

# CONFRONT THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

## AN URGENT CALL TO THE BC GOVERNMENT

September 2021

Dear Premier Horgan and the Government of BC,

We write on behalf of diverse environmental, Indigenous, labour, health, business, local government, academic, youth, and faith communities who collectively represent well over one million British Columbians.

We call on the BC government to recognize the urgency and alarm that people all over the province are feeling as the climate crisis directly impacts our communities and our health: deadly heat waves, wildfires, drought, floods, crop failure, fisheries collapse, and costly evacuations and infrastructure damage. These climate-related impacts are unprecedented and intensifying. Indigenous peoples stand to be disproportionately impacted by climate events despite successfully taking care of the land since time immemorial.

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a 'code red' for humanity. The International Energy Agency has called on world governments to immediately stop investments in and approvals of new oil and gas projects.

The provincial government's CleanBC climate action plan is insufficient to limit warming to 1.5°C and will not keep British Columbians safe from the worst impacts of climate change.

We therefore urge the BC government to develop and implement a transformative climate emergency plan that recognizes the interconnected climate, ecological, and social crises; embeds equity, anti-racism, and social justice at its core; and upholds Indigenous Title and Rights, and Treaty Rights.

To implement the rapid systemic change that is required, we call on the provincial government to demonstrate the leadership necessary to confront the climate emergency, and immediately undertake the following 10 actions:



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**1 Set binding climate targets based on science and justice**  
Reduce BC's greenhouse gas emissions by ~7.5% per year below 2007 levels. Set binding reduction targets of 15% by 2023; 30% by 2025; 60% by 2030, and 100% by 2040 (below 2007 levels). Review and update targets regularly as climate science evolves.

**2 Invest in a thriving, regenerative, zero emissions economy**  
Invest 2% of BC's GDP (\$6 billion dollars per year) to advance the zero emissions economy and create tens of thousands of good jobs. Spend what it takes to immediately reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create new economic institutions to get the job done. Ensure that the economic component of Aboriginal Title is recognized through the sharing of benefits and revenues that result.

**3 Rapidly wind down all fossil fuel production and use**  
Immediately stop all new fossil fuel infrastructure including fracking, oil and gas pipelines, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and fossil fuel-derived hydrogen. Rapidly phase out and decommission all existing fossil fuel production and exports.

**4 End fossil fuel subsidies and make polluters pay**  
End all fossil fuel subsidies and financial incentives by 2022. Ensure that those industries that profit from fossil fuel pollution pay their fair share of the resulting climate damage.

**5 Leave no-one behind**  
Ensure a just transition for fossil fuel workers, resource-dependent communities, and Indigenous and remote communities impacted by fossil fuel production. It will be critical to collaborate in true partnership with Indigenous peoples in climate action. Prepare our communities for the impacts of the climate crisis to minimize human suffering and infrastructure damage. Support those most vulnerable to climate change impact.

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Photo: Gavin Phillips @ItsGavP

## 6

### **Protect and restore nature**

Protect 30% of terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030; support and invest in Indigenous-led conservation initiatives; restore natural ecosystems to enhance ecosystem functions and services, preserve biodiversity, increase carbon sequestration, and improve human and ecosystem resilience to climate impacts. Impose an immediate moratorium on the industrial logging of all old growth forests which are critical carbon sinks.

## 7

### **Invest in local, organic, regenerative agriculture and food systems**

Incentivize carbon storage in soil, restore biodiversity, and ensure food sovereignty and food security across the province. Increase consumption of plant-based foods, and reduce food waste. Support Indigenous communities that wish to maintain traditional food systems and enhance their food security.

## 8

### **Accelerate the transition to zero emission transportation**

Invest in affordable, accessible, and convenient public transit within and between all communities. Reallocate infrastructure funds from highway expansion to transit and active transportation (cycling, rolling, and walking). Mandate zero emissions for all new light vehicles by 2027, and all medium and heavy duty vehicles by 2030.

## 9

### **Accelerate the transition to zero emission buildings**

Ban new natural gas connections to all new and existing buildings by end of 2022. Create a Crown Corporation to mobilize the workforce to retrofit all existing buildings and eliminate fossil fuel heating by 2035, and to build new affordable zero emissions buildings.

## 10

### **Track and report progress on these actions every year**

Embed all of these actions in legislation to ensure accountability, transparency, and inclusion. Establish rolling 5-year carbon budgets that decline over time towards zero emissions by 2040 or sooner.

# A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE

The climate emergency offers an unprecedented opportunity to generate new, vibrant economic and social wealth as we transform where our energy comes from and how it is used. It offers an opportunity to achieve energy security, ensure food security, develop more sustainable local economies and jobs, transform our buildings, redesign transportation, reduce pollution, improve human health and wellbeing, and enhance our quality of life. The transition from fossil fuels to a zero emissions economy has clear benefits for people and natural ecosystems, and is an opportunity to create a more prosperous, just, and equitable society.

Every person, every business, every industry, and every government has a role to play as we coordinate individual and collective actions to create a thriving, resilient, and regenerative society that respects its interdependence with healthy ecosystems and a safe climate.

British Columbia is positioned to become a visionary world leader and demonstrate that innovative and rapid change is possible as we transition to a zero emissions economy.

We urge you to seize these opportunities, and demonstrate to British Columbians that our government is indeed a true climate leader by implementing the 10 climate emergency actions set out in this letter.

**We must act now.**

Global temperature trends  
from 1850 to 2020.

Image: Ed Hawkins

# SIGNATORIES

## Indigenous

British Columbia Assembly of First Nations  
First Nations Summit  
Gidimt'en Checkpoint  
RAVEN (Respecting Aboriginal Values & Environmental Needs)  
Union of BC Indian Chiefs

## Arts / Culture

Brackendale Art Gallery  
Canadian Media Producers Association (BC Branch)  
Claymates Ceramics Studio Inc.  
Coalition of Museums for Climate Justice  
Hummingbird Music Studio  
Indian Summer Arts Society  
Newworld Theatre  
South Cariboo Arts and Culture Society  
Spring Magazine  
Women in Film and Television Vancouver

## Business

1st Knowledge Bank Ltd  
Audiopile Records  
Barnacle Strategies Consulting  
Bydand Wealth Management  
Calmura Natural Walls Inc.  
Climb On Equipment Ltd  
Cool.World  
Crowned Vitta LLC  
Curio Research Ltd.  
Drinkfill Beverages LTD  
Earnest Ice Cream  
Fresh Roots Urban Farm Society  
Goldilocks Goods  
Harvey McKinnon Associates  
Hollyhock  
KWENCH  
Lush Cosmetics North America  
Nada  
New/Mode  
OMC Inc.  
Patagonia  
Persephone Brewing Company  
Rain or Shine Ice Cream

Redroof Enterprizes  
Renewal Funds  
Rethink2gether  
Salish Soils Inc.  
Sea To Sky Cable Cam Inc.  
Squamish ReBuild Society  
Sustainable Produce Urban Delivery (SPUD)  
Tegan McMartin Photography  
TREE WORLD Plant Care Products, Inc.  
Vedalia Biological Inc.  
Viridian Energy Coop  
Visual Science

## Community group

Alliance4Democracy (Sunshine Coast)  
BC Hydro Ratepayers Association  
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.  
Council of Canadians (Campbell River Chapter)  
Council of Canadians (Comox Valley Chapter )  
Council of Canadians (Nelson Chapter)  
Council of Canadians (Terrace Chapter)  
Council of Canadians (Victoria Chapter)]  
Courage Coalition  
Food Stash Foundation  
Friends of Tilbury Working Group  
Global Peace Alliance BC Society  
Kaslo Community Action Team  
Language Partners BC  
Out Here Ski & Board Club  
Philosophers Anonymous  
South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy (SANSAD)  
South Park Family School  
Tree of Life Nature Playschool  
UNBC Outdoors Club

## Health

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment  
Canadian Health Association for Sustainability & Equity (CHASE)  
Doctors for Planetary Health (West Coast)  
Inner Light Healing Arts  
Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance  
Public Health Association of BC

## Faith

Anglican Diocese of New Westminster  
Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice  
First Unitarian Church of Victoria  
Holy Cross and Saint Patricks RC Parishes  
KAIROS (BC-Yukon Region)  
Naramata Community Church  
North Shore Unitarian Church Environmental Action Team  
Salt Spring Island Unitarian Fellowship  
Squamish United Church  
Vancouver Unitarians  
Yasodhara Ashram Society

## Labour

Douglas College Faculty Association  
Federation of Post-Secondary Educators  
North Island College Faculty Association  
Public Service Alliance of Canada (BC Region)  
Worker Solidarity Network

## Seniors

Canadian Senior Cohousing Society  
Pacific Park Place Housing Cooperative  
Squamish Seniors Society  
Suzuki Elders

## Youth

Douglas Students' Union  
My Sea to Sky Youth Council  
Quest Student Environmental Committee  
Reel Youth  
Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group (SFPIRG)  
Students for Mining Justice  
Sustainabiliteens  
Take a Stand: Youth for Conservation

## Environment / Climate action

350 Vancouver  
Against Port Expansion in the Fraser Estuary  
Alberni Climate Action  
Alberni Valley Transition Town Society  
Armstrong/Spallumcheen Climate Action

Association of Denman Island Marine Stewards  
Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment  
Babies for Climate Action (New Westminster)  
Babies for Climate Action (Vancouver)  
BC Climate Alliance  
BC Nature  
BC Sea Wolves  
Below2C  
Better Transit Alliance of Greater Victoria  
Bowen Island Conservancy  
British Columbia Cycling Coalition  
Burnaby Climate Hub  
Burnaby Residents Against Kinder Morgan Expansion (BROKE)  
Canadian Freshwater Alliance  
Chase Environmental Action Group  
Chemainus Climate Solutions  
Citizen's Climate Lobby (Okanagan Chapter)  
Citizen's Oil & Gas Council  
Citizens' Climate Lobby (Nelson-West Kootenay Chapter)  
Climate Action Now!  
Climate Caucus  
Climate Emergency Unit  
Climate Justice Victoria  
Concerned Citizens Bowen  
Cowichan Valley Naturalists  
Creatively United for the Planet  
David Suzuki Foundation  
Denman Island Climate Action Network  
Dogwood  
First Things First Okanagan  
For Our Kids (North Shore)  
For Our Kids (Sunshine Coast)  
For Our Kids (Vancouver)  
Force of Nature (North Shore Community Action Team)  
Georgia Strait Alliance  
GOAL12 Sustainable Consumption and Production Society  
Green Teams of Canada  
HUB Cycling  
Lawyers For Climate Justice  
Leadnow  
Living Forest Institute Society  
Living Oceans Society  
Mount Work Coalition

My Sea to Sky  
Nanaimo Climate Action Hub  
Net0world  
North Okanagan Naturalists' Club  
OneEarth  
Parents 4 Climate  
Planetary Resilience Council of BC  
Protect Our Winters Canada  
Roots on the Roof  
Saanich Eco Advocates  
Salish Sea Renewable Energy Cooperative  
Salt Spring Island Stream and Salmon Enhancement Society  
Sea Smart  
Shuswap Climate Action  
Sierra Club BC  
Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition  
Squamish Climate Action Network (Squamish CAN)  
Squamish Environment Society  
Squamish Food Policy Council (SFPC)  
Stand.earth  
Sunshine Coast Conservation Association  
Sunshine Coast Streamkeepers Society  
Sustainability Action Group for the Environment  
Synergia Institute  
Transition Kamloops  
Transition Salt Spring  
Transition Sooke  
Victoria Climate Hub  
Victoria Transport Policy Institute  
Watershed Watch Salmon Society  
West Coast Climate Action Network (WE-CAN)  
West Coast Environmental Law Association  
West Kootenay EcoSociety  
Wilderness Committee  
Wildsight  
Yellow Point Ecological Society  
Zero Waste BC