On November 4th 2016 the Paris Agreement came into force aiming to stimulate world-wide climate action. It has been said that the agreement was “a laissez-faire accord among nations” whose strengths pertain “to principled obligations to act, regularity and progression of national policy development, international transparency and accountability”\(^1\). Parties to the Paris Agreement will indeed take stock of progress every 5 years starting in 2020. Therefore, Sustainable Canada Dialogues\(^2\) – a network of 60+ scholars from across Canada, have teamed up to provide a report card on climate actions at the federal level. The feedback we offer aims to support advancing the low-carbon transition by applying policies, monitoring progress, and adjusting efforts over time to increase the ambition to mitigate climate change.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step Forward</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Step Backward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. **Put a price on carbon.**
Adopt either a national carbon tax or a national cap and trade program.

2. **Include aggressive goals for low-carbon electricity production in federal and provincial climate action plans.**
Adopt ambitious sectorial targets for low-carbon electricity production. Support interprovincial electricity transportation infrastructure. **(I)**

3. **Integrate the oil and gas production sector in climate policies.**
Eliminate all direct and indirect subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. Develop a clear regulatory framework coherent with the transition to a low-carbon economy. **(II)**

4. **Adopt a multi-level energy policy with energy efficiency and cooperation in electrification at its core.**
Develop a national energy policy with long-term plans for transitioning to low-carbon energy. Ensure government efficiency standards and procurement. **(III)**

5. **Throughout Canada, rapidly adopt low-carbon transportation strategies.**
Update emissions standards for vehicles and support fuel diversification. **(IV)**
Support new models of transportation. **(V)**
 Favor active transportation.

6. **Integrate landscape, land use, transportation and energy infrastructure planning policies at multiple scales to ensure climate change mitigation.**
Integrate climate change into the heart of territorial and urban planning and identify new avenues for financing. **(VI)**
Acknowledge the importance of, and support, green infrastructure and “smart growth” city planning. **(VII)**

7. **Support evolution of the building sector toward a carbon neutral or carbon-positive sector.**
Adopt ambitious targets for energy demand and efficiency of buildings and include climate change mitigation in national building codes. **(VIII)**
Invest in renewable and ambient energy for new and existing buildings.

8. **Safeguard biodiversity and water quality during Canada’s transition to a low-carbon society, while aiming for net positive approaches.**

9. **Support fisheries, forestry and agriculture practices offering opportunities to limit GHG emissions, enhance carbon sequestration, protect biological diversity and water quality.**

10. **Facilitate the transition to a low-carbon sustainable society through the implementation of more participatory and open governance institutions.**

---

* For more information on Sustainable Canada Dialogues: [http://www.sustainablecanadadialogues.ca/en/scd1](http://www.sustainablecanadadialogues.ca/en/scd1)

** I** Budget 2016: $2.5 million over two years, starting in 2016–17, to Natural Resources Canada to facilitate regional dialogues and studies that identify the most promising electricity infrastructure projects with the potential to achieve significant greenhouse gas reductions.

*** II** FSDS: By 2030, 90% and in the long term, 100% of Canada’s electricity is generated from renewable and non-emitting sources.

**** III** LNG announcement

**** IV** FSDS: By 2030, 90% and in the long term, 100% of Canada’s electricity is generated from renewable and non-emitting sources.

**** V** Budget 201: $62.5 million over two years, starting in 2016–17, to Natural Resources Canada to support the deployment of infrastructure for alternative transportation fuels, including charging infrastructure for electric vehicles and natural gas and hydrogen refuelling stations.

**** VI** Budget 2016: 675 million in new funding for local governments to address climate change from reducing greenhouse gas emissions to transforming the way we live, work and move around our communities, municipalities are on the front lines of serving Canadians...

**** VII** Budget 2016: $125 million over the next two years to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to enhance the Green Municipal Fund, including for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**** VIII** FSDS: By 2030, 90% and in the long term, 100% of Canada’s electricity is generated from renewable and non-emitting sources.

**** IX** FSDS: By 2030, 90% and in the long term, 100% of Canada’s electricity is generated from renewable and non-emitting sources.

**** X** See FSDS.

**** XI** See FSDS.
**STEPS FORWARD**

**PRICING CARBON**

On October 3rd, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that, starting in 2018, carbon will be priced at $10 per tonne across Canada and that the price will rise to $50 per tonne in 2022. The carbon price will be revenue neutral for the federal government and income generated will go back to the province or territory of origin. The proposal also respects the different mechanisms for carbon pricing selected by each province, while supporting a variety of pathways to greenhouse reductions. We think that carbon pricing is paramount to the achievement of significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In short, the decision was a necessary and important step in curbing emissions.

**INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

The $120 billion infrastructure investment plan led by Infrastructure Canada exemplifies the federal government’s decision to favour low-carbon infrastructure, raising hope that Canada is taking seriously the transition to low carbon development pathways. Targeted, large-scale investment in low-carbon infrastructure is needed and local and regional governments are key stakeholders in these infrastructure investment decisions. We welcome the support of municipality-led projects to identify and implement greenhouse reduction opportunities at the local level, as well as projects that will deliver transformative shifts toward clean energy and robust public transportation. The impact of the infrastructure investment plan will however depend on selecting projects on the basis of what would best contribute to low-carbon and sustainable outcomes.

**SMALL STEPS**

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

In February 2016, Environment and Climate Change Canada released a draft Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) and engaged in a public consultation around the document. The FSDS seeks to ensure that Canada works towards meeting United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We welcome a strategy allowing for the positioning of climate change in the broader context of sustainability. We particularly applaud the broad public consultation developed to receive feedback from engaged citizens, via an on-line conversation, short animation videos, and “Climate Town Halls.” These served to draw attention to climate change challenges and to elicit solutions. The final version of the 2016-2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy is interesting in that it present specific Mitigation Opportunities; and Adaptation and Climate Change. Transparency and usefulness and engagement of citizens in the process.

**ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

As Canada moves forward to meet the challenges posed by renewable energies, future resource extraction, and industrial development, Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous governance are defining issues. Canada’s adoption of the UN Declaration on rights of Indigenous peoples is therefore an important step in the right direction. It reinforces the mention by Prime Minister Trudeau in the mandate letters that “No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples. It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.” Given that the need to adopt a low-carbon energy future could affect Indigenous peoples and communities, we hope that Canada will honour its commitments and ensure all aspects of this transition respect Indigenous territorial rights and their special socio-economic and cultural circumstances.

**STEP BACKWARD**

**ADDRESSING FOSSIL FUELS**

Despite the progress outlined above, Prime Minister Trudeau’s decision to approve the Pacific Northwest liquefied natural gas (LNG) project casts doubt on the willingness of Ottawa to meaningfully tackle climate change. The impact assessment concluded that this liquefied natural gas project would increase BC’s emissions by 8.5% and that the facility would be one of the largest point source of emissions in Canada.

The decision to approve the project in spite of its implications for future emissions, speaks to the urgency for Canada to integrate

---

1. Radoslav S. Dimitrov The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Behind Closed Doors Global Environmental Politics 16:3, August 2016, doi:10.1162/ GLEP_a_00361
the oil and gas production sector in climate policies. Continued investment in projects with large greenhouse emissions will compromise other sectoral actions, prevent Canada from meeting its emissions reduction target for 2030 and is incompatible with the declared goal of limiting climate change to 1.5°C. It has been said that, to maintain global temperature increase below 2°C, half of existing gas reserves must remain unused. Furthermore, support of the LNG project is not coherent with the push for an innovative low-carbon economy to drive future economic growth.

We therefore urgently call for the establishment of a high-level task-force to begin discussions with a broad range of stakeholders from the oil and gas industry, unions, Indigenous peoples, environmental NGOs, the clean technology sector and academia, on how to transition away from fossil fuels in Canada. This task-force should also be charged with examining how subsidies received by this sector can be shifted to best promote transitions to green energy sources and how to help workers from the oil and gas industry transition their skills to other sectors.

A NON-PARTISAN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY BODY

While the federal government has reached out to citizens and to the Canadian academic community for feedback and open discussions, ambitious climate action demands quickly building support variety of stakeholders from rural communities to corporate boards. Such consensus for change requires a transparent and coherent approach involving all stakeholders and taking into account the diversity of the Canadian population, both indigenous and non-indigenous.

We see a need for an innovative non-partisan advisory board charged with building consensus for, and giving visibility to, climate actions. Such an advisory board, inspired by past initiatives such as the late National Round Table on the Environment or the Economy and the Species at Risk Advisory Council, could help increase the chance for public and industry support and for a deep integration of climate change goals throughout all facets of society and government. The federal government currently benefits from very strong support from the population to tackle climate change, with 77% of Canadians supporting a national plan to reach our international targets to reduce emissions. Now is the time to enhance the level of ambition and engage the society fully in the transition to a low carbon Canada.


SUSTAINABLE CANADA SCHOLARS

Potvin, Catherine, McGill University
Aitken, Sally, University of British Columbia
Anctil, François, Université Laval
Bennett, Elena, McGill University
Berkes, Fikret, University of Manitoba
Bernstein, Steven, University of Toronto
Bleau, Nathalie, Ouranos
Brown, Bryson, University of Lethbridge
Burch, Sarah, University of Waterloo
Byrne, Jim, University of Lethbridge
Creed, Irena, Western University
Cunsolo, Ashlee, Memorial University
Dale, Ann, Royal Roads University
de Lange, Deborah, Ryerson University
Dyck, Bruno, University of Manitoba
Entz, Martin, University of Manitoba
Etcheverry, Jose, York University
Fenech, Adam, University of Prince Edward Island
Fraser, Lauchlan, Thompson Rivers University
Henriques, Irene, York University
Heyland, Andreas, Guelph University
Hoberg, George, University of British Columbia
Holden, Meg, Simon Fraser University
Hoffmann, Matthew, University of Toronto
Gordon Huang, University of Regina
Jacob, Aerin, University of Victoria
Jodoin, Sébastien, McGill University
Kemper, Alison, Ryerson University
Lucotte, Marc, Université de Québec à Montréal
Matthews, Ralph, University of British Columbia
Matthews, H. Damon, Concordia University
Mauro, Ian, University of Winnipeg
Margolis, Liat, University of Toronto
McDonnell, Jeffrey, University of Saskatchewan
Meadowcroft, James, Carleton University
Messier, Christian, Université de Québec en Outaouais
Mkandawire, Martin, Cape Breton University
Morency, Catherine, Polytechnique Montréal
Mousseau, Normand, Université de Montréal
Oakes, Ken, Cape Breton University
Otto, Sally, University of British Columbia
Palmater, Pamela, Ryerson University
Palmer, Taysya S., Knowledge Transfer Consultant
Paquin, Dominique, Ouranos
Perl, Anthony, Simon Fraser University
Potvin, André, Université Laval
Raudsepp-Hearne, Ciara, Consultant
Ramos, Howard, Dalhousie University
Robinson, John, University of Toronto
Sheppard, Stephen, University of British Columbia
Simard, Suzanne, University of British Columbia
Sinclair, Brent, Western University
Slawinski, Natalie, Memorial University
Stoddart, Mark, Memorial University
Sylvestre, Shauna, Simon Fraser University
Villard, Marc-André, Université du Québec à Rimouski
Villeneuve, Claude, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi
Weschke, Sonia, University of Ottawa