

LET'S TALK **CLIMATE ACTION**

Energy Exchange Submission to the Government of Canada

While identifying pathways to a low-carbon economy there is a critical aspect of engaging and educating Canadians on how this energy transition will affect their lives and businesses. An important part of our programming at Pollution Probe is through the work of **Energy Exchange** which works towards the goal of measurably increasing energy literacy levels across Canada.

THE STORY ON ENERGY LITERACY IN CANADA IS CHANGING.

At first, the focus in Canada was on building awareness and decision making capacity around our vast and diverse energy endowment. However, things have changed significantly and though it is still critical to educate people across Canada on our energy system and the value it creates in their lives, we also need to address climate change and the transition towards a low carbon economy; new technologies and innovations; the need for conservation and efficiency; and an increasingly complex energy system that is evolving more rapidly than we can handle. This has caused uncertainty in the marketplace, leaving industry and energy end users confused and polarized on what path we should take as we move forward. Through engagement with our key stakeholders and community of practice, we believe government focus on the following strategic areas would allow Canadians to work together towards providing solutions to our transition to a low-carbon energy system:

1. **Invest in Initiatives that Build Public Confidence including Energy and Climate Literacy:** The type of complexity involved in a transition to a low-carbon energy system is difficult for Canadians to wrap their heads around. Energy and climate literacy form *the* critical link to building this public confidence. This means when engaging Canadians through energy and climate literacy initiatives, the focus should be on taking a systems approach: developing critical thinking skills, ensuring messages are tailored to the audience and providing balanced information that activates collective values. Often we find this means translating information into an engaging format that can be easily understood and digested. It is important that the energy and climate literacy community has enough resources to provide Canadians with the right information, at the right time and in the right format. We've segmented the Canadian population to identify those most interested or open to learning about energy for a more targeted and efficient approach to reach Canadians in a dialogue around energy issues. These "Energy Engaged Citizens" want to learn more about energy issues and are stewards in their communities. Even though we need a national approach to energy and climate planning, communities want to have a say in their energy future and it is so important that they are engaged in a more effective way than they have been in the past. This means using new engagement and communication tools, such as social media, to ensure that we are engaging a wider demographic in a dialogue around energy and climate issues.

2. **Improve Publicly Available Energy and Climate Data:** Canadians do not have access to high quality, timely and robust energy and climate data sets that balance economic, environmental and social indicators. This information is not only critical to develop strong business cases and provide policy direction, but it is also essential to crafting the Canadian energy narrative. We know from our research that Canadians want more reliable, accurate, and transparent data in order to help support their decision making abilities. This should include benchmarking of large energy users and GHG emitters by sector as we know that this kind of transparency and competition drives results quickly.
3. **Use a Collaborative Approach to Energy and Climate Decision Making:** The Government of Canada must actively work in collaboration with provinces and territories, First Nations, Métis and Inuit leadership and communities (FNMI), local communities, businesses, and civil society to ensure that there is a coordinated and streamlined approach to energy and climate policies and regulatory processes. A collaborative approach that informs and authentically engages stakeholders will maximize the benefits of our energy and low-carbon future. This is the approach we use at Pollution Probe and Energy Exchange to build consensus across disparate stakeholder groups—even though it can take more time upfront and can be complicated and uncomfortable, ultimately it is more effective and efficient. Our key recommendation is that all energy conservation, efficiency and GHG mitigation options are rigorously evaluated and stacked against each other through a marginal abatement full cost accounting (i.e. externalities and co-benefits) methodology. This should be completed for each sector and overseen by an independent multi-stakeholder advisory council to ensure balance and foster public confidence in policy and regulatory recommendations. Innovation is moving rapidly and policy and regulatory processes must be nimble in order to keep up and maximize the potential benefits of new developments. A responsive policy environment that allows multiple solutions to be implemented with performance and cost dictating which options will progress is needed.

As citizens of an energy-rich nation possessing immense potential for wealth creation, Canadians must champion a responsible and informed low-carbon energy transformation. It is essential that we help Canadians feel comfortable engaging on energy issues and excited about Canada's energy potential so that they can participate meaningfully in the transition and help be a part of the solution. Members of Canada's energy community acknowledge that energy and climate literacy is an essential ingredient to build public confidence and expand investment opportunities into our future low-carbon energy system.

About Energy Exchange

Energy Exchange—a division of Pollution Probe—is dedicated to advancing energy and climate literacy in Canada. It aspires to a future in which Canadians are united in their energy prosperity, rather than divided by their energy options. Energy Exchange sees energy and climate literacy at the core of a sustainable future for Canada. It is committed to fostering an energy culture that will ensure that Canada's immense and varied energy wealth is used to build a rich and diversified economy and a vibrant and prosperous society. Visit www.energy-exchange.net for resources and details.

About Pollution Probe

Established in 1969, Pollution Probe is a national, non-profit organization that exists to improve the health and well-being of Canadians by advancing policy that achieves positive, tangible environmental change. Pollution Probe has a proven track record of working in partnership with industry and government to develop practical solutions to environmental challenges. Visit www.pollutionprobe.org for details.