



**Working together
we can safeguard
the well-being of
people & the planet.**

Personal and Political Action to Address Climate Change

Canada has an opportunity to move forward in ways consistent with both the Paris Agreement and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. There are innumerable ways that we can minimize our personal environmental impact and reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The scale of the climate crisis requires more than individual action. Real change also requires political action. This list – from the **Give it up for the Earth!** postcard – is just a sampling.

Personal Actions:

1. **Cut my driving by commuting on foot, cycling, taking transit, or carpooling.** Transportation is one of the largest sources of GHG emissions in Canada – second only to the oil and gas sector. Within the transportation sector, [53% of emissions¹](#) are produced by personal vehicles. 4500 km – roughly the distance between Toronto and Vancouver or 40 hours of driving – produces one tonne of GHG emissions. In 2012 the Pembina Institute estimated that Canadians living in metro or suburban areas ([the majority](#)) commute an [average of 45km a day](#) for work. Personal vehicles driven in Canada contribute a yearly total of about 70 Mt of CO₂e emissions.
2. **Eliminate meat from my diet one day a week to reduce emissions from raising and processing cattle.** Cows produce an exceptionally high level of GHG emissions. [Canadians also consume more beef](#) than almost any other type of animal protein. This means cows are a big part of Canadians' GHG footprint. [GHG emissions associated with beef](#) are four times those associated with chicken, and 18 times higher than for beans and lentils. Cheese production contributes double the emissions of chicken and nine times the emissions of beans and lentils. The total emissions of cattle raising in Canada contributes 24 Mt of CO₂e emissions in a year.
3. **Commit to enjoying a spring break “staycation” close to home to avoid aviation emissions.** A southern vacation for one from Canada produces [between 0.3 and 2.1 megatonnes \(Mt\) of carbon dioxide equivalent \(CO₂e\) emissions](#). For a family of five that single vacation results in 1.5 to 10.5 Mt of CO₂e emissions in air travel alone. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, [because most aircraft emissions are produced high in the atmosphere, their impact is 2-4 times greater than equivalent CO₂ emitted at ground level](#).
4. **Divest my savings from fossil fuel companies and reinvest in renewables.** Extracting oil from the ground produces emissions even before it is refined, transported, and used. The Canadian oil and gas sector produces [1.6 billion barrels of oil a year](#) which is estimated to produce 104 Mt of CO₂e emissions at the point of extraction. These emissions are then multiplied as oil-based energy or products (which includes many daily-use household items) are manufactured and consumed. Divestment sends important market and political signals about the values and priorities of Canadians.

¹ For references, visit cpi.ca/for-the-earth.

Political Action:

Canada must strive to do better. **Give it up for the Earth!** calls on the Canadian federal government to take steps to enhance Canada's GHG emissions reduction measures so that they are in line with the Paris Agreement goal of keeping global warming "to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels."

Recommended Policy Changes:

1. **Continue to increase Canada's carbon price beyond 2022 so it reaches at least \$160/tonne by 2030.**
A carbon price must be high enough to achieve intended emissions reductions. Canada has committed to introduce a carbon price of \$10 per tonne in 2018 and rising \$10 per year to reach \$50 per tonne in 2022. In order to achieve Canada's 2030 target, a carbon price implemented in 2017 would need to increase regularly to reach at the very *least* \$160 per tonne by 2030 (that would [raise gasoline prices by about 40 cents per litre](#)).
2. **Eliminate federal fossil fuel subsidies; invest \$12 billion in a low-carbon economy over the next 5 years.**
Government currently subsidizes the oil and gas sector to help companies stay competitive in a high-risk exploration industry. These subsidies encourage the exploration and expansion, development, refining, and export of oil, coal, and gas. Research by the [Green Economy Network](#) indicates that "by investing up to 5 per cent of the annual federal budget in renewable energy, energy efficiency and public transportation over five years, Canada could create one million new jobs while reducing our annual GHG emissions by 25 to 35 per cent."
3. **Respect the autonomy of Indigenous peoples, including when making decisions about energy projects.**
In 2016, Canada expressed [unqualified support for the UN Declaration](#) of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes the principle of "free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples." As the year came to a close, Canada approved two pipelines, including the controversial Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain, despite opposition from Indigenous leaders. Canada's commitment to "a renewed, [nation-to-nation relationship](#) with Indigenous Peoples," requires authentic consultation, as well as respect of Indigenous lands, in order to build genuine reconciliation.
4. **Acknowledge that new fossil fuel infrastructure makes reaching the Paris temperature goals difficult.**
Oil *extraction* is just one source of sector-related emissions. Transportation, refining, and finally combustion magnify the emissions impact. Since [70-75% of these downstream emissions are exported](#), they aren't counted in Canadian totals. Regardless of where the emissions are counted, however, the expansion of pipelines and other fossil fuel infrastructure increases GHG emissions.
5. **Provide retraining for current and laid-off energy workers to retool to work in renewable energy.**
Canada's resource-based and carbon-intensive economy has historically experienced cycles of boom and bust as global economic conditions shift and commodity prices rise and fall, often at the expense of workers. The move towards a low-carbon economy offers a tremendous opportunity to rebuild towards a more robust, more sustainable, and healthier future. Workers currently and previously employed in the traditional energy sector have many skills that are transferable to an economy based on renewable energy. Still, supports are required to retrain and match these workers with the new jobs that will become available through investments in wind, solar, and geothermal power, energy efficiency, and expanded public transportation.
6. **Increase international climate financing to Canada's fair-share contribution of \$4 billion each year by 2020.** Canada's economic development has been historically tied to growth in emissions which will contribute to warming for centuries to come. [The World Bank](#) has estimated that 100 million people could be forced into extreme poverty by 2030 due to climate change. Given Canada's historical contribution to emissions, we have a responsibility to share the financial burden borne by developing countries as they work to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

