

Hundreds of Ontarians signed our petition to press the government for consultation on Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act. The Environmental Bill of Rights requires that any act that will affect the environment be open for consultation.

Thanks to public pressure and the legal work of Greenpeace and EcoJustice, the government has opened a period of consultation on Bill 4. The deadline for comment is October 11th, and ClimateFast is holding a gathering on October 3rd at 60 Lowther for people to discuss and enter in their comments. For those of you unable to attend, we have provided some suggested talking points below:

1) Multiple [scientific studies](#) by highly reputable [scientists](#) have come out this summer warning that we are farther along the path towards runaway global warming than has been recognized by the International Panel on Climate Change. One of these articles, reported in the [Guardian](#), warns that we have only 10-20 years to stop burning fossil fuels or we will not be able to avoid triggering a cascade of positive feedback loops leading to a "hothouse earth," threatening all life on the planet. This is in keeping with previous warnings given by Dr. James Hansen (formerly head of NASA's Goddard Institute) and Dr. Dennis Bushnell (chief scientist at NASA's Langley Research Centre). For Ontario to proceed without a science-dictated climate change plan now compromises our food supplies, our infrastructure, our health and our children's future. Failing to enable the policies and incentives necessary to curtail the threat of runaway global warming is not only negligent, it is criminal.

2) There are many economic benefits to acting on climate change. As reported in [Huffington Post](#), reducing greenhouse gases substantially within the next 3 years, could result in "a grand economic transformation [which] could bring a \$26 trillion windfall, create 65 million new jobs, and avoid [at least] 700,000 early deaths linked to air pollution..." Nationally, according to [Clean Energy Canada](#), actions to improve energy efficiency alone, could result in 118,000 jobs and save \$1.4 billion annually. It makes no sense to cut incentive programs, like rebates for Ontarians to upgrade furnaces and install better insulation, that help curb Greenhouse Gas emissions, save us money and provide jobs for local contractors.

3) It is a blow to the economy, to cancel renewable projects and de-incentivize electric vehicles. It sends a message to green industry that we are not "open for business" and discourages the jobs and investments that will ensure our economy remains prosperous, resilient and sustainable. As a recent [Forbes](#) article states, the Ontario PC's backtracking on climate initiatives, including the cancellation of hundreds of wind and solar projects, "may have just cost its businesses billions, added millions in consumers costs, eschewed thousands of jobs and muddied its investment outlook." Instead, Ontario could benefit from pursuing a forward-thinking economy, moving away from fossil fuels and investing in renewables and clean technology.

4) It is generally agreed amongst environmental advocacy groups that putting a price on carbon is both the only market solution, and a necessary step in our efforts to avoid runaway global warming. The only way that scrapping the cap and trade program would be acceptable, is if it were replaced with a fee and dividend program. In both cases, the money earned could be given back to the people so that it is not a "tax grab." Money collected could also be used to further

actions to reduce Greenhouse Gases, like electric car incentives and investment in renewables or clean technology. Ontario needs to put an effective price on carbon.

5) Putting a price on carbon emissions is a proven way to force polluters to pay the costs which otherwise must be paid for by all of us. It has been estimated that each ton of CO₂ emitted has a [cost of between \\$45 and \\$275](#), accounting for factors like difficulty growing food, threats to human health and lowered worker productivity. Environmental costs include damage from storms and wildfires. In the first 5 months of 2018, extreme weather events cost Ontarians [\\$696 million](#) which does not include the flooding Toronto experienced this summer. The Doug Ford administration is not only ignoring the problem, they're exacerbating it farther by taking a pro-developer stance. Ontario's ministries warned years ago that continued climate change, coupled with land conversion and population growth are a significant threat to the integrity of Ontario's aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. To continue to allow polluters to externalize their costs onto the public is not only negligent, it is criminal.

6) In Ontario, 40% of CO₂ emissions come from heating buildings, and 30% from vehicles. These must be reduced in order to reach Ontario's target of 30% below 2010 levels by 2030. Similarly, the TransformTO plan -- which has lost [a substantial part of its](#) funding due to the scrapping of the provincial price on carbon -- has a targeted reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 30% by 2020, 65% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 based on 1990 levels. Canada has also committed to the Paris Accord to keep temperature rise under 1.5 or 2 degrees C. There is no hope of meeting or exceeding these targets, which we have to do to avoid catastrophic climate change, unless we put a price on carbon and direct the funds to climate action.

7) While Canada's overall contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is small, our per capita emissions (20 tons/person/year) are much higher than the European average (6.9 t/p/y), as well as rapidly growing countries like China (7.7 t/p/y) and India (1.9 t/p/y). Rather than bringing down our per capita contribution to climate change, we have gotten rid of a price on carbon, which is equivalent to starting [30 new coal fired plants](#). We must do better than this, in order to keep global temperatures down and safeguard our health, food supplies and the futures of our children.

Should the current government choose to listen to scientists, citizens and environmental groups, this could be the opportunity to make Ontario's climate action plan a model for the rest of the world, with targets based on science that will meet or exceed our Paris commitments, actionable steps to reach these targets and a commitment to accountably measure and report on progress. This plan needs to include an effective and escalating price on carbon, which can provide funding for climate action.