

# research snapshot

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## Society Needs to Move Towards Sustainable Energy Systems in Order to Deal with Climate Change

### What is this research about?

Climate change is a key issue for the environmental movement today. However, there are differences within the movement with regards to its main priorities and strategies. For many, the priority is to fight climate change by focusing only on reducing green house gas emissions. However, this approach is risky for both the environmental movement and for society. It will lead to conflict within the environmental movement, and it could lead to larger environmental problems for society. A majority of emissions (81% in Canada) are a result of how we produce and consume energy in society. Making energy systems more sustainable will help solve climate change and reduce a range of other environmental problems.



### What you need to know:

Climate change is at its core an energy problem. However, energy usage is not just an ecological problem. It's a social one as well. Climate change requires us to look at our energy systems more critically and reduce the scale of impact we have on our surroundings. Political parties should also examine our energy systems as a common ground to form more effective climate change policy. The ultimate goal should be to adapt to an energy system that is more sustainable in the long term.

Canada. An energy systems approach could mend tensions in the environmental movement today.

### What did the researcher do?

The researcher looked at the problem with using only emission-reduction plans to manage climate change. Renewable energies were used as an example to demonstrate these problems. She explained the importance of paying attention to energy systems as we respond to climate change. Finally, the researcher looked at conflict over climate change policies in British Columbia,

### What did the researcher find?

The researcher found that renewable energy projects did not always lead to reduced emissions. These projects had to change their focus to sustainability for energy systems. It was not the use of renewable energy sources that was a problem, but the scale of its usage. It affected how they integrated into existing energy

systems. For example, the ways that harvesting renewable energies affects ecosystems must be taken into account. Since renewable energies are less dense than fossil-fuel based sources, more land must be used to develop them. There must be more caution taken to carefully plan land use. Efforts to address climate change are needed to focus on reducing the impact of how society produces and consumes energy. If not, we run the risk of failing to solve climate change or dramatically increasing our environmental impact.

The researcher looked at the political tensions within climate change policy in British Columbia. She found that a focus on energy systems would allow for a better consensus to develop on climate change policy. It would also improve climate change policy by focusing on the impact of projects on the environment and society. Another worry brought up was the exclusion of public input into energy system design and development. It would be difficult to achieve consensus without public engagement with and understanding of the problem of energy sustainability.

## How can you use this research?

This research provides meaningful insights on trends in climate change policy today. It would encourage both private and public sectors to respond to climate change in more socially conscious and environmentally responsible ways. This research also offers useful suggestions on how to get the public more engaged in climate change projects. Government and nonprofit agencies may also take advantage of these findings. These would include spaces related to education and recreation.

## About the Researcher

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## Keywords

Climate change, Energy systems, Policy, Renewable energies, Canada

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