an alliance between B.C.'s environmental and labour movements, with a goal to build a green economy in the province. On September 21 and 22, the group hosted the "Good Jobs for a Green Future" conference in Vancouver. See <http://greenjobsbc.org/events/2012-conference/> for summaries of some of the conference presentations (case studies of greening the post office, energy efficiency retrofitting, and greening one hospital employees union local). Related information is at the website of The Columbia Institute, the Secretariat for GreenJobs B.C., at <http://www.columbiainstitute.ca/>. Work in a Warming World (W3) was a co-organizer of the conference, and also organized a workshop on Climate Change and Work, with the Morgan Centre for Labour Research of Simon Fraser University. See http://greenjobsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/W3_SFU_Workshop_Sept-211.pdf for a full workshop agenda.

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U.S. Election: What they are Saying about the Wind Energy Tax Credit, Solyndra, and the Clean Economy

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. Presidential election takes place on November 6. Little is being said about climate change, the environment, or green jobs, with some notable exceptions, including the expiration of the production tax credit program for wind energy, which threatens jobs in several states, including Iowa, a swing state. See *Jobs Blow away as Congress fails to act on Wind Energy* (Bloomberg Business Week, Oct. 7 2012) at: <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-10-07/jobs-blow-away-as-congress-fails-to-act-on-wind-energy> .

For an impartial point of view, see *A Voter's Guide to the Climate and Energy Policy Positions of Obama and Romney* at the website of the non-partisan Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) at: <http://www.c2es.org/publications/2012-voter-guide>, and Fact Check.org at <http://factcheck.org/>, which includes *Romney's Clean Energy Whoppers* (from the 1st Presidential Debate) at: <http://factcheck.org/2012/10/romneys-clean-energy-whoppers/>.

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U.S. Data Release on Green Goods and Service Jobs

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 28, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics released another of its series of reports on green jobs. *Occupational Employment and Wages in Green Goods and Services Summary* provides data based on a sample of approximately 93,000 businesses in 333 industries. Using the BLS output approach to measuring green jobs, the GGS-OCC defines green jobs as “jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources”. See the report at: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ggsocc.pdf> and note item #2 in this issue re previous BLS releases: THE IMPORTANCE OF GREEN JOBS by Pollard at the Economic Policy Institute.

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New Website to Share Green Policies in Ontario Municipalities

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Ontario Green Policy Hub, launched in October, offers a searchable on-line library of sustainability policies in Ontario municipalities. At launch, the website provides details about policies and programs in Toronto, Kitchener, Burlington, East Gwillimbury, York Region, and joint programs. Categories are: Community Design, Transportation, Green Infrastructure, Water Conservation, Energy, Waste Reduction, and Public Buildings. The OGPH was developed by the Municipal Leaders Forum of the Greater Toronto area chapter of the Canada Green Building Council. The Ontario Green Policy Hub is at: <http://www.ogph.ca/> .

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Tourism and Climate Change

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report assesses the current situation regarding tourism and climate change, reviews existing national and international policies, and makes recommendations on priority areas for further action. Following a survey of OECD countries, the report found that policies on climate change mitigation were still in their infancy, with ambitious pledges of emissions reductions but a fundamental lack of “serious” tourism climate policy. Only one-third of the countries studied had identified tourism-related strategies and only five out of 44 had implemented any policies (apart from the EU ETS). None had implemented the comprehensive measures which the OECD recommends in this report. *Climate Change and Tourism Policy in OECD Countries* is a joint publication of the Organisation for Economic Development and the United Nations Environment Program; the lead author of the report is Stefan Gossling of the Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Western Norway Research Institute. The full report is available at: <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism/48681944.pdf>

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Climate Smart Agriculture

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In *Greening the Economy with Climate-Smart Agriculture*, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), clarifies the evolving concept of “climate smart agriculture”, which includes both mitigation and adaptation. The paper was released at the Second Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change in Hanoi, Vietnam in September. See *Greening the Economy with Climate-Smart Agriculture* at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/ap401e/ap401e.pdf>

Carbon Disclosure Report Ranks Corporate Performance Re Emissions Reductions

Posted on **October 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) is an independent, business-oriented, not-for-profit organization which measures, discloses, manages and shares environmental information with the goals of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and promoting the sustainable use of water by businesses and cities. The 2012 editions of its three annual reports, released on September 12, are published "on behalf of 655 investors with assets of US\$ 78 trillion". The reports use voluntary responses to a CDP questionnaire to measure, analyze and score corporate efforts at carbon emissions reduction via a CDI Leadership Index. The reports provide information by sector, with ranked lists by company name. Top performing global companies are: Bayer, Nestle, BASF, BMW, and Gas Natural SDG. Among the 10 largest (by market cap) companies which *did not* respond to the CDP request for information: Apple, Berkshire Hathaway, Royal Bank of Canada, Caterpillar, and Amazon.com.

LINKS:

The Carbon Disclosure Project website is at: <https://www.cdproject.net/en-US/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

CDP Global 500 Climate Change Report 2012: Business resilience in an uncertain, resource-constrained world is at: <https://www.cdproject.net/CDPResults/CDP-Global-500-Climate-Change-Report-2012.pdf> (see intro at)
<https://www.cdproject.net/en-US/Pages/global500.aspx>

CDP S&P 500 Climate Change Report 2012 (U.S. companies) is at <https://www.cdproject.net/CDPResults/CDP-SP500-2012.pdf>

Measurement for Management: CDP Cities 2012 Global Report is available at:
<https://www.cdproject.net/CDPResults/CDP-Cities-2012-Global-Report.pdf>

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ILO sees "Tens of Millions of Green Jobs" Created Worldwide in all Sectors

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Working Towards Sustainable Development is a report published by the ILO, as a result of the collaborative efforts of the Green Jobs Initiative (which includes UNEP, ILO, IOE and ITUC) and the International Institute for Labour Studies of ILO. In a comprehensive survey of green jobs around the world, the report documents the creation of "tens of millions" of green jobs across all sectors, and particularly in renewable energy. It concludes that "Concerns over job losses caused by greening the economy are therefore exaggerated." The report also concludes that "outcomes for employment and incomes are largely determined by the policy instruments used and the institutions which implement them, rather than being an inherent part of the shift to a greener economy." Outcomes are likely to be country-specific, with most gains to be made in developing economies. The report is structured according to specific sectors: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, manufacturing, recycling, buildings, and transportation. Canada is mentioned throughout but not highlighted for any best practices. The report concludes with recommendations for policies that will ensure decent work and social inclusion.

LINK:

Working Towards Sustainable Development: Opportunities for decent work and social inclusion in a green economy is available at the ILO website at:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—dgreports/—dcomm/—publ/documents/publication/wcms_181836.pdf

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Where are the Polluting Jobs in Canada, and how can we Transition to Green?

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a report released in June by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, authors Marc Lee and Amanda Card acknowledge that transition to a zero carbon Canada will take several decades, and state that the principal challenge for Canada and all countries is to de-couple the economy from fossil fuels. They calculate that only 9% of Canadian workers are employed in jobs related to fossil fuels and other “hot spots” of Canadian industry (including electricity generation, freight transportation and transportation services, chemical manufacturing, metal manufacturing and agriculture), yet these sectors comprise 78% of industrial and commercial GHG emissions. The authors also calculate GHG emissions per worker in 14 industrial sectors in Canada. The report offers 12 recommendations for achieving zero carbon growth while creating and maintaining decent green jobs.

LINKS:

A Green Industrial Revolution: Climate Justice, Green Jobs and Sustainable Production in Canada, published by of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, is available at:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2012/06/Green%20Industrial%20Revolution.pdf>

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Alternative Visions for a Community-Based Power in British Columbia

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a report released in June by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, John Calvert and Marc Lee warn that households and small businesses face steep rate increases for their hydro power as a result of the increasing demands of the province’s natural resource extraction industries. The authors argue that these industries create very few jobs (only 1% of BC’s employment) and a great deal of pollution. Their alternative vision is based on seven recommendations, starting with a change in energy planning to a balanced supply and demand framework, anchored in public power, and refocused on meeting the province’s GHG reduction targets. “Aggressively pursuing the energy efficiency and conservation potential in BC, combined with support for small- and community-scale renewable technologies, can significantly reduce the need for new electricity supply. However, this will only happen if the government’s energy-intensive resource extraction policies are dramatically scaled back”.

Powering our Province seeks to assess the job creation potential for rural B.C. of independent power producers (IPP) and community-owned clean energy projects. The report identifies 5 immediate opportunities in: skilled trades and construction; community and First Nations engagement; scientific and environmental monitoring; plant operations and maintenance; and indirect business support. Key barriers faced include the lack of built infrastructure, difficulties accessing advanced education and skills training, and a shortage in capacity for skilled workers, due in part to competition and labour demand from out-of-province and urban centers. The report was published in August by Globe Advisors, and commissioned by the Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition (SIBAC) and its project partners.

LINK:

Clean Electricity, Conservation and Climate Justice in BC: Meeting Our Energy Needs in a Zero-Carbon Future is at:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2012/06/CCPA-BC-Clean-Electricity.pdf>

Powering our Province is available at:

http://www.ruralbcgreenenergy.com/images/GLOBE_BC_Clean_Energy_Business_Opportunities_AnalysisFINAL_July%2030.pdf

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New U.S. Fuel Economy Standards Result in Job Creation

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

New fuel economy standards were announced by the U.S. government on August 28, to begin ramping up in the 2017 model year. It is expected that by 2025, fuel economy for cars and light trucks will have been reduced by 90%. Two new reports estimate the job creation that will occur as a result of the new regulations. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a draft regulatory analysis document which, at 377 pages, is complex and comprehensive, looking at multiple impacts. Chapter 8, which deals with employment effects of the new regulations, surveys multiple models and concludes with a highly qualified statement that “For the regulated sector, the cost effect is expected to increase employment by 600 – 3,600 workers in 2017, depending on the share of that employment that is in the auto manufacturing sector compared to the auto parts manufacturing sector.”

A second report, *Gearing Up*, uses a “quasi-dynamic input-output analytical model” called Dynamic Energy Efficiency Policy Evaluation Routine (DEEPEP). The resulting estimates show 50,000 new direct and indirect jobs will be created in light-duty vehicle manufacturing and assembly by 2030, with real wages projected to increase faster than job growth. The report also explores the job creation potential of increasing domestic content requirements in the U.S.

LINKS:

Draft Regulatory Impact Analysis: Proposed Rulemaking for 2017-2025 Light-Duty Vehicle Greenhouse Gas Emission Standards and Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards is at the EPA website at:

<http://epa.gov/otaq/climate/documents/420d11004.pdf>

Gearing Up: Smart Standards Create Good Jobs Building Cleaner Cars is available at the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) website at:

<http://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/e127.pdf>

(registration required, free).

A summary of the topic, *New Car Rules Get it right on Energy, the Environment and the Economy*, is at the Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions at:

<http://www.c2es.org/blog/greenwaldj/new-car-rules-get-it-right-energy-environment-economy>

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U.S. Studies of the Employment Impacts of Clean Energy Policies

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Some highlights from U.S. studies published in the summer of 2012 include: A report from Michigan State University focuses on the investment and job impacts that would result from increasing Michigan's renewable energy generation to 25% of total electricity by the year 2025. The "25 by 25" proposal will appear on 2012 election ballot for Michigan voters. See *Projected Job and Investment Impacts of Policy Requiring 25% Renewable Energy by 2025* in Michigan, at: http://www.environmentalcouncil.org/mecReports/MSU_Jobs_Report_25x25.pdf

Illinois ranked 4th in the United States in overall installed wind capacity and currently hosts 42 wind power projects. 23 of these projects have in excess of 50 MW capacity. A report published in June by the University of Illinois Center for Renewable Energy uses the JEDI model to analyze the economic impacts for those 23 projects. Findings: those 23 projects created approximately 19,047 full-time equivalent jobs during construction (with a total payroll of over \$1.1 billion) and support approximately 814 permanent jobs in rural Illinois areas.

See *Wind Energy Development in Illinois June 2012* at:

<http://renewableenergy.illinoisstate.edu/wind/publications/2012EconomicImpactReportForWeb.pdf>

The Center for American Progress published an analysis of the potential for clean energy installations on public land in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah. They project that these states could stimulate more than \$137 billion in investment in solar, wind, and geothermal energy over the next two decades, create more than 209,000 direct jobs, and provide electricity for 7 million homes. See *The Vast Potential for Renewable Energy in the American West: Developing Wind, Solar, and Geothermal Energy on Public Lands* at: http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/08/pdf/renewable_energy_west.pdf

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International Cooperation in Skills Training by Labour Unions

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In August, the United Association of Plumbers and Pipe Fitters (UA) and the Plumbing Trades Employees Union (PTEU) of Australia signed an affiliation agreement for joint skills training and employment initiatives in the United States, Canada and Australia. The goal is to help streamline the building industry, reduce the shortage of skilled workers and tackle the global problem of climate change. North Americans can provide expertise in heavy industry as Australia embarks on expansion of their oil and gas refining and power generation; Australian expertise in water conservation will benefit North America as it seeks to address its aging water and sewer infrastructure. More details are at: <http://www.green-unions.com>

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Training Models for Clean Energy Jobs

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Duke Forum for Law & Social Change published a special edition dedicated to “A Just Transition to a Green Economy” in August. One paper discusses the adequacy of job preparation for a more sustainable energy economy in the U.S. and highlights “the failure of our current education and workforce system to provide for adequate and appropriate training-with the exception of a few innovative community college-industry partnerships”. The authors recommend that governments at all levels support workforce and economic development programs between community college and clean energy industry partnerships, and that the U.S. federal Perkins Career and Technical Education funds be directed toward large-scale experimentation with these partnerships.

LINKS:

Duke Forum for Law & Social Change Volume 4 (2012) special issue on “A Just Transition to a Green Economy” is available at: <http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/dflsc/>, including: Gordon, Soares and Steigleder, “Preparing America’s Workforce for Jobs in the Green Economy: A Case for Technical Literacy” and Farrell, “A Just Transition: Lessons Learned from the Environmental Justice Movement”.

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Indicators to Measure Gender Representation in Climate Change Decision-Making

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new report from the European Institute for Gender Equality proposes a set of indicators for objective K.1 of the Beijing Platform for Action – i.e. to “Involve women actively in environmental decision making at all levels”. The report reviews the theoretical links between gender issues and climate change. It is the first EU-wide report on gender equality and climate change which provides comparable data at the for the 27 EU countries, in the form of a series of tables showing women’s current participation in climate change decision-making for ministries related to the environment, energy, and

transportation, as well as at the EU and international levels. It also provides data about the proportion of women graduates among all graduates in scientific and technical fields related to climate change.

LINKS:

Review of the Implementation in the EU of area K of the Beijing Platform for Action: Women and the Environment is available at:

<http://www.eige.europa.eu/content/document/gender-equality-and-climate-change-report>

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Measuring Green Jobs by Time Spent Using Green Technology or Practices

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics released the results of its Green Technologies and Practices Survey at the end of June 2012. The most frequently reported types of green technologies and practices were related to improving energy efficiency within the establishment (57%), and waste reduction as a result of operations (55%). About 854,700 jobs, representing 0.7 % of total U.S. employment, were held by workers who spent more than half of their time involved in green technologies and practices during the survey reference period of August 2011.

LINKS:

Green Technologies and Practices Summary is available at:

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/gtp.nr0.htm> , with links to technical documents.

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Defining the Green Economy in Canada

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Sustainable Prosperity, based at University of Ottawa, has released a White Paper which argues for a definition of green economy that encompasses all sectors, including but not limited to natural resources and the environmental goods and services sector. In providing its guiding principles for a framework for a green economy, the report also defines relevant concepts such as decoupling and natural capital. The report identifies the “priority challenges” for Canada to achieve a green economy, including: increasing resource productivity; identifying ecological limits; improving competitiveness and innovation; and increasing resilience to climate change and other shocks.

LINKS:

Towards a Green Economy for Canada is available at the Sustainable Prosperity website at:
<http://www.sustainableprosperity.ca/dl864&display>

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Forest Biomass Updates

Posted on **September 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The B.C. Bioeconomy Committee was formed in July 2011 to provide advice on opportunities in the sector – specifically forest biomass- to the Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation. The report, released over the summer of 2012, provides a snapshot, rather than a comprehensive study, of the wide range of activities already underway in B.C., as well as Alberta, Ontario, U.S., Europe and Finland. The Committee concludes that there is an urgent need for government leadership, and provides recommendations for action.

On July 19, Ontario announced that it is proceeding with the conversion of the Atikokan Generating Station from coal to biomass, as part of its plan to eliminate coal-fired electricity generation by the end of 2014. The government projects that the conversion will create 200 construction jobs, as well as preserve existing long-term jobs because of a provision that the biomass must be sourced from Ontario's forests and processed in Ontario.

On September 13th the Bioenergy Research and Demonstration Facility at the University of British Columbia was officially opened, to convert local, renewable wood fuel to energy by means of a biomass gasification technology. Note that the federal government also announced funding on September 13 for the Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy (FORCE) tidal energy project in Halifax.

LINKS:

B.C. Bioeconomy report is available at:

http://www.gov.bc.ca/jti/down/bio_economy_report_final.pdf

News Release: Ontario Government converts Coal Plant to Biomass at:

<http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2012/07/ontario-converts-coal-plant-to-biomass-creates-200-jobs.html>

News Release: Harper Government Supports Innovative Renewable Energy Project and Innovation in British Columbia September 13, 2012 at: <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/media-room/news-release/2012/6521>, with a Backgrounder at:

<http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/media-room/news-release/2012/6519>

The Backgrounder re FORCE is at:

<http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/media-room/news-release/2012/6515>

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Australian Carbon Price Directs Support to Industry and Jobs

Posted on **September 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Australia's carbon tax of \$23 per tonne was authorized by legislation in November 2011 and began on July 1st 2012. The price, which affects approximately 500 facilities that emit more than 25,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year, is fixed for the first 3 years and then will rise at 2.5% per year, until July 1 2015, when it will transition to a fully flexible price under an emissions trading scheme. The government has pledged to allocate approximately 40% of carbon price revenue to help businesses and support jobs; the Jobs and Competitiveness Program has earmarked \$9.2 billion for assistance until 2015- including \$1.3 billion for a Coal Sector Jobs Package. The *Clean Energy Act 2011* and its amendments – including amendments in June and August 2012 – are compiled and summarized at:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/en/government/clean-energy-future/legislation.aspx>

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Review of the B.C. Carbon Tax

Posted on **September 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The B.C. carbon tax, which began in 2008, applies to the purchase or use of fuels within the province, with revenues being returned to citizens in the form of reductions in other taxes. Its price is now frozen, awaiting the conclusion of a government review of the program, including revenue neutrality and the impact on the competitiveness of B.C. businesses, especially agriculture and food producers. Citizen's submissions were accepted until the end of August 2012; the review continues to the end of the year. In June 2012, Sustainable Prosperity published its own review of B.C.'s carbon tax, by Stewart Elgie. Their report states that B.C.'s GDP growth has outpaced the rest of Canada's by a small margin since 2008, while use of petroleum fuels has declined by 15.1% and GHG emissions have also shown a substantial reduction. See the B.C. Ministry of Finance Review website at:

http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/tbs/tp/climate/carbon_tax.htm

For official documents, see *British Columbia's Carbon Tax Shift: the First Four Years* at the Sustainable Prosperity website at: <http://www.sustainableprosperity.ca/dl872&display> .

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Measuring Sustainable Manufacturing Practices

Posted on **September 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) launched the Higg Index in July 2012, to measure the environmental life cycle of apparel production (materials, manufacturing, packaging, transportation, use, and end-of-life). The vision is to expand the index to include the footwear industry, and to measure social and labour impacts. SAC, a trade organization of retailers, manufacturers, NGOs, academics and government representatives, claims to represent more than a third of the global apparel and footwear industries, including Walmart, NIKE, Marks and Spencer, and Levi's. Their website is at:

<http://www.apparelcoalition.org>

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WTO Decision Re Ontario's Fit Program is Delayed

Posted on **September 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Chairman of the World Trade Organization Dispute Settlement Board announced in June that, due to the complexities of the dispute, the board will not rule until the end of November 2012 in the international complaint against the domestic content requirements of Ontario's Feed-in Tariff program. The decision had been scheduled for September 2012. Details are at:

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds412_e.htm

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Public Opinion about Climate Change

Posted on **September 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An Angus Reid poll released in late June 2012 shows that 58% of Canadians believe "it is more important to protect the environment, even at the risk of hampering economic growth". Only 45% of Americans and 43% of Britons agreed with that statement. The summary is at: <http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/45431/global-warming-skepticism-higher-in-u-s-and-britain-than-canada/> with a link to the full report and tables.

In the U.S., a survey conducted by the University of Michigan compares the levels of concern for climate change among adults between 32 and 52 years of age. Only 16% were very or moderately interested in the issue (down from 22% in 2009). The detailed report, including where the cohort sources their information, and possible explanations for the lack of engagement is: Miller, Jon D. "Climate Change: Generation X Attitudes, Interest, and Understanding" in *Generation X Report* v. 1 #3 (Summer 2012) at: <http://www.sampler.isr.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/GenXReport.pdf>

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Views on Canada's Energy Policy

Posted on **September 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources released *Now or Never* on July 19th, after 3 years of consultations and hearings. The unanimous report presents 13 priorities for action to achieve long-term and affordable energy solutions.

LINKS:

Now or Never: Canada must act urgently to seize its place in the new energy world order is available at: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/411/enev/rep/rep04jul12-e.pdf> and the French version, *Maintenant ou jamais: Le Canada doit agir d'urgence pour prendre sa place dans le nouvel ordre mondial de l'énergie*, is at: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/411/enev/rep/rep04jul12-f.pdf>

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New Energy Policy Proposes to End Nuclear Power in Japan

Posted on **September 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In Japan's first review of its energy policy after the Fukushima disaster of 2011, a panel of the Japanese Cabinet made public its recommendations on September 14th. Part of the proposed new policy includes phasing out nuclear power by the 2030s – mainly by retiring aging reactors and not replacing them. Japan's big business lobby is vehemently opposed to such a plan, but strong anti-nuclear public opinion has been evidenced by weekly mass rallies in front of the prime minister's office, and in submissions to public hearings held by the government as part of its review.

"Japan Will Try to Halt Nuclear Power by the End of the 2030s" (Sept. 14 2012) at the New York Times website at: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/15/world/asia/japan-will-try-to-halt-nuclear-power-by-the-end-of-the-2030s.html?pagewanted=all&_moc.semityn.www

A summary of the options presented for public consideration is at Options for Energy and the Environment: The Energy and Environment Council Decision at: http://www.npu.go.jp/policy/policy09/pdf/20120720/20120720_en.pdf

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Progress on Canada's GHG Emissions?

Posted on **September 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In August, Environment Canada released its 2012 report documenting Canada's emission trends. See *Canada's Emission Trends 2012* at: http://www.ec.gc.ca/Publications/253AE6E6-5E73-4AFC-81B7-9CF440D5D2C5%5C793-Canada%27s-Emissions-Trends-2012_e_01.pdf (English) or *Tendances en matière d'émissions au Canada 2012* at: http://www.ec.gc.ca/Publications/253AE6E6-5E73-4AFC-81B7-9CF440D5D2C5%5C793-Canada%27s-Emissions-Trends-2012_f_01.pdf (French).

P.J. Partington of the Pembina Institute states: "The progress reflected in this year's emissions trends report is largely the result of updated baselines and accounting rules for greenhouse gas pollution, as well as the considerable action some provinces are taking to reduce their emissions." See <http://www.pembina.org/media-release/2364>. Climate Action Tracker, in its September Update, states: "Canada's government uses uncommon methods of comparing and projecting emissions, while its 2020 reduction target is unchanged and still estimated as "inadequate" by a wide margin." http://climateactiontracker.org/assets/publications/briefing_papers/2012-09-04_Briefing_paper_Bangkok.pff.pdf

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Domestic Content Requirements and Green Employment

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Sustainable Prosperity, a research and policy network based at the University of Ottawa, released a policy brief in April discussing the domestic content requirements for renewable energy manufacturing in Canada. The policy brief focused on the question of whether domestic

content requirements are effective at increasing 'green' employment. The brief looks at various policies in effect in Canada (namely, Quebec and Ontario) and internationally, as well as international trade agreements relevant to domestic content requirements. At least in the short-run, domestic content requirements are likely to increase the cost of renewable energy generating equipment, and therefore also the developer's cost of generating renewable energy. Depending on the type of renewable energy support policy with which the domestic content requirement is linked, this may have the effect of increasing consumers' electricity prices, or reducing the number of renewable energy facilities built. In the last case, it is possible that the reduced renewable energy output leads to overall reductions in employment in renewable energy generation and manufacturing.

LINK:

Sustainable Prosperity news release with link to policy brief:

<http://www.sustainableprosperity.ca/article2445>

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Opportunities for Decent Work in a Green Economy

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The transformation to a greener economy could generate 15 to 60 million additional jobs globally over the next two decades and lift tens of millions of workers out of poverty, according to a new report led by the international Green Jobs Initiative. The study, *Working Towards Sustainable Development: Opportunities for Decent Work and Social Inclusion in a Green Economy*, says that these gains will depend on whether the right set of policies are put in place. At least half of the global workforce – the equivalent of 1.5 billion people – will be affected by the transition to a greener economy. This comprehensive report touches on specifics relating to eight key sectors which are expected to play a central role and be most affected by the transition: agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy, resource-intensive manufacturing, recycling, building and transport.

LINKS:

Summary and overview; *Working Towards Sustainable Development: Opportunities for Decent Work and Social Inclusion in a Green Economy*:

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/news/WCMS_181795/lang-en/index.htm

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/—emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_181836.pdf

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Life Cycle Assessment of the Canadian Oil Sands Considered

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The first section of this report discusses the basic methodology of life-cycle assessments and examines the choice of boundaries, design features, and input assumptions. The second section of the report compares several of the publicly available assessments of life-cycle GHG emissions data for Canadian oil sands crudes against each other, against those of other global reference crudes, and against those of other fossil fuel resources. The third section examines some of the specific findings of the Department of State's commissioned study for the Keystone XL pipeline. The report concludes with a discussion of some tools for policymakers who are interested in using these assessments to investigate the potential impacts of U.S. energy policy choices on the environment.

LINK:

From the Congressional Research Office in the U.S.: *Canadian Oil Sands: Life-Cycle Assessments of Greenhouse Gas Emissions*:

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42537.pdf>

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Policy Brief Compares UK and Canadian Climate Policies

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Sustainable Prosperity and the University of Ottawa's Institute of the Environment marked the 20th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit by presenting a two-day conference, on May 1st and 2nd "Building on Rio + 20: Canada's Role and Priorities in a Global Green Economy", to examine the policy and economic dimensions of Canada in a global green economy. A policy brief released at the conference looks at the vast gap between the level of action and commitment in the UK when compared to Canada in terms of climate policy at the national level. The UK has an aggressive and comprehensive action plan to decarbonise its economy, whereas Canada's Federal government is pursuing a sector-by-sector regulatory approach, with fragmented action between the Federal government and the provinces.

LINKS:

The United Kingdom Climate Policy: Lessons for Canada. Summary and link to policy brief:

<http://www.sustainableprosperity.ca/article2716>

Nova Scotia Releases Its Marine Renewable Energy Strategy

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Nova Scotia released its Marine Renewable Energy Strategy in May. Wave and offshore wind power are part of the mix in the strategy, but tides are the primary focus, given Nova Scotia's unique advantage in developing and growing a new tidal industry. The Strategy focuses on research, development, and regulatory initiatives that have been established to achieve Nova Scotia's vision to be a global leader in the development of marine renewable energy technology and expertise for domestic and export markets. This report doesn't go into any detail about job creation.

LINKS:

Nova Scotia Department of Energy website:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy/>

Nova Scotia's Marine Renewable Energy Strategy document:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy/resources/publications/Nova-Scotia-Marine-Renewable-Energy-Strategy-May-2012.pdf>

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Is Canada Suffering from 'Dutch Disease'?

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Several recent studies have been in the news concerning the concept of "Dutch disease" in Canada.

Dutch Disease or Failure to Compete: A Diagnosis of Canada's Manufacturing Woes, was published by the Institute for Research on Public Policy, and examines the linkages for 80 different manufacturing industries using an empirical model that accounts for changes in global demand and competitive pressures as well as energy-induced strengthening of the dollar. Their results show that only 25 of the 80 industries show a significant negative relationship between the US-Canada exchange rate and output – mostly small labour-intensive industries such as textiles and apparel. Interestingly in light of the recently announced layoffs at GM Oshawa, the study concludes that "automotive industries do not show symptoms of Dutch disease; their weakness stems from cyclical changes in demand and lagging productivity growth".

The Pembina Institute and The Macdonald Laurier Institute both released their own studies on this issue on May 30. The Macdonald Laurier Institute has released a commentary titled, *No Dutch Treat: Oil and Gas Wealth Benefits All of Canada*.

In this report, authors Robert Murphy and Brian Crowley argue that even provinces not directly involved in oil and gas enjoy large gains from such activity in other provinces.

The Pembina report, *In the Shadow of the Boom: How oil sands development is reshaping Canada's economy*, reviews the extent to which oil sands production and exports are affecting Canada's economy, and explores the longer-term economic implications of increased reliance on oil sands expansion to support economic growth and generate public revenue.

LINKS:

Dutch Disease or Failure to Compete? published by Institute for Research in Public Policy (IRPP):
http://www.irpp.org/pubs/IRPPstudy/IRPP_Study_no30.pdf

No Dutch Treat: Oil and Gas Wealth Benefits All of Canada,

(MacDonald Laurier Study) press release and link to full document is at:

<http://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/commentary-no-dutch-treat-oil-and-gas-wealth-benefits-all-parts-of-canada/>

In the Shadow of the Boom: How oil sands development is reshaping Canada's economy,

press release and link to document is at:

<http://www.pembina.org/media-release/2344>

"Is Canada grappling with Dutch disease?" *The Globe and Mail*, May 16th:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/manufacturing/is-canada-grappling-with-dutch-disease/article2433816/>

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Creating a Culture of Sustainability in the Health Care Sector

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Embracing sustainability has tangible financial rewards and creates jobs, according to a new report by the Health Care Research Collaborative. The report, *Creating a Culture of Sustainability: Leadership, Coordination and Performance Measurement Systems in Healthcare*, was conducted by the Health Care Research Collaborative, a collaboration of Health Care Without Harm and the Healthier Hospitals Initiative, and sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in the

U.S. The report found that leadership engagement and incorporation of sustainability as a high-level goal was key to the success of the program. Also found was that jobs are being created as health systems are finding that sustainability efforts need dedicated staff who are responsible for it, and cost savings inherent in sustainability help pay for these staff members as well as to make investments in other hospital programs.

LINKS:

Creating a Culture of Sustainability: Leadership, Coordination and Performance Measurement Systems in Healthcare. A summary of the report can be found at:

http://www.noharm.org/us_canada/news_hcwh/2012/apr/hcwh2012-04-26a.php

Full document:

http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/other/Creating_a_Culture_of_Sustainability.pdf

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Clean Mining Alliance Created in Vancouver, B.C.

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new industry association has been launched aimed at supporting and advocating technological advancements to make the mining industry cleaner and more environmentally responsible. The Clean Mining Alliance is a newly formed international non-profit organization based in Vancouver. Its founding members include the Centre for Environmental Research in Minerals, Metals and Materials (CERM3), part of the University of British Columbia Department of Mining Engineering.

More information on the Clean Mining Alliance, visit their website at: <http://www.cleanmining.org/>

or the University website (UBC CERM3) at:

<http://www.cerm3.mining.ubc.ca/about.html>

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Tariffs Being Applied to Chinese-Made Solar Modules

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a long-awaited decision, the U.S. Commerce Department has issued a preliminary decision on May 17 to apply tariffs to Chinese-made solar modules being imported into the U.S. The tariffs range from 31 percent to 250 percent. The

preliminary tariffs were issued after a lengthy investigation by the Commerce Department into whether Chinese companies are “dumping” solar panels into the U.S. market below cost. These tariffs follow a March decision to issue small countervailing duties on Chinese module producers that are getting illegal domestic subsidies, according to Commerce.

For a summary, see the statement by the American Coalition for Solar Manufacturing at:

<http://www.americansolarmanufacturing.org/news-releases/05-17-12-commerce-department-ruling.htm>

A detailed technical report is available from the U.S. International Trade Administration at:

<http://ia.ita.doc.gov/download/factsheets/factsheet-prc-solar-cells-ad-prelim-20120517.pdf>

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Life Cycle Thinking for a Policy Makers and Business Managers

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new European Union Joint Research Centre (JRC) report provides key information for policy makers and business managers on how to assess the environmental impacts of products and services through more consistent and better quality life cycle assessments. Life Cycle Thinking (LCT) helps to assess the sustainability of supply chains, use, and end-of-life management options for goods and services. A key component of the Europe 2020 strategy, ‘life cycle thinking’ is being used to understand the full environmental impacts of products and services, from design through produce use and end-of-life.

European Commissions Life Cycle Thinking and Assessment website:

<http://lct.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

Joint Research Centre summary with links to the LCA report:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=1410&obj_id=14840&dt_code=NWS&lang=en&ori=HPG

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Making Cities Resilient as Global Disaster Losses Hit \$500 Billion

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction has launched a new phase of the “Making Cities Resilient Campaign” which now includes 1,020 cities around the globe. The *Handbook for Local Government Leaders: How to Make Cities More Resilient* was officially launched as part of the world disaster reduction campaign, which has been extended to 2015. The new Handbook was developed at the request of city leaders to explain why building disaster resilience is necessary, and what kind of strategies and actions are required by cities and local governments to achieve resilience. Summary with links to the Handbook, press release and campaign information: <http://www.unisdr.org/archive/26728>

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York University Students Can Pursue a Certificate in Sustainable Energy

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Students at the undergraduate level enrolled in the Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES) at York University in Toronto now have the option of pursuing a specialty Certificate in Sustainable Energy. This certificate program formally recognizes and integrates a suite of courses which offer BES students applied skills in the field of sustainable energy. For the Certificate in Sustainable Energy, students have the option of completing an internship placement with an organization in the sustainable energy field. At the graduate level, Master in Environmental Studies (MES) students develop their own unique areas of original research, with the possibility of internships in with both public and private organizations. The Certificate is part of the Sustainable Energy Initiative (SEI) in the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES).

For information on the Sustainable Energy Initiative and the Certificate in Sustainable Energy see the SEI website at: <http://sei.info.yorku.ca/>

Or the SEI brochure: <http://sei.info.yorku.ca/files/2011/01/SEI-Brochure-web.pdf>

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Black Out Speak Out Campaign Launched

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Launched on May 7, *Black Out Speak Out* (or *Silence, on parle!* in French) invites Canadian organizations, businesses and citizens to darken their websites on June 4, to protest changes introduced in the federal government's budget act (C-38). The *Black Out Speak Out* initiative is led by CAPE, CPAWS, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecojustice, Environmental Defence, Equiterre, Greenpeace, Nature Canada, Pembina Institute, Sierra Club Canada, West Coast Environmental Law, and WWF Canada. Go to Black Out Speak Out website at: <http://www.blackoutspeakout.ca/> or <http://www.silenceonparle.ca/>

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“Golden Rules” for Natural Gas Extraction

Posted on **June 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On May 29, the International Energy Association released a special World Energy Outlook Report on natural gas, including fracking. According to one of the authors, “If this new industry is to prosper, it needs to earn and maintain its social license to operate,” *Golden Rules for a golden age of Gas* is at: <http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/goldenrules/>

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Building Ontario's Green Economy: A Road Map

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

This report by Blue Green Canada recognizes the efforts taken by the province of Ontario to become a leader in the green economy. The report makes recommendations for ways Ontario can further strengthen the green economy and pursue a resource efficient, socially inclusive, low carbon economy. The report contains a series of recommendations for a variety of sectors, including low-carbon transportation, cap and trade, energy efficient buildings, and waste management.

LINKS:

Building Ontario's Green Economy: A Road Map. Summary:

<http://environmentaldefence.ca/reports/building-ontarios-green-economy-road-map>

Building Ontario's Green Economy: A Road Map. Report:

http://environmentaldefence.ca/sites/default/files/report_files/GreenEconomyRoadmap_FINAL.pdf

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Promoting Safety and Health in the Green Economy: A Report Released by the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

This report highlights occupational safety and health (OSH) as an integral part of the promotion of green jobs and a greener economy to achieve economic and social development that is also environmentally sustainable. The report, titled *Promoting Safety and Health in a Green Economy*, looks at different "green industries" from an OSH perspective. Industries discussed include all forms of renewable energy, waste management (including shipbreaking), agriculture, forestry, construction, and the special case of nuclear energy.

LINKS:

Promoting Safety and Health in a Green Economy. Summary and link to the report:

http://www.ilo.org/safework/info/publications/WCMS_175600/lang-en/index.htm

Promoting Safety and Health in a Green Economy. Summary and link to the report:

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Growing Green and Decent Jobs

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) report with economic analysis by the Millennium Institute shows how investing 2% of GDP in the green economy in each of the next five years could create up to 48 million new jobs. The report analyzes 7 industries in 12 countries across Asia-Pacific, Africa, the Americas and Europe, including: Germany, Spain, Bulgaria, Brazil, Dominican Republic, the USA, South Africa, Ghana, Tunisia, Indonesia, Nepal and Australia.

LINKS:

The Growing Green and Decent Jobs Report can be found here:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/growing-green-and-decent-jobs,11011.html>

Summary *Growing Green and Decent Jobs*:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/summary-growing-green-and-decent.html?lang=en>

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Provincial Climate Change Plans Compared

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In the absence of effective policies from Canada's federal government to tackle global warming, many provinces have stepped up to implement their own plans and policies. *All Over the Map: A Comparison of Provincial Climate Change Plans* looks at the strengths and weaknesses of each provinces' plan. This report by the David Suzuki Foundation documents the shift, assessing each province's climate change plans and programs and comparing the relative merits of each. It updates the status of each province's efforts, and provides recommendations for moving forward.

LINKS:

All Over the Map: A Comparison of Provincial Climate Change Plans

Report:<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/downloads/2012/All%20Over%20the%20Map%202012.pdf>

Background and Interactive Map:

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/reports/2012/all-over-the-map-2012/>

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Post Carbon Pathways: Reviewing Post Carbon Economy Transition Strategies

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

This report aims to provide a concise overview of learning from 18 of the most comprehensive and innovative large-scale post carbon economy transition strategies. Around the world, detailed policy and research initiatives are demonstrating that a rapid transition to a post carbon economy is both technologically and economically feasible. However, the latest climate science shows that the window for effective action is rapidly closing. Strategies to reduce emissions at the required scale and speed will need to be implemented in the next five to ten years if they are to significantly reduce the risk of runaway climate change.

The report is the first stage in an ongoing Post Carbon Pathways project designed to strengthen understanding of the most effective ways of overcoming barriers to the rapid implementation of post carbon economy transition strategies – with an emphasis on plans pitched at the speed and scale capable of having some real chance of reducing the risk of runaway climate change. Published by the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, University of Melbourne and the Centre for Policy Development.

LINKS:

Post Carbon Pathways: Reviewing Post Carbon Economy Transition Strategies.

Link to briefing paper, summary, full report, and slides:

<http://www.postcarbonpathways.net.au> and;

Link to the full report:

http://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/CPD_OP17_Post_Carbon_Pathways.pdf

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Debating the Green Economy in the Lead Up to Rio+20

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

This document is an overview of the international context of perceptions, actions and political discussions relating to the green economy, leading up to the Rio + 20 Conference in June. *The Green Economy – The New Magic Bullet?* considers the debate over exactly what a green economy is and should be with what measures and instruments it should be implemented, explaining that this has not yet been defined and is the topic of intense political debate. The report compares and contrasts the initiatives and definitions of a green economy by the UNEP and OECD in the context of the Rio + 20 Negotiations. Published by the Heinrich Boell group in Washington D.C.

LINKS:

The Green Economy – The New Magic Bullet? Expectations from the Rio + 20 Conference at:

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Canada's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Released

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Government of Canada simultaneously released the National Inventory Report, the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program facility-level data and related overview report, and the greenhouse gas indicators of the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators program in April. The Government of Canada has praised the data pointing out that emissions have not increased while the economy has grown. Critics point out however, that at the current rate, Canada will not meet the targets set for 2020.

Canada and other signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have submitted the National Inventory data to the UNFCCC, which has released the national inventory submissions of greenhouse gas emissions by all signatories. The report includes sectoral and trend tables for all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and removals, and sectoral background data tables for reporting implied emission factors and activity data.

LINKS:

Inventory of GHG emissions from Canada, 1990- 2010. See full report at the UNFCCC website:
http://unfccc.int/national_reports/annex_i_ghg_inventories/national_inventories_submissions/items/6598.php

Executive summary at Environment Canada website:

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/ges-ghg/default.asp?lang=En&n=8BAF9C6D-1>

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Good Jobs, Green Jobs Regional Conferences

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

This year the Blue Green Alliance, USA is holding four regional conferences, rather than one national conference in order to enable and encourage more participation. Conferences have been held in Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, with the final conference being held May 10-11th in Detroit. Plenary sessions from the regional conference held in Philadelphia on April 3rd and 4th are available in video format on the conference website. Information on the conference can be found on the website: <http://www.greenjobsconference.org/>

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Ontario Announces Clean Energy Task Force

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Task Force has been established to help broaden the Province's energy focus. The Task Force will facilitate collaboration within Ontario's clean energy industry to identify export markets, marketing opportunities and approaches to demonstrate Ontario's advanced clean energy systems.

Ontario's Clean Energy Task Force:

<http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2012/04/members-of-the-ontario-clean-energy-task-force.html>

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Mexico's House of Representatives Approve Climate Change Act

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On April 19th, Mexico passed landmark legislation: the far-reaching Climate Change Act that will impose binding emission reduction targets on successive governments. The Act will also provide the government with the power to introduce new renewable energy incentives, phase out fossil fuel subsidies, and potentially introduce emissions trading mechanisms. The legislation requires the government to cut emissions by 30 per cent by 2020 and ensure that 35% of the country's electricity should come from renewable sources by 2024, and with an end goal of cutting carbon emissions 50 per cent by 2050.

For commentary summarizing aspects of Mexico's Climate Change Act at Nature News online, go to:

<http://www.nature.com/news/mexico-passes-climate-change-law-1.10496>

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Groups Mobilizing for Rio+20 Conference, June 20-22nd

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) will take place over three days, June 20-22, 2012. The theme of the Conference is the "Green Economy" and the overall theme is "The Future We Want". The conference website, with an introductory brief about green jobs is at:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=224&menu=45>

Chatham House in the U.K has published "Rio+20 and the Global Environment: Reflections on Theory and Practice", a special issue of *International Affairs*, vol. 88, no.3, May 2012. Go to Chatham House Online:

<http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/ia> or

Wiley Online: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/inta.2012.88.issue-3/issuetoc>

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Canada's Greenest Employers Announced

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Launched in 2007, the Canada's Greenest Employers competition is organized by the editors of the Canada's Top 100 Employers project. This special designation recognizes the employers that lead the nation in creating a corporate culture of environmental awareness, have developed exceptional earth-friendly initiatives and attracting people to their organizations because of their environmental leadership.

Employers are evaluated based on the following criteria: (1) the unique environmental initiatives and programs they have developed; (2) the extent to which they have been successful in reducing the organization's own environmental footprint; (3) the degree to which their employees are involved in these programs and whether they contribute any unique skills; and (4) the extent to which these initiatives have become linked to the employer's public identity and whether they attract new people to the organization.

Greenest Employers website, with a list of employers:

<http://www.canadastop100.com/environmental/>

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Earth Hour Challenge – Actions for a Day or a Year?

Posted on **May 11, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) supported the Earth Hour campaign by WWF, which was held on March 31. ITUC recognizes the influence unions have in communities and workplaces to act on issues of climate change and is challenging individuals and workplaces to take actions throughout the year.

Introducing the pledge for workplaces and individuals:

<http://www.sustainlabour.org/noticia.php?lang=EN&idnoticia=385>

Suggested actions to be taken in workplaces:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/earth_hour_leaflet_en.pdf

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Profiles of British Columbia's Green Economy

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

British Columbia is one of the members of the Pacific Coast Collaborative (PCC), along with California, Oregon, and Washington. The PCC commissioned GLOBE Advisors and the Center for Climate Strategies to identify opportunities for accelerated job creation and investment in a clean economy, defined as clean energy supply and energy efficiency, green buildings, clean transportation, and climate resiliency. The resulting report, *The West Coast Clean Economy*, released in March 2012, estimates clean economy contributions of \$47.2 billion to GDP, and more than 508,000 full-time equivalent direct production jobs for the entire West Coast region in 2010. British Columbia is profiled, summarizing key policy,

program and investment initiatives; B.C.'s 2010 current clean economy GDP is estimated at \$7.4 billion and the number of direct jobs at 62,593.

A briefer profile based on a broader definition of green economy was released by B.C. Premier Christy Clark at the 2012 GLOBE Conference in Vancouver on March 14. *B.C.'s Green Economy: Growing green jobs* summarizes the policy initiatives which promote investment, cites exemplary companies, and provides statistics on job creation and training in each of B.C.'s clean tech, mining, forestry, tourism, agriculture, and transportation sectors. Statistics are given for 2008, estimating 117,160 direct and 48,840 indirect full-time equivalent green jobs (or 7.2% of total employment) for the entire province.

LINKS:

The West Coast Clean Economy is at:

http://globeadvisors.ca/media/3322/wcce_report_web_final.pdf

B.C.'s Green Economy: Growing green jobs is at a B.C. government website at:

http://www.bcge.ca/BCs_Green_Economy_print.pdf

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Ontario Feed-In Tariff Review Affirms Domestic Content Regulations, Lowers Prices

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Ontario government announced on March 22 that it will accept all recommendations contained in the 2-year review of the Feed in Tariff program, including continuation of the domestic content regulations which encourage local manufacturing, and "creating more jobs sooner by streamlining the regulatory approvals process for projects". The report states that "Since 2009, it is estimated that the program has created almost 2,000 direct manufacturing jobs... Other jobs related to the FIT Program are construction-based... For every 10,000 construction jobs created by the clean energy sector, almost \$500 million in economic activity flows back into Ontario communities". It also states that Ontario's public colleges and universities have introduced new programs including training for wind turbine technicians; green business management; renewable energies technicians; sustainable energy and building technology; and clean and renewable energy engineering technology. In a statement entitled *Moving Clean Energy Forward*, the government outlines its future actions, including the development of a Clean Energy Economic Development Strategy by the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation. No target date is provided.

LINKS:

Ontario's Feed-in-Tariff Program: Two year Review Report is at: <http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/docs/en/FIT-Review-Report.pdf>, and the Ontario government's reaction is at *Moving Clean Energy Forward* at: <http://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2012/03/moving-clean-energy-forward.html>

Response by Blue Green Canada to the FIT Review and the legislative debate concerning the Green Energy Act is at: <http://www.bluegreencanada.ca/node/127> .

Northern Gateway Pipeline Job Creation – Another Analysis

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 21, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released an analysis which reviews the economic case for the Northern Gateway Pipeline, with a focus on the claimed and projected employment impacts. Enbridge claims that the pipelines will create 63,000 person-years of employment during its construction phase, and 1,146 full-time jobs once completed. Marc Lee, author of the CCPA report, argues that these projections are “grossly overstated, and based on modeling that makes many unjustified assumptions”. He also criticizes Enbridge for ignoring the economic costs and environmental risks of the pipeline, including disruption to existing employment, potential job losses due to oil spills, and the economic costs of carbon emissions. Lee concludes that “The only jobs we can bank on are approximately 1,850 construction jobs per year for three years, and a handful of permanent new jobs once completed”. Lee also discusses the additional job creation opportunities that even minimal processing of oil sands bitumen in Canada would bring, and the greater job creation that could result from redirecting the \$5 billion investment from oil sands to green jobs and industries.

LINKS:

Enbridge Pipe Dreams and Nightmares: The Economic Costs and Benefits of the Proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline at:

http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2012/03/CCPA-BC_Enbridge_Pipe_Dreams_2012.pdf

For links to earlier studies on the Northern Gateway pipeline, see the February 2012 issue of the Work and Climate Change Report at:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs010/1104412491262/archive/1109241016356.html#article7>

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Job Creation from Energy Efficiency Improvements

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 1, Deutsche Bank Climate Change Advisors (DBCCA) and The Rockefeller Foundation in the U.S. released a report which estimates that a \$279 billion investment in retrofitting of residential, commercial and institutional buildings in the U.S. could reduce that country's CO2 emissions by nearly 10% per year and produce more than a threefold return on investment by the end of the decade. It estimates that the retrofits, including upgrades to lighting, heating, and cooling, could create 3.3 million job years, equivalent to employing 330,000 full time workers for 10 years, mostly in the residential sector. The report concludes with a discussion of financing models for such investment.

LINKS:

United States Building Energy Efficiency Retrofits: Market Sizing and Financing Models is available at:

<http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/uploads/files/791d15ac-90e1-4998-8932-5379bcd654c9-building.pdf>

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3.1 Million Jobs in Green Goods and Services in the U.S.

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The inaugural issue of *Employment in Green Goods and Services* was released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics on March 22, revealing that in 2010, 3.1 million jobs, or 2.4% of total employment in the U.S., were associated with the production of green goods and services. Manufacturing had 461,800 GGS jobs, the most among any private sector industry. The BLS green jobs definition contains two components: an output-based definition which includes jobs found in businesses that produce goods and provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources, and which is the subject of the March report. The second, process-based definition includes jobs where duties involve making production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources. A report on process-based jobs is scheduled for Summer 2012.

LINKS:

Employment in Green Goods and Services 2010 is available at:

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ggqcew.pdf>.

Two related websites with technical information about data and definitions: the GGS website at: <http://www.bls.gov/ggs/>; the U.S. BLS Green Jobs website at: <http://www.bls.gov/green/> .

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Business Attitudes and Actions Toward Adaptation

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a report released in March and directed to Canada's business community, the National Round Table on the Economy and the Environment presents case studies of the practical adaptation actions, experience and advice of what they call "climate pacesetters". The thirteen Canadian firms profiled are: B.C.Hydro, Cameco, Coca Cola Canada, EBA Engineering Consultants, Entenergy, Hydro Quebec, J.D. Irving, Munich RE, Rio Tinto Alcan, Royal Bank of Canada, Summerhill Pyramid Winery, Tolco Industries, and Whistler Blackcomb. Companion documents: A Business Primer and an Advisory

Report to Government, with research and recommendations on how government can support greater business adaptation to climate change.

Another recent report by Siemens UK surveyed six hundred businesses concerning their attitudes toward energy management and conservation, as well as the position of the Energy Manager within the company. The goal of the brief report is to serve as a foundation for the construction of a "Green League" of companies. Some sobering findings: while 79% of respondents claimed to take energy management seriously within their companies, 46% admit that they don't know their current CO2 emission levels; 7% had investing nothing in the last 3 years on energy efficiency improvements, and 94% of energy managers have no formal qualifications relating to their role.

LINKS:

Facing the elements: building business resilience in a changing climate: case studies Report #5 in the NRTEE Climate Prosperity series at:

<http://nrtee-trnee.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/cp5-case-studies.pdf>

The Green League: How businesses are reacting to the green agenda is at:

http://www.siemens.co.uk/pool/news_press/news_archive/2012/greenleaguereport.pdf

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Environmental Cuts in the 2012 Canadian Budget

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The budget of the federal government of Canada, released on March 29, 2012, includes changes to "streamline" environmental assessments, cut the budget of Environment Canada, and eliminate the National Roundtable on the Economy and the Environment (NRTEE).

LINKS:

See the budget documents at the government's website at: <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2012/home-accueil-eng.html>;

read a summary in the Toronto Globe and Mail at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/ottawa-clears-hurdles-to-resource-development/article2386106/>.

For reactions, see Marc Lee at the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis website at:

<http://www.behindthenumbers.ca/2012/03/29/a-budget-that-screws-the-planet-for-short-term-profits/>

or Andrea Harden-Donahue at Rabble.ca at:

<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/council-canadians/2012/03/budget-2012-good-big-oil-bad-people-and-environment>.

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Ontario's Climate Adaptation Strategy Assessed

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 7, 2012 the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario released a review of the 2011 Climate Ready adaptation strategy and planning document. The Commissioner states that the plan "represents a significant contribution towards a growing national and international policy movement". However, he calls for improvements such as prioritizing the actions that are needed, setting specific targets and timelines, identifying dedicated funding, and outlining the responsibilities of key government ministries. He calls on the province to support local and municipal initiatives such as the Community Adaptation Initiative, whose funding ends in March 2012.

LINKS:

Ready for Change? An assessment of Ontario's climate change adaptation strategy at:

<http://www.eco.on.ca/uploads/Reports-special/2012-Adaptation/Ready-for-Change-bookmarked.pdf>

Climate Ready: Ontario's Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, 2011-2014 at:

http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@ene/@resources/documents/resource/stdprod_085423.pdf

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Update on British Columbia: Carbon Tax Under Review; Natural Gas Strategy Projects Job Growth

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In February, British Columbia released two strategy documents, fleshing out plans for the natural gas industry which had been previously mentioned in the B.C. Jobs Plan. The government press release claims that development of LNG will produce approximately \$20 billion in new private sector investment, create 800 new long-term jobs in LNG facilities, up to 9,000 more jobs during construction, and thousands of spin-off jobs in transportation, engineering, construction and environmental management.

The B.C. government's budget speech in late February confirmed that the government will increase the carbon tax as scheduled in 2012, but the tax will be frozen after that while the government conducts a one-year review of the impact on B.C.'s economy, especially on the agricultural sector. The budget press release is at:

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/02/budget-2012-focuses-on-a-stable-economy.html>.

LINKS:

British Columbia's Natural Gas Strategy: Fuelling BC's economy for the next decade and beyond at:

http://www.gov.bc.ca/ener/popt/down/natural_gas_strategy.pdf

Liquefied Natural Gas: A Strategy for B.C.'s Newest Industry at:

http://www.gov.bc.ca/ener/popt/down/liquefied_natural_gas_strategy.pdf

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Impact of a Spill on the Keystone XL Pipeline

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Cornell's Global Labor Institute has released a second report about the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. Although a comprehensive spills risk assessment for the pipeline hasn't been conducted, authors Lara Skinner and Sean Sweeney used economic data and interviews to estimate the potential impacts in the six states along the proposed route, and describe how the Kalamazoo River spill in 2010-to date the largest tar sands oil spill in the U.S.-caused significant economic damage.

LINKS:

The Impact of Tar Sands Pipeline Spills on Employment and the Economy is at:

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/globallaborinstitute/research/upload/GLI_Impact-of-Tar-Sands-Pipeline-Spills.pdf

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Call for Just Transition in U.K. Green Jobs

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Greener Jobs Alliance is a U.K. advocacy group founded by the Trades Union Congress, University and College Union, Greenpeace, and others. It released a 4-page *Green Skills Manifesto* in January 2012, which criticizes the 2011 government green skills policy and calls for policies based on equality, just transition, fair and decent jobs. The *Green Skills Manifesto* is available at: http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/pi/Green_skills_manifesto.pdf

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OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new document released by the OECD on March 15 updates and projects what the environment will be like in 2050. Based on model projections done jointly by OECD and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, it focuses on four areas which were identified as needing urgent attention by an earlier OECD Outlook published in 2008. Chapter 2 discusses socio economic developments, for example highlighting that nearly 70% of the world population will be urban by 2050, magnifying challenges such as air pollution, transport congestion, and waste management. *OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050: The Consequences of Inaction* is available in various formats and languages from links at:

http://www.oecd.org/document/11/0,3746,en_2649_37465_49036555_1_1_1_37465,00.html

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Global Guidelines for Forests

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) released a working paper in March 2012, intended as a foundation for the global guidelines it is developing for forest managers to understand, assess and implement climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. It examines all types of forests (boreal, temperate, and tropical), and includes all management objectives (production, conservation, protection and multipurpose). It includes a section on Socio-economic impacts, as well as a discussion of policy instruments such as the REDD+ and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

LINK:

Forest Management and Climate Change: a literature review. (Forests and Climate Change Working Paper #10) at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/md012e/md012e00.pdf>

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Blue Green Canada Expands Membership

Posted on **April 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Blue Green Canada recently reported that the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP), the Columbia Institute and the Pembina Institute have joined the organization. See the press release at: <http://www.bluegreencanada.ca/node/123>.

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A Greener European Economy can Bring a Double Dividend

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Towards a Greener Economy: The Social Dimension examines the green economy in the European Union, especially the labour market and employment aspects. It focuses on the 15 high carbon industries which produce approximately 85 per cent of production emissions, and which represent approximately 12% of employment. The core of the report is its discussion of the green policy measures currently in use in the EU, and the conclusion that a “double dividend” – greater decent work opportunities and a greener economy – is possible if environmental, economic and social policies are integrated in the right policy mix. The report concludes by identifying topics requiring further research. *Towards a Greener Economy* was released in November 2011, and is the result from the cooperation between the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion and the International Institute for Labour Studies of the ILO.

LINKS:

Towards a Greener Economy: The Social Dimension is available at:

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Canadian Municipalities Invest in Infrastructure Projects to Boost Green Economy

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At its Sustainable Communities Conference, February 8-10, 2012, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities released a new policy document, *Building Canada's Green Economy: The Municipal Role*. The FCM states that municipalities build and operate most of Canada's environmental infrastructure, from water treatment plants to public transit to recycling and waste disposal services. In areas such as land-use planning, transportation, and building standards, municipalities have direct or indirect influence over 44% of Canada's GHG emissions.

Building Canada's Green Economy describes existing programs such as Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) and the Green Municipal Fund (GMF), which together have invested over \$145 million in projects that have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 350,000 tonnes. In addition, a \$550 million federal endowment to the FCM is reported to have been invested in capital projects which have yielded 32,650 jobs. The report also compares the potential job multiplier effect of municipal jobs vs. the oil and gas extraction industry: it estimates transit and passenger transportation operations would create over 20 jobs per million dollars invested. Extraction activities, the report states, generate roughly 3 jobs per million dollars invested, while support activities for mining, oil and gas extraction generate about 8 jobs per million.

LINKS

Building Canada's Green Economy: The Municipal Role is available at:

http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Building_Canadas_green_economy_the_municipal_role_EN.pdf

Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Economy website is at:

<http://www.fcm.ca/home/issues/environment/the-green-economy.htm>

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Co-operatives as a Green Agent

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A study by the Canadian Co-operative Association examines co-operatives that are creating and facilitating renewable energy development in Canada. Of the 71 such co-ops in Canada in 2010, 26% are in the biofuel sector, 22% in the wind sector, 3% in solar, 8% in biomass, 3% in hydro, and 28% in "varied". The report describes the organizational structure, stage of development, and geographical distribution, and lists each co-operative by name, address, and web address.

LINKS:

Co-operatives helping fuel a green economy is at:

http://www.coopscanada.coop/public_html/assets/firefly/files/files/Rpt_on_Renewable_Energy_Coops_FINAL_final_2.pdf

Employment in Renewable Energy

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

State of Renewable Energies in Europe, a bilingual document in French and English, was released in February and compares the main statistics on the renewable energy market in the 27 European Union countries for the years 2009 and 2010. Official 2010 data will only be available by 2013, but the group responsible, EurObserv'ER, has proven to be remarkably accurate in its past estimates. It describes and quantifies 9 renewable sectors including wind, solar, biomass, geothermal. For each type of energy, and for each country, it provides estimates of direct and indirect job creation: it estimates total renewable energy based employment at 1.11 million people in 2010 – a 25% increase from 2009. The top employer is solid biomass, followed by photovoltaic and wind power. The final chapter focuses on seven EU regions which have particularly high amounts of RES investments in 2010.

LINKS:

State of Renewable Energies in Europe is available at:

<http://www.eurobserv-er.org/pdf/barobilan11.pdf>, with more detailed data provided and searchable at the EurObserv'ER website at: <http://www.eurobserv-er.org/>

Related reports which discuss the market (but not employment) for renewables:

Wind in power: 2011 European statistics (February 2012) from the European Wind Energy Association at:

http://www.ewea.org/fileadmin/ewea_documents/documents/publications/statistics/Stats_2011.pdf

Global wind statistics 2011 (4 pages) is available from the Global Wind Energy Council at:

http://www.gwec.net/fileadmin/images/News/Press/GWEC_-_Global_Wind_Statistics_2011.pdf

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Climate Change, Oceans and Fisheries

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In late February, the Global Partnership for Oceans was launched – a coalition of international organizations such as the UNEP, UNESCO, FAO, and non-governmental organizations such as WWF and Nature Conservancy, to address the challenges to oceans management and governance, including over-fishing, marine degradation and habitat loss. These are the same issues that were raised by the Royal Society of Canada in February in its comprehensive 300-page report, *Sustaining Canada's Marine Biodiversity*. Ten Canadian marine research scientists examined the state of the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans as a result of overfishing, aquaculture “and all the things we do that drive climate change”. The report explains the real and future threats to biodiversity, discusses Canada's international and national legal obligations and policies, and offers “seven recommendations for action that will take Canada from negligence to effectiveness in managing its fisheries and preserving marine biodiversity, for the benefit of Canadians and all the world's people”.

LINKS:

Global Partnership for Oceans website is at: <http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/>

The full report, *Sustaining Canada's Marine Biodiversity: Responding to the Challenges Posed by Climate Change, Fisheries, and Aquaculture* is available at: http://www.rsc.ca/documents/RSCMarineBiodiversity2012_ENFINAL.pdf.

The 20 page summary document, which focuses on policy, is in English at:
http://www.rsc.ca/documents/RSC_MBD_1_3_25_Twenty-Five_EN_FORMAT.pdf
and in French at:
http://www.rsc.ca/documents/RSC_MBD_1_3_25_Twenty-Five_FR_FORMAT.pdf

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California Green Economy Grew Despite the Recession

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Next 10 of San Francisco has published an analysis of California's "core green economy". While employment and business growth varies across the 15 green industry segments measured, there was overall employment growth of 1% in green manufacturing in 2009-2010, despite the recession. For the period 1995 to 2010, job creation in the clean energy/materials manufacturing sector increased by 53% while jobs in the rest of the manufacturing sector decreased by 18%.

LINKS:

Many shades of green at:

http://next10.org/sites/next10.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/MSOG_2012_M2.pdf

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Green Career Guide Aimed at Women

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, in early February 2012, released *Why Green is Your Color: A Woman's Guide to a Sustainable Career*. The career guide was written under contract to the Women's Bureau by Public Policy Associates, Inc. and Wider Opportunities for Women. It is designed for workers and educators, career counselors and training providers, and discusses a range of in-demand and emerging jobs, as well as job training opportunities and career development tools.

LINKS:

Green Jobs for Women website at:<http://www.dol.gov/wb/media/green.htm> includes links to the career guide, transcripts from teleconferences in 2010, and details of regional training pilot projects.

Why green is your color is available at:

http://www.dol.gov/wb/Green_Jobs_Guide/

Green Jobs teleconferences, including PowerPoint presentations, fact sheets and transcripts of teleconferences are at:

<http://www.dol.gov/wb/media/Greenteleconferneces.htm#Industries>

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Northern Gateway Pipeline Developments

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian Energy Research Institute has released *Oil Spills and First Nations: Exploring Environmental and Land Issues Surrounding the Northern Gateway Pipeline*. It provides a good explanation of the issues and the process underway with the Northern Gateway pipeline review. According to this document, environmental issues are paramount and job creation is a very minor concern among the First Nations. The report is available at:

http://www.ceri.ca/images/stories/2012-02-15_Oil_Spills_and_First_Nations.pdf.

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union (CEP) presented evidence to the National Energy Board on January 31, calling for a delay in the decision on the Northern Gateway pipeline until a national energy policy is in place. The union includes a memo by Michael McCracken, principal of Informetrica Inc., who was retained by CEP to assess the potential impact of the Northern Gateway project. His report estimates 26,000 jobs would be lost if bitumen extracted in Alberta was exported rather than being upgraded in Canada. See the CEP Evidence at:

http://www.cep.ca/sites/cep.ca/files/docs/en/120201_Northern_Gateway_Project_CEP_Evidence_00389312.pdf, and the Memorandum from Informetrica, titled *Employment Consequences of Exporting Bitumen*, at: http://www.cep.ca/sites/cep.ca/files/docs/en/120201_Northern_Gateway_Project_Attachment_A_00389307.pdf

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Oil Sands Pollution

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A February 23 vote by the European Union has ended in a stalemate, so that the issue of whether crude from Canada's oil sands should be classed as dirtier than other fuels will be debated by the full European Council in Spring or early Summer. Read a CBC summary at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2012/02/22/oilsands-european-union-vote.html>.

A paper by University of Victoria scientists Andrew Weaver and Neil Swart calculates the climate impact of producing the oil sands. "The Alberta Oil Sands and climate", in *Nature Climate Change* was published online February 19, 2012 and is available (for a fee) at:<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1421.html>. Neil Swart's website provides a summary of the paper and selected data at:

http://climate.uvic.ca/people/nswart/Alberta_Oil_Sands_climate.html. For a discussion of the Weaver Swart paper, go to the

Pembina Institute blog by P.J. Partington on February 27, at: <http://www.pembina.org/blog/612>. Another study, released by the American Geophysical Union in its *Geophysical Research Letters* on February 22, is unique in using satellite data to calculate the overall extent of the oil sands' air quality impacts including the giant dump trucks, huge refining facilities where the bitumen is processed, and more. Read a summary at: http://www.agu.org/news/press/pr_archives/2012/2012-12.shtml.

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Youth Interested in Green Careers

Posted on **March 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The latest *World Youth Report* released by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs on February 6, 2012 was based on a four-week consultation period, where youth around the world were invited to submit their opinions and comments. There was great concern that educational systems are not adequate and that the skills taught are not relevant. Many identified entrepreneurship as a preferred career path, and many were interested in innovation in green technologies and communications. Read the press release and summary at:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41150&Cr=unemployment&Cr1=>

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Pipelines and Jobs in the News

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the January 18, 2012 decision by U.S. President Obama to deny its presidential permit, the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline has been back in the news. And in Canada, the Joint Review Panel for the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Project began conducting community hearings on January 10th. Although most opposition to both pipelines focuses on environmental damage, the promise of job creation is a powerful factor behind the debate. With the release on January 26th of a confidential policy document of the federal government, Greenpeace Canada has called into question the neutrality of the Canadian government and the National Energy Board in this environment/jobs debate.

LINKS:

"Federal documents spark outcry by oil sands critics" (Jan 26, 2012) in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/federal-documents-spark-outcry-by-oil-sands-critics/article2316087/>

Confidential federal tar sands strategy targets Aboriginal and green groups at:

<http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/recent/Confidential-federal-tar-sands-strategy-targets-Aboriginal-and-green-groups/>

Greenpeace cites *Pan-European Oil Sands Advocacy Strategy*, obtained by Freedom of Information legislation, and available at:

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?>

[a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0B_0MqnZ4wmcMYjY0NjY4Y2MtOWQzMt00NmU0LThhNWmtNzExN2EwYWI5N2Ex&hl=en_US&pli=1](https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0B_0MqnZ4wmcMYjY0NjY4Y2MtOWQzMt00NmU0LThhNWmtNzExN2EwYWI5N2Ex&hl=en_US&pli=1)

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Re Job Creation of the Keystone XL Pipeline

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by **elizabethperry493**

The Cornell Global Labor Institute has updated and re-released *Pipedreams? Jobs gained, jobs lost by the construction of Keystone XL*, which concludes that the oil industry claims of job creation in the U.S. are unsubstantiated and exaggerated. *Pipedreams?* states that 50% or more of the steel pipe to be used in the pipeline will be manufactured outside of the U.S.; jobs will be temporary; between 85-90% of workers be non-local or from out of state; and that in the long-term, jobs would be lost due to higher fuel costs in the Midwest, pipeline spills, pollution, and climate change impacts. The Cornell report specifically disputes The Perryman Report, commissioned by Transcanada Corporation, which estimates that "the \$7 billion pipeline project is expected to directly create more than 20,000 high-wage manufacturing jobs and construction jobs in 2011-2012 across the U.S., stimulating significant additional economic activity".

LINKS:

Cornell University Global Labour Institute website, with links to other Keystone Pipeline documents, at:

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/globalaborinstitute/research/Keystonexl.html>

Pipedreams? Jobs gained, jobs lost by the construction of Keystone XL at:

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/globalaborinstitute/research/upload/GLI_KeystoneXL_011912_FIN.pdf

Transcanada Inc. website is at:

http://www.transcanada.com/economic_benefits.html

The Perryman Report, formally *The Impact of Developing the Keystone XL Pipeline Project on Business Activity in the US: An Analysis Including State-by-State Construction Effects and an Assessment of the Potential Benefits of a More Stable Source of Domestic Supply* is available at: http://www.transcanada.com/docs/Key_Projects/TransCanada_US_Report_06-10-10.pdf

Keystone XL Pipeline archive of stories and related documents at the New York Times website at:

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/k/keystone_pipeline/index.html

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Re Northern Gateway Job Creation

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by **elizabethperry493**

Fact sheets at the Enbridge website claim that, with an estimated capital cost of \$5.5 billion, construction of the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline will create about 62,700 person-years of employment across Canada over 3 years (5,537 person-years of employment on actual on-site construction; 17,227 person-years in companies that directly supply goods and services, and 39,930 person-years of spin-off employment).: Enbridge has an educational and training strategy to utilize local workers, and in November 2011, the company announced a commitment of \$1.5 million in core funding for a Gateway Education and Training Fund to train Aboriginal people in pipeline construction skills.

LINKS:

Enbridge's Northern Gateway website at:<http://www.northerngateway.ca/economic-opportunity/benefits-for-british-columbians/> provides an overview of the company's estimates for job creation, or

See Socio-economic Fact Sheet at:

http://www.northerngateway.ca/assets/pdf/Environment%20Protection%20and%20Socio-Economic%20Assessment/NGP-FS-06-004_Socio-Economic%20Benefits.pdf

National Energy Board website for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Review Panel at: <http://gatewaypanel.review-examen.gc.ca/clf-nsi/hm-eng.html>.

(See the Public Registry for all official documents and submissions at:

<https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/ll-eng/livelink.exe/fetch/2000/90464/90552/384192/620327/customview.html?func=ll&objId=620327&objAction=browse&sort=-name&redirect=3>).

CBC Northern Gateway Pipeline: benefits vs. concerns January 10, 2012, with links to related documents at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/01/10/f-northern-gateway-pipeline.html>

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Improving Energy Efficiency through Workplace Behaviour

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by **elizabethperry493**

A new report from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy provides case studies of workplace programs to reduce energy use, by changing employees' attitudes and behaviours. Of the five case studies, three are Canadian: B.C Hydro, University Health Network (Toronto) and the British Columbia Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resource. The other two case studies are of the Empire State Building in New York and the U.S. House of Representatives.

LINKS:

Greening Work Styles: An Analysis of Energy Behavior Programs in the Workplace (January 2012) is available at:

<http://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/b121.pdf>

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Job Projections for Canadian Hydropower

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A study released by HEC Montréal at the end of 2011 has projected that electricity generation projects already under consideration across Canada until 2030 would create 776,000 FTEs for construction firms and their suppliers, with a further 224,000 FTEs forecast to be created by increased spending by those directly or indirectly employed by the projects. The report was conducted at the request of the Canadian Hydropower Association (CHA) and conducted by a team of MBA students at the HEC Montréal. A total of 158 hydropower projects were identified across Canada, with 3 scenarios developed using Statistics Canada's Input-Output modeling.

LINKS:

Job Creation and Economic Development Opportunities in the Canadian Hydropower Market is available at:

<http://www.globe-net.com/articles/2011/december/27/hydropower-investment-could-create-a-million-canadian-jobs/>

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Encouraging Clean Energy at State and Municipal Levels

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Pembina Institute has released a fact sheet and a backgrounder which describe and advocate the potential of municipalities to encourage renewable energy and reduce energy consumption. Clean Local Energy Available Now (CLEAN) contracts, known as feed-in-tariffs in Europe, have not been implemented in any Canadian cities yet, although a Renewable Energy Task Force in Edmonton, Alberta has examined the idea, and U.S. and German examples are named. Regarding jobs, the Fact Sheet states: "A FIT provides durable and predictable market conditions, essential to attracting infrastructure investment and developing local manufacturing capacity. The economic benefit of any clean energy project is directly related to the degree to which materials, components and labour can be locally sourced".

A study of clean energy funds (CEFs) operated in 20 states in the U.S describes various models used by the funds to encourage the development of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, with short case studies of Massachusetts, California, and New York. Researchers conclude that, especially in the absence of coordinated federal policies, state-level

clean energy funds can collectively become an important driver of national economic growth, if the CEF's re-orient themselves from a project focus to broader economic development objectives, linked and coordinated with other agencies and stakeholders in the clean energy industry.

LINKS:

Renewable Energy: FIT for Cities Fact Sheet is at the Pembina Institute website at:
<http://www.pembina.org/pub/2133>; *CLEAN Cities: A municipal financing option for supporting local renewable energy* is at:
<http://www.pembina.org/pub/2306>

Leveraging State Clean Energy Funds for Economic Development was released by the Brookings Institute at:

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2012/0111_states_energy_funds/0111_states_energy_funds.pdf

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Clean Energy Jobs in Obama's "Built to Last" Economic Policy

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by **elizabethperry493**

In a follow-up to U.S. President Obama's 2012 State of the Union address on January 24th, the White House released an economic statement which includes a section on creating clean energy jobs. "The President called on Congress to build on our success in positioning America to be the world's leading manufacturer in high-tech batteries and reiterated his call for action on clean energy tax credits and a national goal of moving toward clean sources of electricity by setting a standard for utility companies, so that by 2035, 80% of the nation's electricity will come from clean sources, including renewable energy sources like wind, solar, biomass, hydropower, nuclear power, efficient natural gas, and clean coal. Because Congress has not yet acted on this and other key steps to achieve a clean energy economy, the President announced that the Department of the Navy will make the largest renewable energy purchase in history – one gigawatt. In addition, the President is directing the Department of Interior to permit 10 gigawatts of renewables projects by the end of the year, enough to power three million homes."

LINKS:

Blueprint for an America Built to Last economic statement at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/blueprint_for_an_america_built_to_last.pdf

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Sustainable Corporations Ranking Released to Coincide with the World Economic Forum

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by **elizabethperry493**

The Global 100 claims to be “the most extensive data-driven corporate sustainability assessment in existence”. Launched in 2005 by Toronto-based media company Corporate Knights, this annual clean capitalism ranking is announced each year during the World Economic Forum in Davos. Companies from around the world are ranked according to energy productivity, waste management, water use, CO2 emissions, and a “Clean Capitalism Paylink”, which recognizes companies that link the remuneration of senior executives with the achievement of clean capitalism goals or targets. Six Canadian companies were listed in the world’s top 100 sustainable companies for 2012: Suncor Energy (ranked 48th); Enbridge (71st); Encana (76th); Nexen (89th); Sun Life Financial (91); and Royal Bank of Canada (95th).
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Also at the Davos World Economic Forum: Labour’s Demands

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) put forward its 5 principles for world economic recovery: Job creation, Social protection, sustainable demand and decent work, Financial regulation, Fair and progressive taxation, and Climate action. Its climate change goals include reducing emissions of industrialised countries by 25-40% by 2020, implementing a green climate fund, and ensuring a just transition for workers and communities.

LINKS:

Global 100 press release, January 25, 2012 is at the Corporate Knights website at:
http://www.corporateknights.ca/sites/default/files/Global100Release_Final_Jan25%281%29.pdf

For details on the research and methodology of the rankings, as well as current and past lists of companies, go to:
<http://global100.org/index.php>

Labour’s five demands for jobs, growth and equity is at:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/l20.pdf>

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Wind Turbines and Rural Ontario

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

While reaffirming its support of Ontario’s Green Energy Act, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture on January 20 released a new position statement, calling on the Ontario government to suspend industrial wind turbine development. The OFA states that the issue is seriously polarizing rural communities and preoccupying the rural agenda. This controversy comes as a new wind energy installation built by the CAW at its Family Education facility at Port Elgin, Ontario is about to become fully operational. A letter from CAW President Ken Lewenza to the local Member of Parliament makes clear that the union has encountered local opposition to its clean energy initiative. Read the OFA Position statement on Industrial Wind Turbines at:

<http://www.ofa.on.ca/uploads/userfiles/files/ofa%20position%20statement%20on%20industrial%20wind%20turbines.pdf>
CAW Clean Wind Energy website at: <http://www.caw.ca/en/10744.htm> and the letter from President Ken Lewenza to MP

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Four Scenarios for the Canadian Economy, Environment, and Competitiveness in 2025

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Policy Horizons Canada has published a thought piece based on the key question: "What are the federal policy implications of increasing interest in reconciling economic growth, environmental sustainability and prosperity?". Factors considered were environmental pressures, consumer values, population growth, technological change, and supply and demand of natural resources. The four scenarios developed and explained in an appendix are: 1) Muddling through 2) Gradual progress 3) Slow decline, and 4) Transformation. *Leading the Pack or Lagging Behind: A Foresight Study on Environmental Sustainability and Competitiveness* is available at: http://www.horizons.gc.ca/doclib/2011-0092_eng.pdf.

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U.K. Unions and Local Governments can Contribute to Job Growth

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At a Trades Union Congress conference in the U.K. in January, *The New Green Team* was released. Researched and written by the Association for Public Services Excellence (APSE) for UNISON, the report was based on extensive interviews with local authorities. The research found "there is potential for huge expansion in new jobs and skills include Green Finance, Green Law, Architecture, Research and Development, Engineering, Assembly Technicians, Installation Technicians, Carpentry, Plumbing and Repair and Maintenance jobs". The document is available at: <http://www.apse.org.uk/page-flips/2011/the-new-green-team/index.html>.

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UK Publishes Landmark Climate Change Risk Assessment

Posted on **February 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA), released on January 25, 2012, is a 1,000 page document examining over 700 potential impacts of climate change in a UK context. Detailed analysis was undertaken for over 100 of these impacts across 11 key sectors. The report identifies the huge economic risks that will result from climate impacts, including spiraling insurance costs and increasing difficulty in obtaining mortgages as flood risk increases. The report cites tourism as one of the UK sectors likely to benefit, but warns that "the threats outweigh the opportunities". The Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) and supporting documents are available at the website of the U.K. Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/government/risk-assessment/>

Job Forecasts for Renewable Energy in Ontario

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Review of Ontario's Feed-in-Tariff program concluded its feedback phase on December 14, 2011. A joint submission to the Review by the Green Energy Act Alliance and Shine Ontario argues that the existing target of 13% of energy consumption from new renewables is too low to sustain job creation, and therefore proposes a target of 26% by 2018. This, it is claimed, would create over 300,000 full-time person-years of employment in manufacturing, development and construction and operational jobs. The report provides details about its job creation modeling for three renewable categories: 1) solar PV, 2) wind, and 3) biomass, biogas and hydro. The forecasts rely on the Jobs and Economic Development Impact (JEDI) tools developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Berkeley, California, as well as 2011 analysis by ClearSky Advisors and a 2010 report by Navigant Consulting for SkyPower.

Shine Ontario is a new Ontario provincial solar industry and professional association composed of independent professionals, leading utility-scale solar and commercial rooftop solar project developers, photovoltaic module manufacturers, engineering construction firms and leading environmental organizations throughout Ontario.

LINKS:

Ontario Government FIT Energy Review website at:

<http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/en/fit-and-microfit-program/2-year-fit-review/>

Green Energy Act Alliance and SHINE Ontario Submission is at:

http://environmentaldefence.ca/sites/default/files/report_files/FIT.Review_Updated.pdf

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Professional Associations have a Role to Play in Climate Change

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report published by West Coast Environmental Law starts from the position that climate change is a cross-cutting issue that affects advice and decision-making in many different professions, including architects and engineers, professional foresters, biologists, insurance professionals, accountants, and city planners. The report calls for an enhanced role for professional associations using the existing tools, such as codes of conduct and ethics, standards of practice, requirements for continuing professional development, and policy statements. In one example, the author suggests a statement of ethical responsibility to "act in the public interest (including promoting sustainability); not speak beyond one's expertise or competence; not make misleading statements or falsify data; and act with due diligence". The report describes exemplary climate change initiatives underway by such groups as the Canadian Institute of Planners, Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEG BC), and Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI).

LINKS:

Professionals and Climate Change: How professional associations can get serious about global warming, written by Andrew Gage and published by West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL), a British Columbia “non-profit group of environmental law strategists and analysts dedicated to safeguarding the environment through law”. Available at: http://wcel.org/sites/default/files/publications/Professionals%20and%20Climate%20Change_0.pdf

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Impact Analysis of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in the U.S. Northeast

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In 2009, ten Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states began the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the first market-based program in the U.S. to reduce CO2 emissions from power plants. In a report released in mid-November, 2011, researchers found that the net effect of the first three years of RGGI has been the creation of 16,000 new “job years”, with each of the ten states showing net job additions. Jobs related to RGGI include engineers who perform efficiency audits; workers who install energy efficiency measures in commercial buildings; staff performing teacher training on energy issues; and workers in state-funded programs that might have been cut had a state not used RGGI funds to close budget gaps.

The paper is also an overview of this innovative program. Its unique approach is to “follow the money”, from the auction, where power plant owners spent roughly \$912 million to buy CO2 allowances, to the state level where virtually all the \$912 million in allowance proceeds were disbursed back into the economy in diverse ways such as energy efficiency measures, community-based renewable power projects, assistance to low income customers to help pay their electricity bills, education and job training programs, and even contributions to a state’s general fund. Consumers now pay regional electricity rates that reflect a price on CO2 emissions, and emissions have been reduced because of the RGGI (as well as the economic recession).

LINKS:

The Economic Impacts of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on Ten Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States: Review of the use of RGGI auction proceeds from the first three-year compliance period by Paul J. Hibbard, Susan F. Tierney, Andrea M. Okie, & Pavel G. Darling published by the Analysis Group at:

http://www.analysisgroup.com/uploadedFiles/Publishing/Articles/Economic_Impact_RGGI_Report.pdf

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What is the Role of ILO in Climate Change Adaptation?

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In early December, the International Labour Organization (ILO) released a working paper jointly produced by ILO's Employment Intensive Investment Programme and the Green Jobs Programme. *Towards an ILO Approach to Climate Change Adaptation* explores the implications of climate change, its impacts on the world of work, and the role to be played by the ILO. This report is a detailed description of the relevant ongoing work, including the Decent Work Agenda, Green Jobs Programme and Skills for Green Jobs. It also discusses future strategies and priorities for the ILO and identifies three clusters which can serve as a basis for the integration of initiatives: 1) Local resource-based infrastructure, Social Protection, Income and Local Development, 2) Re-skilling, Social Protection and Active Labour Market Policies, and 3) Disaster Risk Reduction and Access to a Range of Financial Services.

LINKS:

Towards an ILO Approach to Climate Change Adaptation. Available at:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/—emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_169569.pdf

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International Study of Biodiversity and Employment

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A report to the European Commission considers the nature and number of jobs linked to biodiversity. Direct jobs are those which manage and conserve protected areas, or in biodiversity sustained sectors, such as in fisheries, forestry and agriculture. In ecosystem services, such as water provision and purification, people are employed in water management and related industries. The number of jobs attributed to biodiversity and ecosystem services is significant both in the EU and developing countries, although there is a difference in distribution and skill-levels. Ecoservice jobs represent 35% of jobs in developing countries compared to 7% in the EU. Also, in the EU, biodiversity-related employment is often highly skilled, whereas in developing countries, it tends to be low skilled and poorly paid, particularly in primary industries such as agriculture and fishing.

LINKS:

The Social Dimension of Biodiversity Policy: Final Report for the European Commission, (231 pages) is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enveco/biodiversity/pdf/Social%20Dimension%20of%20Biodiversity.pdf>

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COP17, the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 17th United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Durban, South Africa in November/ December. Official documents from the conference are posted at the United Nations UNFCCC website at: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>; for analysis and summaries of the conference, try the detailed and highly-readable report, *On the Road Again*, from the Wuppertal Institute at: www.wupperinst.org/en/cop, or a news report from The Guardian (UK) at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jan/05/business-must-get-ready-for-low-carbon-world>. Environment Canada's

position statements for the COP 17 are at: <http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=E18C8F2D-1>, and for the record, Canada's statement of withdrawal from Kyoto on December 12 is at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=FFE36B6D-1&news=6B04014B-54FC-4739-B22C-F9CD9A840800>

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Quebec Cap and Trade Begins

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Starting on January 1, 2012, Quebec begins a one-year transition period to help large carbon emitters in the province adjust to its cap and trade policy. The full program will start in 2013 and will require companies which produce more than 25,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year (about 75 companies, mainly aluminum and mining) to reduce their carbon footprint or buy clean-air credits at \$10 per tonne of greenhouse gases. A Globe and Mail article is at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/quebec-goes-it-alone-with-cap-and-trade-climate-plan/article2273374/>

The text of the draft regulation is available in the Quebec Official Gazette in English at: http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/changements/plan_action/projet-reglement/droits-emission-ges_an.pdf

and in French at:

<http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/changements/carbone/reglementPEDE.pdf>

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B.C. Business Leaders Support Carbon Tax

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An open letter to the citizens of British Columbia was released on December 19, 2011 and signed by 85 British Columbia business leaders. Citing the urgency highlighted in the recent report by the National Round Table on Energy and the Environment, as well as the example of California and Australia, the letter endorses the current B.C. carbon tax and calls on the government "to commit to a schedule of continuing increases after July 2012" ...to "help us secure a better future, while creating new, high-paying jobs today, in non-polluting industries". The open letter was coordinated by Tides Canada, The Pembina Institute, and the David Suzuki Foundation, where the full text of the letter is posted at: http://www.davidsuzuki.org/media/news/downloads/2011/Carbon_Tax_Open_Letter.pdf

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Energy Efficiency in the U.K.

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Britain has launched a Green Deal consultation to run from December 23, 2011 to January 18, 2012. In a speech in Parliament as part of his annual Energy Statement, the Minister of the Department of Energy and Climate Change discussed the Green Deal, which allows individuals and businesses to make energy efficiency improvements to their buildings at no upfront cost, allowing repayment in installments through the ongoing electricity bill. The Minister predicts the measures would not only protect property owners from rising energy bills but also support at least 65,000 insulation and

construction jobs by 2015. See a summary at:

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/green_deal/green_deal.aspx

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Change at the Pew Center

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A press release on November 9, 2011 announced that the Pew Center on Global Climate Change has been succeeded by C2ES, the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. Funding for the Centre has been shifted from the Pew Charitable Trusts to key sponsors Entergy, HP and Shell, as well as major contributions from the Alcoa Foundation, Bank of America, GE, The Energy Foundation, Duke Energy, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. C2ES describes itself as “an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization working to advance strong policy and action to address the twin challenges of energy and climate change”. The new website is at: <http://www.c2es.org/>; the press release about the name change and new foci of activity is at: <http://www.c2es.org/press-center/press-releases/C2ES-launch-announcement>

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Climate Change and Migration

Posted on **January 12, 2012** by [elizabethperry493](#)

COST, the intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology, has the goal of coordinating and reducing fragmentation of nationally-funded research on a European level. COST has announced a new “action” which will bring together established and early-stage social scientists to study climate change and migration across three interrelated fields of investigation: knowledge; law and policy; and theory. An overview of the new initiative, to be chaired by Dr. Andrew Baldwin, Department of Geography, Durham University, U.K., is available at: http://www.cost.esf.org/domains_actions/isch/Actions/IS1101

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A Call for Policy Changes to Create More and Better Jobs in Canada’s Energy Sector

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a study released on October 27, John Calvert and Marjorie Griffin Cohen of Simon Fraser University in Vancouver provide a detailed discussion of employment trends in Canada’s energy sector by gender, age, types of occupations, and level of trade union membership. The study finds that, in virtually all areas of energy development, there are skill shortages and the need for additional training. These shortages cover a wide range of different occupations, from engineers and architects to skilled trades, equipment operators, technicians and labourers. Although the renewable energy industry is more labour-intensive than the traditional energy sector, the authors consider its job creation potential as small, given the current policy environment. For example, they characterize job creation in green electricity projects as creating only a small number of permanent jobs, with most job creation in short-term construction jobs, usually in non-union projects. This, they say, is primarily because most new green electricity projects are being built by the private sector. In examining the role of labour unions in policy development, the authors find that their role to date has been largely restricted to dealing with training and other aspects of workforce development. Calvert and Cohen call for a new, comprehensive energy strategy

which gives priority to the urgent need to address global warming, and which incorporates a green employment component.

LINKS:

Climate Change and the Canadian Energy Sector: Implications for Labour and Trade Unions is available at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives website at:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/climate-change-and-canadian-energy-sector>

For an earlier analysis by Calvert and Cohen, see their chapter (pages 48- 80) in *What Do We Know? What Do We Need to Know? The State of Research On Work, Employment and Climate Change in Canada* (Final Report)(2010) at the W3 website at:

<http://warming.apps01.yorku.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/What-do-we-know-full-report-final.pdf>

See commentary on the report on Keith Brooks' blog at BlueGreen Canada at: <http://www.bluegreencanada.ca/node/117>

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Canadian Marine Renewable Energy Industry Sets out its Vision and Strategy; Nova Scotia Develops Policies and Legislation

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Based on the discussions in three workshops involving more than 100 experts from government, industry and academia, a national vision and strategy for marine energy has been released at the end of October. *Charting the Course: Canada's Marine Renewable Energy Technology Roadmap* sets a vision of becoming a world leader in marine energy, with a generating capacity, installed by Canadian industry, of 75 MW by 2016, 250 MW by 2020 and 2,000 MW by 2030, with an annual economic value of \$2 billion. Regarding the skills demands of the industry, the report states that the marine renewable energy sector is applying general electrical engineering, ocean engineering, and marine operations expertise from other sectors. "As the sector grows, it is unclear whether future needs can be met through the training and expertise developed in other sectors alone. Building a marine renewable energy-specific knowledge base that addresses the specialized needs of the sector can focus efforts to establish a Canadian advantage". Specifically, the document calls for action to set up trades and technology programs in all aspects of marine renewable energy at community colleges between 2011 and 2016, while developing university programs in the same time frame. The goal is that by 2020-2030, 70% of skilled workers in the industry will come from Canadian community college and university programs.

In a report released to the public on September 21, Robert Fournier of Dalhousie University provided the government of Nova Scotia with a compilation of the views from public consultations on offshore wind and tidal energy in the province, and has made 27 recommendations for the future of marine renewable energy policy and legislation. In discussing the advantages of Nova Scotia for marine energy production, Fournier points out that in addition to the obvious natural advantage of the strong tides of the Bay of Fundy, "The Halifax-Dartmouth area is widely acknowledged to be among the top 5-6 global centers of marine-related research. These human skills are an important resource contributing to all facets of a fledgling marine renewable energy initiative". The government has already accepted Dr. Fournier's recommendations and is in the process of developing a Marine Renewable Energy Strategy and new legislation. This swift action is in line with

Nova Scotia's Renewable Electricity Plan and regulations, which lay out a legal requirement to achieve 25% renewable electricity supply by 2015, using only environmentally-friendly sources such as hydro, wind, solar, biomass, and tidal.

LINKS:

Charting the Course: Canada's Marine Renewable Energy Technology Roadmap is available at:

http://www.oreg.ca/web_documents/mre_roadmap_e.pdf

The Fournier Report, *Marine Renewable Energy Legislation: A Consultative Process. Report to the Government of Nova Scotia* is available in English at:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy/resources/spps/public-consultation/marine-renewable-energy/Fournier-Report-English.pdf>

In French at:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy/resources/spps/public-consultation/marine-renewable-energy/Fournier-Report-French.pdf>

For a library of international documents concerning marine energy, please visit the Ocean Renewable Energy Group library at:

http://www.oreg.ca/index.php?p=1_50

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Wind Energy Plan for B.C.

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

WindVision 2025: A Strategy for British Columbia, was released by the Canadian Wind Energy Association at its annual conference in Vancouver on October 4th. CanWEA believes that the share of wind energy as a percentage of total generation in the province can increase from the current 250 MW (megawatts) – or 1 % of electricity demand – to 5,250 MW, or 17 %, by the year 2025. If this is achieved, the Association projects over \$3.7 billion of direct benefits to BC communities during the construction phase alone, generating an estimated 22,500 person-years of employment during construction, and 7,500 person-years of employment over the 20 to 25 year lifespan of the wind energy projects.

LINKS:

Windvision 2025 is available at:

<http://www.canwea.ca/pdf/canwea-bc-windvision-web-e.pdf>

The accompanying review of the plan by consultants ClearSky Advisors is available at: <http://www.canwea.ca/pdf/clearsky-review-windvision-bc.pdf>

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Greenbuild Conference in Toronto: October 4-7, 2011

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

For the first time ever, the annual Greenbuild International Conference was held outside the United States, in Toronto from October 4 to 7. Greenbuild, launched in 2002 and organized by the U.S. Green Building Council, attracts a diverse international group of building industry representatives, architects, and product manufacturers. This year, the Green Jobs Summit session of the conference highlighted several keynote speakers including Ken Neumann, National Director of Canada for the United Steelworkers. A new study by McGraw Hill Construction was presented, surveying design and construction professionals and trades workers in the U.S.. It defined "green jobs" as those involving more than 50% of work on green projects or designing and installing uniquely green systems. It found that skilled trades such as carpenters, HVAC/boilermakers, electricians, concrete/cement masons, and plumbers are expected to see the greatest growth in green jobs; 15% of these trades today are green jobs, and this is expected to increase to 25% in three years. 30% of green job workers said that they needed major training when they started, and most report that formal education and training programs will continue to be needed.

The Canadian Construction Sector Council (CSC) reported results of their own survey in March 2011, regarding trends, training and skills levels in Canada's green building industry. The CSC's annual *Construction Looking Forward* survey for 2011 was released in April 2011 and forecasts offer a detailed nine-year scenario of workforce supply and demand by trade, province and region.

LINKS:

Press release of the McGraw Hill Construction Green Jobs report is at:

<http://www.construction.com/AboutUs/2011/1004pr.asp>

Canada's Construction Sector Council (March 2011) *Green Sustainable Building in Canada: Implications for the commercial and residential construction workforce* can be ordered at no cost from:

<http://www.csc-ca.org/en/products/green-sustainable-building-canada-implications-commercial-and-residential-construction-work>

Construction Looking Forward 2011 National and Provincial reports are available at: <http://www.csc-ca.org/en/products/2011-construction-looking-forward-forecast-reports-and-highlights>

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New CAW Policy on Transportation puts Sustainability as a Priority

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the first ever CAW Transportation Conference, held from September 23-25, the Canadian Auto Workers discussed a draft version of a new policy for transportation in Canada. The starting point of the policy is that “transportation must change”, because of three forces: climate change, peak oil, and globalization. The union states its goal: “to create a made-in Canada transportation system that is the most efficient, accessible, green and safe in the world”, based on four overarching principles: the transportation system must be environmentally sustainable, recognized as a public good, made-in-Canada, and a place for good jobs. For each of the transportation sectors (road, rail, air, marine) the paper outlines issues and proposes very specific solutions and policy goals. The document and an accompanying action plan will be discussed and voted on by the National Executive Board, and CAW and Quebec Councils.

LINKS:

We make it move: a vision for sustainable transportation at:

<http://www.caw.ca/en/10639.htm>

Press release about the Transportation conference at:

<http://www.caw.ca/en/10643.htm>

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How do International Labour Unions Conceptualize the Jobs vs. Environment Debate?

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Authors Nora Rathzel (Dept. of Sociology, Umeå University, Sweden) and David Uzzell (Department of Psychology, University of Surrey, England) have published an academic article which focuses on the ways in which international trade unions are conceptualising the relationship between jobs and the environment. Between March 2009 and December 2010, 35 interviews were conducted with union officials of national unions in Brazil, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and the UK, as well as with international federation officers of these unions in Brussels, Geneva, London and Paris. On the basis of these interviews, the authors present and discuss four discourses of trade union engagement with climate change: ‘technological fix’, ‘social transformation’, ‘mutual interests’ and ‘social movement’, in the context of the different international histories and models of trade unionism.

LINKS:

Rathzel, Nora & Uzzell, David. 2011. “Trade unions and climate change: The jobs versus environment dilemma”. *Global Environmental Change* 21 (4): 1215-1223. Available at: http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/7307/2/Microsoft Word – GEC_Jobs-Environment.pdf

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Ontario Government Launches Review of Feed-in Tariffs

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

All Ontarians are invited to participate in the review of the FIT Program, either by answering an online survey or making a written submission. The consultation period launched on October 31 and will run until December 14, 2011. The scope of the review includes whether FIT pricing maintains a balance between the interests of ratepayers and the continued encouragement of clean energy investment in Ontario, as well as “an assessment of government policies and tools to ensure that Ontario remains a center of manufacturing excellence and clean energy job creation”. More details and the online survey are available at the Feed-in Tariff Review website at:

<http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/en/fit-and-microfit-program/2-year-fit-review/>

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Canada’s Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainability Releases Audit Report

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The report discusses the federal government’s assessment of cumulative environmental effects of oil sands projects in northern Alberta, and its climate change plans under the *Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act*. Among the findings: “decisions about oil sands projects have been based on incomplete, poor, or non-existent environmental information that has, in turn, led to poorly informed decisions”. Regarding the climate change plans under the Kyoto Protocol, the Commissioner notes that the plans do not report the total amount of government funding, and that financial information for the individual measures is not reported consistently (and even that some of the measures do not include any financial information). In this report, the auditors determine the funding allocations associated with each measure in the plans, and conclude that the federal government allocated over \$9.2 billion to implement its climate change plans.

See the Audit report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development at: http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/par_cesd_201110_00_e.pdf (English) and http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/par_cesd_201110_00_f.pdf (French)

The reaction of the Pembina Institute is at: <http://www.pembina.org/media-release/2276>

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Economic Impact on Canada of GHG Emissions, and a Closer Look at the Forest Industry, Coastal Areas, and Human Health

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

At the end of September, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy released the 4th report in its Climate Prosperity series. *Paying the Price: the Economic Impacts of Climate Change for Canada* warns that unless global greenhouse gas emissions are reduced and Canada invests in adaptation, the economic impacts of climate change on

Canada could reach \$5 billion per year by 2020, and between \$21 and \$43 billion per year by 2050. Because climate change impacts will differ by sector and by region, the report also considers adaptation strategies and provides estimates of economic impacts and cost-effectiveness of those strategies for three representative areas: timber supply, coastal areas and human health. Economic impacts are measured in changes to GDP, but the report does not specifically measure impacts on employment. Read *Paying the price: the economic impacts of climate change for Canada* (168 pages) at:

<http://nrtee-trnee.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/paying-the-price.pdf> (English) and <http://nrtee-trnee.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/prix-a-payer.pdf> (French)

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New Skills Training for Wind, Wave and Tidal Energy Jobs in the U.K.

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

RenewableUK, a renewable energy trade association, announced the creation of the Renewables Training Network (RTN) on October 6, 2011. With £600,000 support from private industry and matching investment from the UK government, the training network “will address critical skills shortages within the renewable energy industry”, and according to the press release, the network is “paving the way for over 77,500 new jobs in UK wind, wave and tidal industries and supply chain within next ten years”. This investment follows on a survey, *Working for a Green Britain: Future Employment and Skills in the UK Wind & Marine Industries* published by the association in July 2011. See the Training Network press release at:

<http://www.bwea.com/media/news/articles/pr20111006-1.html>

see *Working for a Green Britain* at:

http://www.bwea.com/pdf/publications/Working_for_Green_Britain_V2.pdf

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CAW Launches New Course Re Good Jobs in a Green Economy

Posted on **November 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Twenty-five CAW rank-and-file activists attended the first pilot session of a new course that ran from October 3-6. The program included keynote speakers Tony Clarke, Executive Director of the Polaris Institute and Gideon Forman, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. The course provided an overview of some of the key environmental issues, including climate change, food security and water issues, and discussed the transformation needed to fight for a green economy, examined the impacts on workers and the role that unions can play, and enabled participants to build activist links within the CAW and with allied environmental organizations.

See the press release at:

<http://www.caw.ca/en/10691.htm>

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Forthcoming ILO Study on Skills for Green Jobs

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Watch for an important new report, *Skills for Green Jobs*, to be released by the ILO Green Jobs Programme on October 15, 2011. It will examine the experiences of 21 developed and developing countries, including Australia, Brazil, China, India, South Korea, South Africa, France, Germany, Spain, U.K., and the U.S. Canada is not profiled. This comprehensive work identifies the sectors most affected by the shift to green restructuring, the changing and emerging occupations in major economic sectors, as well as gender implications. It concludes that, while a few new occupations will emerge in the transition to a greener economy, "massive change" will occur in existing occupations, and at all levels of occupations, across all sectors. Of note for further research: discussions of "Measuring and classifying green jobs and related skills", and "Identifying skill needs: Evaluating existing systems and tools". The report concludes that successful transition to a greener economy will require efficient re-training and skills upgrading, especially for the disadvantaged in the labour market. A key message is the need for coherence and coordination of environmental and skills policies.

LINKS:

Summary and links to *Skills for Green Jobs* are available at:

http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/forthcoming-publications/WCMS_159585/lang-en/index.htm. This webpage also provides links to detailed country study reports for each of the 21 countries summarized in *Skills for Green Jobs*.

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A Plan and Green Jobs in a Greener Sector: British Columbia's Forestry Industry

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A paper released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in August 2011 envisions a more carbon-focused, "green" approach to the forests and forest industry of B.C. Author Ben Parfitt covers a lot of ground in this document, including the prospects for exports to China; the loss of wood processing jobs to other provinces; the need for a workable carbon tax accounting system for forestry. Of the employment benefits of a greener approach, the report estimates 2,630 new jobs from processing logs into solid wood, pulp and paper and bio-energy products in B.C. rather than out of province, 2,400 forest industry jobs from processing usable wood waste left behind at logging operations, 5,200 seasonal jobs in tree-planting and associated tree nursery work, as well as eventually 10,100 jobs as a result of increased higher value manufacturing. He provides detailed policy recommendations which centre on: greater secondary forest products manufacturing; maximum use of forest industry wood waste in a range of bio-products; greater forest conservation (with carbon credits acting as an incentive to achieving such conservation); and more effective reforestation efforts. As he has done before, Parfitt calls for a restoration of staff levels in the provincial Forest Service.

LINKS:

"Making the Case for a Carbon Focus and Green Jobs in BC's Forest Industry" by Ben Parfitt is available from a link at:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/greenforests>

BC forestry missing out on great green job potential at:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/bc-forestry-missing-out-great-green-job-potential> is a conversational summary of the report by the author.

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Solar Industry Shows Superior Job Growth

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With most eyes on the continuing story of the bankruptcy of U.S. solar manufacturer Solyndra, the Solar Foundation of the U.S. has pre-released preliminary data from the National Solar Jobs Census 2011, ahead of the full release scheduled for October 19, 2011. Census 2011 measured employment growth in the U.S. from August 2010 to August 2011 and found that solar businesses added 6,735 new workers since August 2010, representing a 6.8 percent growth rate. When measured against overall economic data from Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI), this rate of job growth outpaced the overall U.S. economy (which grew by 0.7 percent) and fossil fuel electric generation (which lost 2 percent of its workforce).

Notably, Solyndra announced layoffs of approximately 1,100 full-time and temporary employees on August 31st. However, if the New York Times coverage is any indication, the real story of Solyndra is less about the viability of the solar power industry and more about political interference and lobbying in Washington.

A July 2011 report from the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) provides good news for the solar energy industry. The 10th edition of the PV Status Report provides data on the solar industry in the EU, India, China, South Korea, Taiwan, and the U.S. It shows that global production of photovoltaics more than doubled in 2010, making it one of the world's fastest growing industries. The EU has the most PV installations, providing more than 70% of the total worldwide solar PV electricity generation capacity as of the end of 2010. China has become the major manufacturing centre for solar cells and modules followed by Taiwan, Germany and Japan.

The most recent survey of the Canadian solar photovoltaic sector comes from the Canadian Solar Industry Association, in a report they commissioned from Clear Sky Advisors Inc. and released in July 2011. The Economic Impacts of the Solar Photovoltaic Sector in Ontario 2008-2018 states that the solar PV sector in Ontario provides 8,200 full-time jobs in 2011, and is projected to create over 74,000 jobs by 2018. As the report acknowledges in its scenarios, these projections depend on political support for long range energy policies.

LINKS:

National Solar Jobs Census 2011 press release is at:

<http://www.thesolarfoundation.org/sites/thesolarfoundation.org/files/2011%20Jobs%20Census%20Topline%20Release%20FINAL.pdf>

The Solar Foundation homepage is at:

<http://thesolarfoundation.org/home/rich-history-bright-future>

Solyndra company press release of August 31 2011 is at:

<http://www.solyndra.com/news>

"In Rush To Assist A Solar Company, U.S. Missed Signs", from the New York Times, September 23, 2011 at:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/23/us/politics/in-rush-to-assist-solyndra-united-states-missed-warning-signs.html?_r=1&hp

PV Status Report by the European Commission Joint Research Centre is available at:

<http://re.jrc.ec.europa.eu/refsys/pdf/PV%20reports/PV%20Status%20Report%202011.pdf>

The Economic Impacts of the Solar Photovoltaic Sector in Ontario 2008-2018 is available at:

http://www.cansia.ca/sites/default/files/economic_impacts_of_the_solar_photovoltaic_sector_in_ontario_2008-2018_july_26_0.pdf

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Jobs in the U.S. Recreational Tourism Sector

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

This report from the Center for American Progress reviews recent research in the United States on the direct, indirect, and induced jobs created by the conservation economy-recreational tourism, renewable energy, land restoration, and sustainable forestry and land management. The report estimates the size of the current job market in each of these sectors, with the disclaimer that these numbers are likely underestimated because of a scarcity of research on jobs in restoration and forest management. The size of this sector is impressive, even if it is underestimated: recreation and tourism on Department of the Interior Lands is estimated at 388,000 jobs, with an additional 224,000 jobs on Forest Service Lands. The report makes 15 policy recommendations to encourage further job creation, including a call for increased effort to track the number of jobs and the economic impact of land conservation on rural communities.

LINKS:

The Jobs case for Conservation: Creating opportunity through stewardship of America's public lands by Jessica Goad, Christy Goldfuss, and Tom Kenworthy is available at the Center for American Progress website at:

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/09/pdf/public_lands.pdf

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Workplace Education Regarding Climate Change for B.C. Public Sector Workers

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On August 29th, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) at the University of Victoria launched an online climate change course aimed at public sector workers, most specifically policy analysts in British Columbia. "Climate Insights 101" is the first of four planned modules; it uses a combination of animation, interviews and click-thrus to educate about the basic concepts and findings of climate science research. Module two (regional climate change and its impacts), module three (adaptation) and module four (mitigation) are currently in production and are planned for release next year. In launching this workplace education initiative, the provincial Minister of the Environment, Terry Lake, is quoted as saying that "building a solid knowledge base within the province's civil service is essential because climate change will impact not only the environment but also the economy, the way we live, how we use our land and water, and what our future agricultural options are".

LINKS:

Press release describing the initiative at:

http://www.pics.uvic.ca/assets/pdf/news/MR_Short_Courses_29August2011.pdf

Climate Insights 101 course at: <http://www.pics.uvic.ca/insights/>

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Keystone Pipeline Protest Includes a Concern for Lost Jobs

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Dave Coles, President of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, was among those arrested in Ottawa on September 26th for protesting against the Keystone XL pipeline from Alberta to Texas. The union has consistently opposed construction of the pipeline, on the grounds of environmental damage, energy security for Canada, and because of the loss of potential oil refining jobs in Canada. The CEP bases its arguments on a 2006 study by Informetrica, which estimated that the increased export of Alberta bitumen will cost the Canadian economy 40,500 potential direct and indirect jobs. CEP is calling on the federal government to reverse the decision to allow construction of the Keystone pipeline.

LINKS:

Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union Backgrounder on Keystone XL at: <http://www.cep.ca/docs/en/110922-keystone-xl-backgrounder-e.pdf>

National Energy Board Reasons for Decision regarding the Keystone Pipeline, case OH-1-207, issued in September 2007. Note chapter 9, which summarizes the socio-economic arguments made by CEP, the Alberta Federation of Labour, Parkland Institute and Dr. Laxer at: https://www.neb.gc.ca/liveling/liveling.exe/fetch/2000/90464/90552/418396/446070/478070/477791/A1A4H2_-_Reasons_for_Decision_OH-1-2007.pdf?nodeid=477856&vernum=0 (English)

https://www.neb.gc.ca/ll-eng/livelink.exe/fetch/2000/90464/90552/418396/446070/478070/477791/A1A4H3_-_Motifs_de_d%E9cision_OH-1-2007.pdf?nodeid=477859&vernum=0 (français)

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Fife Wind Farm to Fund Apprenticeship Training

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Carbon Free, a wind farm developer, has partnered with Adam Smith College in Fife, Scotland in a unique community benefit scheme. According to the agreement, the revenues from the electricity generated will support a minimum of 5 apprenticeships per year over 25 years, to provide employment opportunities to people living near the wind farm, and to address skills shortages in the engineering sector. The 8-turbine Earlseat wind farm was approved by local councils on September 20th and is expected to be built by the end of 2013. For a fuller news report go to:

<http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2110580/fife-wind-farm-hails-green-apprenticeship>

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Website to Monitor Country Actions on Mitigation

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 9, 2011, the Open Climate Network website was launched as a platform for updates and analysis on country actions on climate mitigation and the provision of climate finance. The website provides information on the latest policy developments and results of Open Climate Network analysis. Participant countries include: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union nations, India, Japan, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, and the United States. Clare Demerse of Canada's Pembina Institute is one of the five Network Experts. Visit the network at:

<http://insights.wri.org/open-climate-network/2011/09/open-climate-network-launches-website-track-national-progress-climate-c>

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Feed-in Tariff Programs and the WTO

Posted on **October 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new paper released by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) examines the local content regulations of the FIT programmes implemented by Ontario, Germany and the United Kingdom in the context of the World Trade Organization subsidy rules. The Ontario cases are the first WTO disputes related to climate change, and are being watched for their ramifications for all future climate-change related trade disputes.

LINKS:

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Green Expectations

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Green Expectations, published by the U.K. think tank the Institute for Public Policy Research, reports on a learning exchange in March 2011, when the Institute led a group of community leaders, trade union and NGO representatives to California to meet with politicians, business people, academics and civil society leaders engaged in the emerging green economy. The report draws together case studies and analysis of key literature about green job creation and the quality of green jobs. Three case studies are presented: Community Workforce Agreements (Clean Energy Works, Oregon); Community Mobilisation Initiatives (Green Justice Coalition, Massachusetts), and a joint industry-union training partnership, (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union (IBEW) and the National Electrical Contractors' Association (NECA), California).

The report draws policy implications for the green economy in the U.K., and points out that “the US experience demonstrates how strength emerges from a broad base: strong coalitions are needed between the government, trade unions, employers and environmental and community groups to build a ‘just transition’ to a low-carbon economy, to advocate for greater policy stability and to defend existing policy”.

There are also valuable appendices: Appendix A compiles and summarizes U.S. Green Economy job projections and estimates from 12 major studies; Appendix B describes some important U.S. Green economy organizations: Apollo Alliance, Emerald Cities, Richmond BUILD, Green for All, and the Ella Baker Center Green Jobs campaign. Appendix C presents Green Economy coalitions and organizations in the U.K.: East London Green Jobs Alliance; Global Action Plan; TUC Green Workplaces; Claverhouse Group; Greener Jobs Alliance; Capacity Global's Greener Jobs Programme.

LINKS:

Green Expectations: Lessons from the US Green Jobs Market, published by the Institute for Public Policy Research in the U.K. at: http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2011/07/green-expectations_July2011_7756.pdf

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Detailed Data and Policy Recommendations for the U.S. Clean Economy

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Sizing the Clean Economy, published by the Brookings Institute in July 2011, claims to be “the first study of the U.S. clean economy to provide timely information that is both comprehensive enough in its scope and detailed enough in its categorization to inform national, state, and regional leaders on the dynamics of the U.S. low-carbon and environmental goods and services “super-sector” as they are transpiring in regions and metropolitan areas”. Of the U.S. green economy

between 2003 to 2010, the report finds: Clean economy jobs are predominantly in manufacturing (26%, compared to 9% green jobs in the economy as a whole) and provide more opportunities with better pay for lower-skilled workers. Highly trained innovators-scientists, engineers, and architects-are disproportionately demanded by the clean economy. 64 percent of all current clean economy jobs and 75 percent of its newer jobs created between 2003 to 2010 congregated in the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the United States. The report's discussion and policy recommendations emphasize the need for detailed regional and local market labour market information.

LINKS:

Sizing the Clean Economy: A National and Regional Green Jobs Assessment at:

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/Programs/Metro/clean_economy/0713_clean_economy.pdf

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Modelling the Impact of Clean Energy Innovation

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Google.org, the philanthropic arm of Google Inc., has released an analysis using McKinsey and Company's U.S. Low Carbon Economy model to estimate the potential impact of clean energy innovation on the U.S. energy system and economy by 2030 and 2050. The results compare a "business as usual" approach with other scenarios of aggressive technological innovation and strong government incentives for clean energy. It concludes that strong technological innovation alone could result in over 1.1 million net new jobs by 2030, while improving economic output and reducing emissions.

LINKS:

The Impact of Clean Energy Innovation: Examining the Impact of Clean Energy Innovation on the United States Energy System and Economy at:

http://www.google.org/energyinnovation/The_Impact_of_Clean_Energy_Innovation.pdf

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Education and Competency Standards for Green Occupations in Canada

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

ECO Canada has released the 2011 survey of the state of environmental programs in Canada's post-secondary educational institutions, updating its 2010 report. As of 2006, there was a total of 127,170 enrolments in environmental programs in universities and colleges in Canada, compared to 109,074 in 2001. Measuring enrolment numbers between 2006 and 2008, the report notes a transition in enrolment from colleges to universities, especially in 3 programs: natural resources and conservation, biological and biomedical science, and physical sciences.

In June 2011, the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute and the Environment Careers Organization of Canada (ECO Canada) announced an Environmental Professional in Greenhouse Gas – EP (GHG) – designation. This title is available to professionals who have been working for 5 or more years in the areas of GHG quantification or verification. (A trainee

designation is also available for those with less than 5 years experience). ECO Canada has also released a scoping study for building operators, as a step toward defining and measuring a profession which can help reduce the amount of energy used in buildings in the commercial and institutional sectors.

LINKS:

Post-Secondary Environmental Education in Canada at:

<http://www.eco.ca/pdf/ECO-Secondary-Education-RPT-2011.pdf>

Competencies for GHG Professionals: National Occupational Standards at:

<http://www.eco.ca/pdf/2009-NOS-for-Greehouse-Gas-Professionals.pdf>

Building Operators Scoping Study: 2011 Labour Market Research Study at:

<http://www.eco.ca/pdf/2011-Building-Operator-Scoping-Study.pdf>

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Ontario's Feed-in Tariff Program Moves Closer to Arbitration at the WTO

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On July 20, 2011, the World Trade Organization established a panel to arbitrate the case of "Canada – Certain Measures Affecting the Renewable Energy Generation Sector" (DISPUTE DS412), to determine whether feed-in tariff programme violates WTO law by providing guaranteed long-term pricing for the output of renewable energy generation facilities that source up to 60% of their inputs from Ontario. Although the panel has been established, no members have been appointed yet. All documents are compiled at:

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds412_e.htm

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Quebec Cap and Trade

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On July 6, the government of Quebec tabled regulations for a cap-and-trade system, based on the Western Climate Initiative (WCI) model. A 60-day consultation period is underway. The planned implementation of the system will be January 1, 2012, with only the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon trading required in year one. Read Dale Marshall's remarks from the David Suzuki Foundation website at: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/climate-blog/2011/07/quebec-takes-next-step-towards-a-cap-and-trade-system/>

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Oil Sands Monitoring

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada's Environment Minister released a monitoring plan for the oil sands region on July 21, 2011. Following the 2010 recommendation of an independent Oil Sands Advisory Panel, the new plan includes components for monitoring air quality, biodiversity, and the next phase of water quality monitoring. The federal government and the government of Alberta will implement the plan, according to the Environment Canada press release at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=714D9AAE-1&news=DA1E8CBC-D0A6-4304-A1DD-A9206D0818AB>

See the full plan at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=56D4043B-1&news=7AC1E7E2-81E0-43A7-BE2B-4D3833FD97CE>

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Emissions Standards for Heavy-Duty Trucks in Canada and the U.S.

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On August 9, 2011, Canada's Environment Minister released a consultation document for proposed regulations to limit greenhouse gas emissions and improve fuel efficiency of new on-road heavy-duty vehicles, including full-size pick-up trucks, tractor-trailers, freight, delivery, service, cement, garbage and dump trucks, as well as buses, beginning with the 2014 model year. The proposed regulations will be published in the Canada Gazette, Part 1, in early 2012. At that time, there will be a formal 60-day consultation period. Regulations are scheduled for later in 2012, with an implementation date to be aligned with that of the U.S.

This initiative has been in the works since May 21, 2010, when Canada and the U.S. announced their intentions to proceed with joint North American regulations. On August 9, 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) published the U.S. regulations.

LINKS:

Environment Canada. *Consultation Document for Discussion of the Main Elements of the Proposed Regulations under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 to Limit Greenhouse Gas Emissions from New On-Road Heavy-Duty Vehicles and Engines* at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/lcpe-cepa/default.asp?lang=En&n=E826C69F-1>

United States. Environmental Protection Agency. Regulations and Standards website compiles links to regulations and background information at: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/climate/regulations.htm>

Canadian Trucking Alliance submission re the GHG reduction plan at:
<http://www.cantruck.ca/imispublic/Environment1/AM/ContentManagerNet/ContentDisplay.aspx?Section=Environment1&ContentID=8373>

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Australian Legislation Includes Carbon Pricing

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Australian government released drafts of several bills, including a carbon pricing mechanism, in a Clean Energy Legislative Package on July 28, 2011. See *Securing a Clean Energy Future: the Australian Government's Climate Change Plan*, and especially Chapter 5, Supporting Jobs, at: <http://www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Consolidated-Final.pdf>

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International Renewable Energy Industry

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Renewables 2011: Global Status Report was released in July by the Renewable Energy Global Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21). Since 2005, this annual has benchmarked market and industry trends (including investment flows & national policies) for all renewable energy sectors: solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, hydroelectric. Note the table re:employment in renewables, by sector in Chapter 3. *Renewables 2011* at: http://www.ren21.net/Portals/97/documents/GSR/REN21_GSR2011.pdf

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United Nations 2011 World Economics and Social Survey

Posted on **September 12, 2011** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Great Green Technological Transformation is available at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_current/2011wess.pdf. The report focuses on three themes: transition to renewable sources of energy; promotion of small-holder agriculture and environmentally-intelligent farming technology; and development of new technology to reduce disaster risk to adapt to climate change.

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