

Joint Statement to the Government of Canada

April 22nd, 2015

To the Government of Canada:

We, a coalition of concerned Canadians, are disappointed and alarmed by the Government of Canada's lack of commitment to domestic action on climate change and the international climate negotiations process. Refusal to recognize the threat posed by climate change endangers both Canadians and the global community.

The government's recent failure to submit Canada's targets for emissions cuts to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) by the March 31st deadline is indicative of this lack of commitment.

Leading up to this year's international climate negotiations in Paris, the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21), the UNFCCC invited developed countries to submit their "Intended Nationally Determined Contribution" (INDC). These submissions are voluntary, but highly important. They demonstrate a country's commitment to engage meaningfully in the next and most critical international climate change treaty.

The United States, member states of the European Union, Russia and Mexico have all submitted INDCs in accordance with the March 31st deadline.¹ As one of only a few developed countries that have yet to submit, Canada is out of step with its closest allies and trade partners. We are not pulling our weight as a member of the international community and not doing our fair share to reduce emissions.

COP21 is our last chance to form a global, legally binding climate agreement to keep temperature rise below 2°C and secure a safer climate future. Such an agreement represents the only universal mechanism to ensure all UN countries are accountable for charting and holding to a path that avoids catastrophic climate change.

Despite being a signatory to the UNFCCC process, Canada's national policies and results are grossly out of line with what is required to comply with our international commitments. Our most recent agreement made through the Copenhagen Accord commits us to a 17% emissions reduction below 2005 levels by 2020. However, based on figures from Environment Canada's 2012 Progress Report, under current policies Canada is expected to reach a mere 1.5% reduction below 2005 levels by 2020.²

This lack of progress makes Canada a climate pariah when so many other nations are stepping up their plans for emissions cuts to address dangerous climate change. Both Canadians and the international community expect to see firm commitments from our country to keep us below the 2°C threshold.

We call upon the Government of Canada to develop, without delay, a **clear national action plan with targets to reduce carbon emissions, reflecting Canada's fair share of global emissions, in line with stabilizing the rise in global average temperatures to below 2°C.**

This plan should be underwritten by the following national policy commitments:

- End subsidies and other measures that promote the growth of the fossil fuel industry;
- Put a price on carbon, based on the *polluters pay* principle, to cap carbon-intensive forms of production;
- Invest in a national renewable energy plan at a scale necessary to secure a low-carbon future.³

Canada is at a crossroads. We are calling upon our government to stand on the right side of history. The path we choose will define us as a nation and determine the future of our children and grandchildren. Taking action on climate at the international level is intrinsically linked to the well-being of all Canadians. Now is our opportunity to rebuild our reputation as an international leader and prove to Canadians and the world that Canada is still a nation that respects and acts for the greater global good.

Across the country, Canadians are already taking positive action on climate. Artists, community organizers, educators, entrepreneurs, engineers, environmental advocates, healthcare providers, Indigenous activists and leaders, journalists, lawyers, public servants, policymakers, politicians, scientists, tradespeople, youth leaders and many other citizens are becoming engaged in building a brighter, more climate-safe future for our society.

We want our national government to work *with* Canadians, not against us. We have an opportunity to slow climate change, and in doing so, ensure a better quality of life for all Canadians. By leveraging our vast natural resources in an ecologically responsible way, Canada can be a leader in clean energy innovation.

The Paris COP21 agreement presents an enormous opportunity for Canada to chart a path towards a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future. The Government of Canada must step up to its responsibilities as a member of the international community, and represent the true interests of Canadians and future generations.

Signatories:

Beyond Crisis
Canadian Electoral Alliance
Canadian Friends Service Committee
Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice
Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
Citizens' Climate Lobby
Citizens for Public Justice
Climate Impact Network
Climate Reality Project Canada
ClimateFast

Green Neighbours 21
Greenspiration
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Ontario Renewable Energy Co-Op
Our Horizon
Peace and Social Action Committee
People's Climate Movement
SolarShare Co-operative
Step Up, Canada!
The Council of Canadians

Conscience Canada
 County Sustainability Group
 Creating Resilience to Extreme Weather
 Ecology Ottawa
 Federation of Community Power Co-operatives
 For Our Grandchildren
 Green 13
 Green Heroes

The Green Majority
 Toronto350.org
 Toronto Environmental Alliance
 Toronto Raging Grannies
 Transition Toronto
 TREC Education
 TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative



Step Up, Canada!



Citizens' Climate Lobby
Lobby Climatique des Citoyens





For more information on the joint statement please contact Emmay Mah at info@stepupcanada.ca or Lyn Adamson at climatefast@climatefast.ca.

¹ INDCs as communicated by Parties. Accessed on the UNFCCC website:
<http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx>

² Environment Canada (2013). The 2012 Progress Report of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.

³ For more information on these policy commitments please refer to:
<http://www.climatefast.ca/resources/fossil-fuel-subsidies-fact-sheet-kairos>
<http://www.climatefast.ca/resources/putting-price-carbon-fact-sheet-kairos>
<http://www.climatefast.ca/resources/renewable-energy-plan-canada-fact-sheet-kairos>