

## **An Open Letter to the Leaders of Canada's Federal Political Parties**

To help inform Canadians preparing to choose the government that will ultimately represent us this December at the Paris Climate Summit, *Sustainable Canada Dialogues* has examined each of your party platforms from the point of view of the 10 key policy orientations we proposed last spring in our consensus paper, *Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars*.

This analysis is a “snapshot in time.” It is based solely on information publically available on each of your official party web sites, including news and backgrounders, up to October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015. It shows which of our climate policy orientations or actions have already caught your attention and identify others still needing advocacy. We acknowledge that parties may present valuable measures that fell outside the scope of this exercise. The full analysis of your platforms will be available October 8<sup>th</sup> at <http://sustainablecanadialogues.ca/en/>.

Here are some positive findings:

- Putting a price on carbon is key. NDP and Green platforms set the price of carbon at the national level, as proposed in *Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars*. Both platforms go further and including discussion of important design questions, such as redistribution of income.
- All platforms, with the exception of Conservative, view transition to renewable energy as a job creation strategy. Canada has a wealth of untapped renewable energy resources and their responsible development would increase the resilience of Canadian communities and the Canadian economy. This means sustainable job creation *and retention*.
- Most platforms name specific climate mitigation actions. To this date Liberal and Green platforms offer a broader array.

On energy production:

- With the exception of Conservative, all parties stress the need to revisit the environmental impact assessment process for energy projects such as pipelines.
- Liberal, NDP and Green platforms eliminate subsidies to oil and gas industries.
- Liberal and Green platforms acknowledge the importance of taking advantage of Canada's vast renewable energy resources, including low-carbon electricity production, smart grids and electrical integration.
- Liberal, NDP, Bloc and Green Party platforms agree on the need to fundamentally re-define relationships with First Nations as we move to renewable energies.

On energy usage:

- Overall, platforms related to energy *use* are less developed than those related to energy *production*. Yet energy use, e.g. in transportation and buildings, offers some of the best opportunities for win-win approaches increasing social wellbeing while reducing emissions and increasing sustainability.
- The need to integrate infrastructure planning policies—including landscape, land use, transportation and energy—is the least represented of our policy orientations, suggesting that understanding climate solutions from an integrated perspective is still a challenge.

Our snapshot of the platforms reinforces *Sustainable Canada Dialogues'* view that Canada urgently needs a national dialogue on climate change policy, to identify socially acceptable transition pathways to a low-carbon society and economy.

In that context, we call your attention on a new report *Acting on Climate Change: Extending the Dialogue Among Canadians* that we will launch on October 8<sup>th</sup> in Toronto. This is a collection of 28 papers from a range of sectors of society including: First Nations, business, labor and non-governmental organizations. By the number of contribution and the diversity of contributors, the collection adds depth and breadth to the policy orientations we proposed in *Solutions from Canadian Scholars*. It presents a Canada brimming with ideas and the will to change.

In 2014, *The Climate Change Performance Index* ranked Canada 58 of 61 countries, based on climate policy. From the election campaign to a new Canadian government *en route* to the Paris Climate Summit, we hope each party will enrich its position with ideas put forward by Canadians, before, during and after this election campaign, to restore Canada's global leadership as a champion for the environment.

Yours truly,

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