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1) Urgency for Action

Question: Is climate change really an immediate crisis? Isn't there time for gradual change and can't we leave it for the next generation to handle?

Answer: Climate crisis is not a distant threat and we can not leave the problem for our children to solve. To avert some of the worst repercussions and protect the next generations, emissions need to come down rapidly, and continue that downward trajectory until we reach net-zero. The reasons for action listed below are compelling. Keep in mind, we still have the chance to reduce future impacts and make a difference.

Call to Action: "Emission reductions over the next few years and decades will have immensely important impacts, not just in the 21st century but perhaps for the next ten thousand years." [From the former Environmental Commissioner's Greenhouse Gas Progress Report 2016](#)

Reasons to Act

Nature can no longer maintain a healthy balance of CO₂ in the atmosphere, we are in [uncharted territory](#) when it comes to the climate and biodiversity is suffering. However, if emissions are curbed now, there is still a chance for healing and a long-term stabilizing effect.

- **Floods** in Ontario increasing - Ottawa, Pembroke, Bracebridge, Muskoka region, southwest - [winter flood risk](#) increase - in May, Lake Ontario reached its [highest level in history](#)
- **Extreme Weather:** devastating tornadoes in Eastern Ontario - volatile precipitation patterns, increased frequency and intensity of extreme events
- **Forest Fires:** [1,325 forest fires](#) last summer in Ontario - climate crisis makes wildfire season longer, [increases the size of area burned](#) and the number of fires - Canada's Boreal forest, a vital carbon sink, is under threat - fires release GHG's
- **Extreme Heat:** In Canada, temperatures are projected to increase at more than [twice the global rate](#) with warming of 6.5°C possible by the end of the century
- **Arctic:** temperatures at warmest in at least [40,000 years](#) - sea ice at lowest since records kept - could lose ice almost completely by 2030 or sooner - [increases extreme weather](#)/warming - thawing permafrost releases methane (holds 50% of global carbon)
- The **long time Sea Level Rise** is very influenced by total volume of CO₂ emitted before we transition to 100% renewables
- May lose 67% of **wildlife** populations [by 2020](#); [IPBES](#) says a million species threatened with extinction, many within decades; loss of deep ocean oxygen [threatens marine life](#) - mass migration of species, largest for about 25,000 years, will have extensive effects, both [societally and environmentally](#)

Health: The climate crisis could undo 50 years of gains made in global public health. Extreme weather will impact air quality, food, water and shelter. On the flip side, [CAPE](#) Drs. cite significant health benefits to low-carbon lifestyles - less heart/lung disease, better brain function.

- humidity produces more **disease-carrying insects** (e.g. ticks = lyme disease)

- **Water Contamination** - sanitary issues due to sewage overflow from storms - poisoned wells, septic tank back-ups
- **Heat-Related Illness** - e.g. [number of days above 30 Celsius in Toronto could almost double by 2050](#) and 240 people a year are expected to die due to heat-related illness
- **Mental health** - anxiety/depression - fears include: safety, security, lack of individual control - survivors of natural disasters [traumatized](#) - loss, displacement, PTSD

Rising Emissions: In May, the parts per million of CO₂ in the atmosphere reached a new high of [414.8](#). This represents the seventh consecutive year that global levels have risen steeply. Prior to the industrial use of fossil fuels, we were at a level of about 280 and [350 is considered a safe upper limit](#). Getting back to safer levels is key and emissions need to begin a steady decline now.

Threats to Civilization: US military, joint chiefs of staff and Pentagon say climate change is the most pressing, imminent threat to civilization, more than any world war or terrorism

Economics: Equity Issues: A Better World: (see other sections)

****Also note these articles by Leo Lepiano, published at [wawa-news.com](#), addressing some of the difficulties in understanding the need to act on climate change now:*

["The Growing Threat of Climate Change"](#) "Understanding how the climate is changing requires both a broad geographical perspective and that we think across longer time periods."

["Climate Science is Not Uncertain"](#)

["There is no way back"](#), the need to think in terms of delayed consequences

2) Costs and Carbon Pricing

Question A: Will the costs of climate action be too much for us? Is carbon pricing a dangerous "tax" on everything, punishing regular citizens, and making things unaffordable? Does carbon pricing jeopardize jobs, business and public services?

Answer: The cost of inaction is unimaginably greater than the cost of taking immediate action to limit global temperature increase as much as possible. Climate change is a dangerous - in fact deadly - "tax" on everything. It will harm us all more, starting with the most vulnerable, if we don't shift our lifestyles and economy. The cost of damages and insurance losses will only increase if we don't shift the market away from carbon emitting choices.

It is also important to know that the current federal system returns the "tax" to individuals, so that they can use the money to purchase more efficient goods and services as they become available. Because the wealthy consume more that is carbon intensive (flights, cars, large houses) and the rebate is distributed equally to all Canadians, the majority of Canadians will be in a better position to purchase carbon-neutral products with the rebate they receive.

As the price rises, the incentives for both producers to innovate and consumers to shift to low-carbon products and services increases. The producers who redesign their products to become less carbon intensive will sell more attractively priced goods and services and consumers will spend their growing rebates on these more attractive options.

Costs of Climate Change

- [2009 to 2015](#) (just six years), disaster-related compensation to provinces and territories was greater than all the previous 39 fiscal years combined
- Fire management costs have been rising by about [\\$120 million every decade](#), now costing Canada [a billion dollars](#) every year
- On August 7, 2018—Toronto had [\\$80 million worth of damage](#) in three hours - In 2013, floods cost upwards of [\\$940 million](#) in damage in Ontario
- In first nine months of last year, [Insurance Bureau of Canada](#) estimated extreme weather caused about a billion in damage - \$350 per household in first 6 months - rates will rise

How Federal Carbon Pricing & Rebates Work

- Most of what is collected through pricing carbon in Canada, will be given back to individuals and families through Climate Action Incentive Payments
- [In Ontario](#), this program will cost the average household \$256 and they will receive a tax rebate of \$300
- The remainder of the money collected will be used to help schools, hospitals, small and medium-sized businesses, municipalities, Not-for-Profits and Indigenous communities. This amounts to about \$1.45 billion in Ontario over the next five years
- Concurrently, what is collected from emitting industries, through the [output-based pricing system](#), will be used to help with GHG reductions in Ontario
- A variation applies to other province's in Canada, depending on whether they have implemented their own pricing systems or not

Carbon Pricing Benefits

- According to a [National Energy Board report](#) in April, businesses and households will be encouraged to become more efficient and lower emissions as they also build an economy for Canada that is more resilient
- [GDP loss small and gains in clean industry in trillions](#) - costs of inaction outweigh those attributed to taking action
- With carbon pricing introduced in 2008, BC reduced emissions 19% with [GDP growth at a higher rate than the rest of Canada](#)
- Private sector members also in favour - including Alberta oil patch giant Suncor, Husky Energy, Shell Canada, Canada's Big Five banks, Loblaws and Canadian Tire Corp.

Question B: Is carbon pricing ineffective? Shouldn't it be much higher than proposed to work?

Answers: Carbon pricing can only be one piece of a strategy to shift the global economy away from carbon intensive energy sources and focus investment and innovation on alternatives. The price does need to rise quickly, with corresponding rebates, if the carbon pricing system is to achieve the impact desired and provide incentives for industry to reduce carbon output.

- As the former eco-commissioner told us, in her report, "[Climate action in Ontario: What's Next.](#)" we need carbon pricing (making polluter's pay), regulations on polluters (that are enforced) and investment in solutions
- Other notable supporters: Nobel prize winner, [William Nordhaus](#), [Citizens Climate Lobby](#), scientist [James Hansen](#) and many others
- [Fourth Industrial Revolution](#) proposed now, i.e. change in how we view and use raw materials (fuel, gas, water etc.), circular rather than linear approach that unlinks economic growth from resource consumption - carbon pricing as a tool to galvanize move to net-zero economy
- "[Use value, exchange value, and the carbon tax](#)" - Article by Leo Lepiano in [wawa-news.com](#)

3) Environment and Economy: Compatibility

Question A: Aren't the economy and the environment both important? How do we reconcile the two?

Question B: Don't we need new pipelines and fossil fuel projects? Isn't wanting to phase them out quickly unreasonable and against the best interest of Canadians?

Answer: Protecting the economy and the environment can be mutually compatible goals if we build a green economy. It is no longer in the best interest of Canada to prolong the transition to a clean energy system. We have the technology, resources and finances to address the environmental crisis and adapt our economy. Adapting can not only benefit our health and maintain a livable environment, it can ensure a prosperous, resilient economy, providing jobs and capitalizing on the wealth available in renewable technology.

[8 Reasons for a Green Economy](#)

- **Jobs:** long-term, reliable jobs - about same number of employees in clean energy sector as in real estate sector, 298,000 - this sector [growing faster](#) than rest of the economy - we can grow other [climate jobs](#) too, including those in recycling and public transport
- Workers in precarious fields can be [supported in the transition](#) to a net-zero economy and existing low-carbon jobs i.e. caregiving, can be made secure, rewarding and valued
- **Renewables Competitive:** According to a [May 2019 IREA report](#), renewables can be cost competitive with fossil fuels - onshore wind and solar, with good natural resources, regulatory and institutional frameworks, can come in at \$.03-.04/kWh - hydroelectric power is cheapest on the whole, averaging \$.05/kWh - [hydroelectric from Quebec](#) cheapest for Ontario
- Average cost of new energy plants, factoring in onshore wind, solar photovoltaic (PV), biomass or geothermal energy is mostly lower than \$0.10/kWh, although these are global figures and individual costs vary - new fossil fuel plants typically cost \$0.05/kWh to over \$0.15/kWh
- Research also shows, over the long-term, renewable energy is actually [more cost effective](#) than non-renewables, considering lifespan costs of energy projects - [Lazard](#) reports that wind and utility-scale solar can be the least expensive forms of energy generation

- **Renewables Work:** energy storage options are improving and a 2016 study done by GE, supported by Natural Resources Canada, finds that [wind energy alone can reliably provide over 1/3rd of Canada's energy needs](#). This reliability has only gotten better!
- **Global Markets:** we do not want to be left behind other world economies as they employ forward-thinking clean technology
- **Electric Vehicle Benefits:** [30 Reasons to Buy an Electric Car Today](#), mentions saving time, fuel cost savings, less maintenance - buying a used EV is even thriftier!
- **Energy Efficiency Benefits:** [renovation tax credits](#) for retrofits can create jobs for local trades and keep revenue in communities - Increased energy efficiency in Ontario could mean a net increase of [52,800 jobs/year](#) and add \$12.5 billion/year to the GDP
- **Green New Deal for Canada:** the [plan in the works](#) is incredibly promising. It has the potential to address three interrelated crisis - climate, social and biodiversity
- **A Livable & Caring Future:** a green economy is key, for a less catastrophic, habitable as well as more equitable, values-based and caring future

8 Reasons to Move Away from Fossil Fuels

- **Science and Math:** cannot pursue new fossil fuel projects and prevent climate crisis - in 2017, the [Extracted Carbon](#) report from CCPA found relative to global reserves, for a 50% chance to stay below 1.5°, 86% of Canada's proven reserves must remain unexploited
- Use more fossil fuels than ever before - every year. [Half of all the CO2](#) in atmosphere accumulated since 1992 - emissions from Canada's tar sands are up to [64% higher](#) than reported
- According to Oil Change International, the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project alone, would release up to 130MT of CO2 a year = 28 million new cars/33 coal power stations
- **Economics:** reported that 30,000 lost oil and gas jobs are basically [unrecoverable](#) and the industry employed just 1% of Canada's workers, international markets [are not paying higher prices](#) for Canada's difficult to produce oil, and it [isn't a lack of pipelines](#) keeping prices low
- Many countries, including France, the UK and China are planning to [ban the sale](#) and manufacture of gas and diesel cars sooner than anticipated. This limits the market for tar sands oil
- **Expert Opinions:** concerned scientists and other experts urge us to cease investment in fossil fuel expansion - infrastructure is meant to last [30-50](#) years, longer than we can continue to use fossil fuels, and development risks [stranded assets](#)
- **Externalized Costs:** It is unfair that the oil and gas industry is supported as it pollutes ([3.3 billion in subsidies](#)) and costs are externalized i.e. tax payer subsidies, clean-up costs, water quality
- A 2018 [Parkland Institute report](#) uses a low carbon price of \$50 tonne to assess the carbon liabilities of the big five oil companies and finds that not only do costs outweigh assets and stock values, they are higher than Alberta's whole GDP
- **Impacts to our Health:** air quality etc. will effect our ability to work and live well. This can't help our prospects! Air pollution causes [more deaths worldwide](#) than wars and smoking

- **Slowing Global Efforts:** In a SEI report, Peter Erickson found that even accounting for any potential displacement of other countries' oil, expanding the tar sands could mean that Canada will contribute up to [150MT](#) more to global pollution by 2030 and significantly slow the global transition away from carbon intensive energy sources
- **Environmental Damage:** prioritizing exploration and drilling rights for natural resources, threatens [marine life](#), biodiversity and the communities that depend on them
- Tar sands development [furthers the destruction of our Boreal forest](#), and requires vast quantities of water, a lot of which is from the Athabasca River, fed by a retreating glacier

Call to Action: “Energy efficiency and electrification could mean more money and better value for Ontarians – in people’s pockets, in good jobs, in more competitive businesses, in attracting international investment, and in tax dollars going further, as well as better air quality and public health.” [“Climate action in Ontario: What’s Next”](#), 2018 GHG Progress Report, former Environmental Commissioner

4) Canada’s Fair Share

Question: Aren’t the emissions targets Canada adopted in line with keeping temperatures below 1.5°C and honouring the Paris agreement? Isn’t climate already a dominant priority for our leaders today? Haven’t we already done our part, our contribution to emissions is so small?

Answer: 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 is not going to be enough to stop the climate crisis or keep temperatures below 1.5°C. The world acknowledges that this target must be more ambitious. What’s more, Canada is set to fail in even these climate targets, due in large part to fossil fuel extraction.

Climate change poses the most critical issue of our time and addressing it needs to be *the* priority of our elected leaders, the lens through which all decision-making, regulating and spending is filtered. The analogy of a war effort is helpful here: our resources and ingenuity need to be channeled into actions that bring down emissions as rapidly as possible and then, draw carbon out of the atmosphere.

There really is no such thing as an end to responsibility in the context of the climate crisis, which requires action on an [unprecedented scale](#) and at a local to international level. If every jurisdiction said it was up to the other one, progress would virtually halt. Canada’s actions, as a wealthy, extraction-based country, have a huge influence on the world stage just as Ontario’s policies have a large impact on Canada’s ability to reach its national goals.

7 More Reasons Canada Should Increase Climate Ambition

- **Incompatible Policies:** Canada has asserted the right to sell its tar sands reserves, which would use up a large portion of the earth’s remaining carbon budget even though it comprises less than 1% of the population
- Coal phase out, carbon tax and low carbon fuel standard decrease carbon output about 53MtCO₂ - approved pipelines/LNG add about 465MtCO₂ (onshore and offshore emissions)

- **Falling Short of Goals:** Climate Action Tracker rates Canadian policy as insufficient. Environment Canada projections show that based on the policies we have in place, we will miss our GHG reduction targets for 2030 by [78Mt-115MTCO2](#)
- **Real Fair Share:** [Climate Action Network](#) finds Canada's fair share means we need to double ambition and increase contributions to international climate efforts - studies, like the one on [ocean heat records](#), indicate a smaller carbon budget and support the need to act quickly
- **Per Capita Emissions High:** "Despite our country's small population, Canada has ranked among the top 10 global carbon polluters for most of the last century. When it comes to per-capita emissions, the picture gets even more grim: Canadians emit more per person than almost any other country, including all Europe nations and Russia (and that's including several other large, cold countries)...Meanwhile, Canada is one of the richest nations on the planet with one of the lowest-emitting electricity grids." [Climate Action Network](#)
- **Climate Justice:** Disruption from storms, drought, floods, pests and heat compromise agriculture, transportation and architecture. The [poor, vulnerable and those with poor governance](#) are at risk. At the same time, Canada benefited tremendously from the fossil fuel industry and has the resources to back up climate commitments with effective action across all sectors, move away from fossil fuels and [offer support to other countries](#)
- **Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation:** Indigenous people are on the frontlines, dealing with the impacts of extractive projects and climate crisis - 30% of intact wild spaces are on Indigenous land - UNDRIP and the right to Free Prior and Informed Consent need to be upheld - Indigenous wisdom and traditional knowledge, including the cultural and historical use of the land and sustainable practises, need to be respected and supported
- **Global Consequences:** [Mass starvation](#) in S. Sudan, Nigeria, Yemen and Somalia. More people at risk than since WW II - [Threat of forced migration](#) for communities and cultures: Alaska, Louisiana, Bangladesh, some islands in Pacific and Indian Oceans - threat of instability and conflict - climate-related risks, like water crises and [human migration](#) among top 10

Examples of regressive or weak actions:

- Creating a climate plan without addressing fossil fuel subsidies and need to phase them out
- Creating loopholes in environmental assessments and polluter-pay principles that short change the potential climate benefit of such policies
- Moving too slowly on significant infrastructure investments that are critical to transformation [public transportation, both urban and non-urban; building retrofitting]

Examples of stronger and better actions:

- Density targets for urban areas
- Fully funded programs to reforest and regulations that prevent deforestation
- Help for workers in the fossil fuel industry to transition to green jobs
- See other ideas in [A People's Climate Plan for Canada](#), climatefast.ca.

Call to Action: "Governments that fail to provide responses to the global climate crisis are doing so 'at their own peril,' former United Nations climate chief Christiana Figueres said during a visit to Toronto. Figueres, a central figure behind the 2015 Paris Agreement, made the com-

ments as she called for governments and tech companies to "go exponential" in their efforts to tackle the global climate emergency." [National Observer, Architect of Paris Agreement says we need to 'go exponential' to beat climate crisis](#) By Fatima Syed, May 22nd 2019

5) Individual and Political Action

Question A: Is climate action a political, partisan issue? Shouldn't we simply be responsible and do what we can as individuals, in our neighbourhoods and homes? Isn't climate action dependant on individual, bottom-up and grassroots efforts?

Answer: Climate change and nature are essentially apolitical, as is our need for breathable air, clean water and healthy soil, our rights to a healthy environment and the rights of the next generations. However, given the existential nature of the climate crisis, appropriate action - the kind that protects our loved ones and the natural world we depend on - must be taken by strong climate leaders of every political stripe. We need all elected leaders to work together.

Doing things like being environmental stewards, picking up litter, wasting less food and reducing plastic use are important, but as individuals we cannot solve the climate crisis on our own. We must work collectively to transform our communities, province and country. This requires we demand of our governments, at all levels, that they put in place the programs - funding, laws, and regulations - that will support individual change and accelerate the larger-scale changes to industry and services needed now i.e. ban single use plastics and end fossil fuel subsidies.

[Canada's Emissions](#)

In Canada, according to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the **oil and gas industry** is the largest source of GHG emissions, emitting 27% of the national total. The amount emitted increased 84% from 1990 levels in 2017, totalling 195MT CO₂. This increase is mostly due to tar sands development. If the oil industry continues to develop as planned, it will compromise the progress made by other sectors, prevent Canada from meeting its emissions targets for 2030 and is incompatible with keeping temperature increase to 1.5°C.

The second largest source of Canadian emissions is the **transportation** sector, emitting 24% (174MT CO₂). This sector's emission grew 43% from 1990 levels in 2017. The increase mainly came from increased purchases of passenger "light trucks" and freight trucks. This means we need help shifting to non-fossil fuel transportation - laws, regulations and supportive funding.

According to Eddy Pérez, international policy analyst at Climate Action Network Canada, detailed in an April 2019 [CBC article](#), 5 significant things Canada can do to reduce emissions are:

- End the use of coal and diesel
- create Canada-wide plan for net-zero transport that goes beyond individual vehicles
- reduce oil and gas methane emissions
- stop subsidizing fossil fuels and be honest about the future of this industry
- have cross-canada building codes (include energy-efficiency & no-carbon heating/cooling sources).

[On a personal level](#)

according to a 2019 initiative by [kairosCanada](#), the top three things we can do are eat a plant-based diet (especially avoid beef), move to active and public transportation and not take air trips. They also mention having less children has the biggest impact of all.

What one flight emits - Peter Shepherd's ideas:

- flight to Vancouver will melt a block of ice the size of a 625 cubic metre house, which would fill 6,250 large (100 liter) suitcases and 1 bag
- refreezing with a state-of-the-art industrial ice-making operation, the cost would be about \$4,000 to do this partial remediation, about \$4,000/tonne

Question B: I drive an SUV, take flights or eat meat, my contribution to environmental action won't be considered valid, will it? I'm trying, I recycle and bike, isn't that enough?

Answer: It is not about guilt. Guilt and blame will not help us! We need to begin where we're at, learn and become open to make changes. We all live in the system. We all need support, help and those bigger, societal changes to protect and carry us along. That said, individual resistance to making changes could make or break this transition and some personal choices up carbon output more significantly than others i.e. bigger, light truck vehicles like the SUV mentioned above. We need everyone on board and quickly!

Question C: How do we show others, who are afraid to lose their quality of life, that it is possible and in our best interest, to accept policies and changes that reduce Canada's carbon output?

Answer:

A Better Future

Yes, it will require challenging adjustments to move to a net-zero carbon future, but these changes are [not as hard as we think!](#) Small reductions in economic growth may occur, but these predictions usually don't include the cost benefits of climate action (i.e. public health, rapid drop in cost of renewables, financial risk assessments related to climate and cost of climate-related damages if emissions go unchecked).

Secondly, the oil and gas industry is a precarious place for the current skilled workforce. Canadians actually don't need any new oil and gas development domestically and unearthing it for export at this point, makes our whole economy less resilient along with furthering climate change. A clean energy transition that brings everyone along with it, can actually make many positive changes to the way we live - greater equality, higher quality of life (see the [Wellbeing Budget](#)), better health and brighter prospects. The sooner we orchestrate this oncoming transition, the less difficult it will be!

On another note, our current consumerist culture often drives a wedge between us and true compassion, abundance and connection. Things like mindfulness, a sense of oneness with nature and fostering empathy can be re-valued during the societal transition that underscore our deepest needs, heighten our sense of belonging, and let us interact with and give back to the world around us. We have the chance now, to create a new norm, a culture of care - a smart, green, loving and fair approach - for our communities and our country.

In building that future, it will become even clearer that many critical issues of the day interconnect. Climate action must and can happen along with action to address these multiple issues i.e. as in [TransformTO plan](#), redressing equity issues, reducing poverty, facilitating good quality local jobs, improving health, making communities more resilient.

Call to Action: "If we truly believe another outcome is possible, and we truly desire it, then it is also a question of love. Not an abstract, new age love for people we don't know who live in a place we have never visited, but the love that is manifested when we work in the world towards something beyond ourselves." Leo Lepiano, from ["On Ontario's emissions and global emissions, the prisoner's dilemma."](#)